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During my months at the University of Pennsylvania, I have been impressed by the quality and diversity assembled on this campus. As one of the earliest of the great American universities, with an exclusive history dating back to the colonial college founded by Benjamin Franklin, this institution has shown a marked ability to develop and adapt to changing circumstances in the course of its two-hundred-and-twenty-five years. As we enter the last decades of this century, we combine traditional strengths with the flexibility necessary to satisfy the increasingly stringent demands placed on higher education, by the students we train and the society we serve, while continuing to preserve and to create knowledge.

Among the educational assets that have made Pennsylvania a center of specialized as well as liberal study, the School of Veterinary Medicine occupies a very special place. The only veterinary school in the mid-Atlantic region, it is a leader in education and practice in the nation and the world. Soon to celebrate the centenary of its founding in 1884, the school is at the forefront in basic and clinical investigation and the development of new fields, including research into animal and human interactions and the crucial area of aquatic medicine.

With facilities both at the New Bolton Center and on our Philadelphia campus, the school can boast the oldest building belonging to the University, as well as spectacular new facilities for training and service to the agricultural and the urban communities. The George D. Widener Hospital, dedicated just over a year ago, provides superior new facilities for the treatment of large animals, along with the teaching and research space necessary for sophisticated investigation of the diseases and productive capacity of food animals. At its rural campus, the University continues to make major contributions to animal agriculture in the Commonwealth and to the horse-racing industry of the entire region, through the research and expertise of its veterinary facility. With the very recent opening of the Veterinary Hospital on our Philadelphia campus, the University acquired, after years of careful planning, a fantastic new resource—the world's most advanced facility for the integrated housing, research, and care associated with small animals, from household pets to the exotic inhabitants of aquaria and zoos.

Recent developments in veterinary medicine have had far-reaching implications for society beyond the simple health care of animal patients. Our school is well situated to draw upon the strengths of other areas of the University of Pennsylvania to the advantage of students, faculty, and the world of learning. The School of Veterinary Medicine has become an increasingly important citizen of our vital and complex campus while achieving growing recognition outside in the neighborhood, city, Commonwealth, and region. The respect and support of the school, at the state level, is one in which we, at the University, take particular pride since it reflects the advantages of the unique relationship that exists between the University and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

A major pleasure of my first spring at Pennsylvania has been the chance to participate in the final stages of long-awaited developments at the University's School of Veterinary Medicine. The school is now firmly positioned to continue its leadership into the twenty-first century, as a pioneer in teaching, research, and delivering expert care to both the urban and rural animal communities, on which human society so greatly depends.

Sheldon Hackney

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President, University of Pennsylvania

