

Innovation, teamwork, and global awareness characterize Colorado State University DVM training

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Improving the health of animals, people, and the environment has been central to the Colorado State University (CSU) mission since 1907, when the first veterinary class matriculated. Today, with more than 600 students across the 4 years of the DVM program, the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at CSU remains dedicated to that mission, focusing on excellence in advanced veterinary medicine, community connection, and awareness of the intersection of the profession with larger societal challenges.

Recent program changes reflect improved training of skills and clinical reasoning critical to day 1 competency. In the surgical curriculum, this includes stronger simulation training, coached repetition, and earlier hands-on experiences with surgical patients through a partnership with the Denver Dumb Friends League. All fourth-year students are offered the Reassessment Campaign on Veterinary Resuscitation CPR course to hone triage and resuscitation skills on high-fidelity simulators. This training emphasizes teamwork and communication and has been shown to improve trainee clinical competence and confidence.

The DVM program cultivates partnerships around the world to create learning opportunities rooted in honoring community and increasing accessibility. For example, the CSU Todos Santos Campus in Baja California Sur, Mexico, is now in its sixth year of hosting fourth-year veterinary students for externships focused on collaborative spay-neuter clinics and community outreach. The CSU-University of Alaska Fairbanks 2+2 program, initiated in 2015, has allowed the training of more than 50 veterinarians to date. Improving access to Alaskan residents, but open to all applicants, the program was developed to emphasize the unique needs of Alaskan animal and community health while equipping students with clinical expertise and a foundation in spectrum of care and accessibility. Emphasizing these principles closer to home, a partnership with the Murphy Center in Fort Collins provides students the opportunity to serve under-resourced clients and individuals experiencing homelessness in caring for their pets.

Recognizing the national need for food supply veterinarians and rural general practitioners, the DVM program

offers courses, training, and resources that equip students to enter the rural workforce. Partnering with the College of Agriculture and the Office of Extension at CSU, DVM faculty and administrators are strengthening the pipeline for rural and large animal positions, removing barriers to entry, and bolstering connections with local and regional producers. Curriculum opportunities include Spanish for the Veterinary Professional, a 9-credit course emphasizing naturally occurring dialogue between veterinarians and Spanish-speaking clients and animal caretakers. CSU Livestock Veterinary Services faculty have designed a new facility housing inpatient, outpatient, and ambulatory services. A combined equine and livestock teaching facility for laboratory training is in the early stages of planning.

The CSU vision for, and support of, veterinarians does not stop at graduation. Sustainability, Equity, Accessibility is a novel and newly launched initiative for DVM students led by the Office of the Assistant Dean of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. The program leads students to examine long-term challenges for the profession, ranging from climate change to diversity and inclusivity in the workplace.

Looking toward the future, the CSU DVM curriculum is undergoing an in-depth renewal, with a rollout planned for first-year students entering in the Fall of 2026. Students will be equipped to approach continuous feedback with a growth mindset as they develop competencies through early and repeated clinical exposure. Students will receive mentorship and strategic training in professional identity, leadership, well-being, and financial literacy. The Veterinary Health Education Complex will house all DVM students to enhance peer-to-peer support, with facilities equipped to facilitate delivery of the new curriculum and program services. The new Primary Care Clinic will serve as a key training ground for students and an important service provider to under-resourced individuals. The renovated Animal Specialty Hospital will have enhanced operations, services, and equipment in support of exceptional care and scientific discovery.

With deep roots, robust medical training, and modern tools to tackle problems inherent to evolving professional and global landscapes, CSU DVM students are positioned to serve as leaders in the profession for decades to come.