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Message From the President of the Veterinary Medical Alumni Society: Highlights and Insights About Your Veterinary School

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President's Message

Highlights and Insights About Your Veterinary School

Beginning with this issue, the "President's Message" column will be a regular feature of *Bellwether*. At meetings of the Veterinary Medical Alumni Society Executive Board, we are fortunate to hear firsthand from Dean Kelly,



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department chairs, and members of the administration, and I am pleased to have the opportunity to share with you the news and accomplishments of your alma mater.

This fall, Dean Kelly and his staff have been busy managing the budget as the School's FY'04 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania appropriation has yet to be signed into law. Last spring, due to the uncertainty of the appropriation, the School presented a balanced budget to the University based on a potential 5 percent or \$1.9 million reduction. This caused a tuition increase of 4 percent, a reduction in the grant given to Pennsylvania residents from \$5,400 to \$3,500, and, for the first time, the imposition of a technology fee of \$350 per student.

In a time of fiscal restraint, maintaining competitive salaries with the private sector in specialty areas are almost impossible. Nevertheless, Penn has successfully retained one faculty member and two recent graduates of its residency program in radiology who have recently become board-certified. The School is able to retain and attract faculty, in part, by remaining at the forefront of clinical care.

Clinical services at the Matthew J. Ryan Veterinary Hospital will be enhanced in the near future by the addition of a hemodialysis unit, which will be one of only a handful in the country, to save patients with acute renal failure, and by the construction of a new Radiation Therapy and Imaging Center, to be located in what is now the Hospital garage, which will feature a linear accelerator and MRI. At the George D. Widener Hospital for Large Animals, digital radiography has expanded the diagnostic and teaching modalities at New Bolton Center.

Our School's world-class reputation as a leading research institution is due to the innovative work of its faculty. In May, researchers at Penn, led by Hans Schöler, were featured on the cover of *Science* for their work in producing mouse eggs in vitro directly from embryonic stem cells. This fall, **Ralph Brinster, V'60**, was inducted into the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's Hall of Honor, which recognizes scientists supported by the Institute for exceptional contributions to advancing knowledge and improving maternal and child health. This came on the heels of Dr. Brinster being awarded the Wolf Prize, one of the most prestigious scientific awards in the world, last spring.

This mix of groundbreaking research in the basic sciences combined with the advanced clinical care available at the Ryan and the Widener hospitals makes the collage of achievement at our School second to none in the world.

After several years of planning and fund raising, groundbreaking for the new Teaching and Research Building on the Philadelphia campus will be held on Saturday, April 17, 2004. This new building will contain five floors, including a vivarium in the basement, two floors of teaching and library space, and two floors of research laboratories. This state-of-the-art facility, which is to be completed in time for the start of classes in the fall of 2006, will ensure Penn's continued preeminence in veterinary medicine. Donors to the building deserve more credit than they will ever receive. In a difficult economy, raising more than \$47 million is a credit to the efforts of the entire School community and, in particular, to the staff of the School's Office of Development and Alumni Relations, who coordinated the fundraising campaign.

In this season of giving, I hope that you will help us meet The Landeau Challenge. **Laurie J. Landeau, V'84 WG'84**, has issued a challenge to inspire alumni to make their first gift or to increase their past support to the Veterinary Student Scholarship Fund, which supports the School's highest priority—the training of future veterinarians. If alumni contribute a total of \$150,000 in new and increased gifts to the Veterinary Student Scholarship Fund by June 30, 2004, Dr. Landeau will contribute

\$150,000 to the School. There has never been a better time than now to support our future colleagues!

While talking of raising money, please consider funding an Opportunity Scholarship. Originated and chaired by **Charlie Raker, V'42**, the program represents the best win-win opportunity available. By pledging \$2,500 a year for four years, you will provide a single student with a total of \$10,000 in financial assistance. You will not only feel good by serving as a mentor, you will share in the thrill, even if vicariously, of being a veterinary student again. As my wife, **Brenda, V'70**, and I know firsthand, your support will never bring you so much goodwill and satisfaction. For more information, contact myself or Dori Myers at the School at (215) 746-7438 or via e-mail at <dmyers@vet.upenn.edu>.

Finally, your input is welcome and appreciated. The Executive Board wants you involved; Penn Veterinary Medicine is your School. It is a joy for us to work on behalf of and to participate in the School's exciting future. We want all alumni to experience this satisfaction.

Please feel free to contact me via e-mail at <DrsJBSTewart@aol.com> with your comments and suggestions. For more information on the Veterinary Medical Alumni Society, please visit <<http://alumni.vet.upenn.edu/vmas.html>>.

Season's greetings and best wishes for the New Year!

Alumni: Sign-Up for Monthly E-mail Newsletter

Send your e-mail address to Joshua E. Liss, Director of Alumni Relations and Annual Giving, at <lissj@vet.upenn.edu>, and you will join the more than 1,500 alumni who receive a monthly e-mail newsletter with news and events of interest to you!