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# Veterinary Technology

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## **Veterinary Technology**

The Veterinary Technology program was started in 2003. It was originally housed in a building across from the DMACC Ankeny Campus, but moved to the new Future Farmers of American (FFA) Building when facilities for the agriculture programs were completed in the spring of 2010. The program has been offered only at the Ankeny Campus since its inception.

The nation as a whole has had a huge increase in the number of veterinary technology programs in the past 15 years 2000 -2015. Veterinary offices are in high demand for qualified and competent people with veterinary technician skills. Veterinary offices may have only hired one veterinary technician in the past; however, in the present day of animal care, most offices will hire two to three technicians per doctor, and, in some cases, even more.

The program was started in response to requests from both prospective students and veterinarians for a continuing supply of qualified and nationally-certified veterinary technologists in order to prepare veterinary technicians to provide professional technical support to veterinarians, biomedical researchers and other scientists.

Initially, the program was limited by a lack of appropriate classroom and laboratory space and instructional equipment. These issues were largely resolved with the move to a permanent location in 2010.

The program was developed as a two-year program to award an associate of applied science (AAS) degree. The curriculum focuses on the major areas of emphasis in the certifying examination and in providing basic knowledge that will be required for the vast majority of students to continue to meet certification requirements. In effect, it is a national curriculum that must be in place to continue the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMT) approval. This is a condition for students sitting for the national exam and to acquire the designation as a RVT (Registered Veterinary Technician).

The curriculum was developed in cooperation with an advisory committee, comprised of veterinarians and representatives of the Veterinary College at Iowa State University. The curriculum is similar to many other curricula in established Vet Tech programs in two year colleges. It was influenced by the accreditation standards of the American Veterinary Association. The program received full accreditation status from the AVA in 2008.

The major change in the curriculum since its inception has been to slightly increase the number of veterinary-specific courses and slightly decrease the number of general education electives. This change was recommended by Dr. Frank Cerfogli in an effort to increase the student's ability to pass a knowledge-based Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE), required for the graduates to obtain their licenses.

The program advisory committee continues to meet three times annually (fall, spring and summer). The primary focus of the committee since the program was founded has been on curriculum. Membership on the committee includes representatives from the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, doctors of veterinary medicine, licensed veterinary technicians and numerous industry representatives. Committee members who have been especially active include Dr. Tom Johnson, Dr. Dan Whitney, and

Ms. Diane Garrison, whose contributions focused on assisting staff. Members have also been helpful in providing and assisting in the placement of students for internships and employment.

The faculty report that student demand for the program continues to increase. The faculty has also adjusted the screening requirements for admission to reflect higher reading comprehension levels in an attempt to increase program completion rates. Students who successfully complete the program sit for the VTNE and the Veterinary Technician State Examination (VTSE)

Students regularly have participated in state and national completion. The program has received honors based on their participation. Many are active in the local student chapter of the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (SCNAVATA).

The program most recently received renewed program accreditation from the American Veterinary Medical Association Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee.

The two-year AAS degree program originally admitted 15-18 students each fall, which was later increased to 30 students. In the initial years of the program, the percentage of students graduating was 50 percent until recent years when it rose to over 75 percent. Approximately 90 percent of graduates are employed in the field within the first year following graduation. The majority of graduates initially are employed in small, mixed or large animal practices. Major employers have included Creature Comforts Animal Hospital in Ankeny and Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine in Ames, Iowa.

The schedule and sequence of the program remains much as it did initially. Students are on campus for two terms, usually participate in a summer internship and return for two terms before sitting for the VTNE and the VTSE.

Two program chairs have headed the program: William Showers, DVM, from 2003 until his death on January 26, 2008, followed by Frank Cerfogli, DVM, from January 27, 2008 to December 11, 2015.

Faculty members and lab assistants have included

- Dee Dee Schumacher, RVT, VTS
- Jeannie Stall, RVT
- Dwayne Faidley, BS, MS
- Jennifer Schleining, MS, DVM, ACVS
- David Starling, DVM
- Leah Braas, DVM
- Amy Crane, DVM
- Megan Harrison, RVT

Future goals include creating courses with the option to be taken online and increasing the student pass rate for the VTNE.