

December 14.2009

To the University Committee on Academic Policy:

The Veterinary Technology Program at Michigan State University was established in 1968. It is the first program to be accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) and the Program has maintained full accreditation status for the past 40 years. The Program is recognized as the flagship program in the United States and Canada and is viewed as the gold standard in this paraprofessional training. The Program at Michigan State University was also the first veterinary technology program to be fully integrated into a College of Veterinary Medicine and Veterinary Teaching Hospital. As the clinical phase of the veterinary technology program students is completed in the Veterinary Teaching Hospital alongside veterinary students, interns, residents and clinical technicians and veterinarians, MSU-CVM is viewed by other Veterinary Schools as the definitive model of the Veterinary Healthcare Delivery Team.

The Veterinary Healthcare Delivery Team is crucial for animal health and vital for the economic health of veterinary practice. The National Commission of Veterinary Economic Issues has made the recommendation that for every veterinarian in clinical private practice, 3 veterinary technicians are needed to optimize health care delivery and the financial "well-being" of the practice. As of December 31, 2008, the American Veterinary Medical Association reported a total of 60,000 veterinarians in clinical practice. In 2008, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported 79,000 veterinary technicians. The employment of these veterinary technicians is NOT limited to clinical practice. Veterinary technicians are employed in industry, the government, the Armed Forces, research facilities, humane societies and as educators in the 166 veterinary technology programs in the United States. It is obvious that we have yet to meet the needs of the veterinarians in practice, the 2,500 veterinarians that graduate from US veterinary schools each year and all of the other stakeholders. Each year, CVM graduates approximately 100 veterinarians and the State of Michigan credentials 170 veterinary technicians. Clearly, we are at a deficit within the State. Finally, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that by 2016, there will be a need of 100,000 veterinary technicians or a 26% increase above the 2008 census.

The Veterinary Technology Program at Michigan State University is an exceptional educational program. The Program has maintained full accreditation status since its inception, a 100% pass rate on the Veterinary Technician National Examination (National Average: 75%) and a 95% pass rate for the State of Michigan Licensing examination (State Average: 84%). A summary of the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) and State of Michigan Performance 2005-2009 for MSU and comparison data is provided for your review (Appendix 1). The graduates of the Program have 3-4 job offers within the State of Michigan and are highly sought throughout the State and the United States. Michigan State University is the only veterinary technology program in the State and one of 16 U.S. programs which offer a Bachelor of Science Degree. The Bachelor of Science Degree permits graduates of the Program to be successful in industry, government, academic institutions and general and specialty clinical practices and, in many cases, to qualify for a higher pay scale. The BS degree is preferred for educators of veterinary technology students. With the increase of veterinary technician programs doubling over the last 10 years, we have been unable to keep pace with the need. In addition, the BS degree has permitted MSU-CVM alumni to complete Master Degrees in Public Health, Biology and other related science and non-science fields.

Over the last 5 years, the Program has graduated an average of 28 students. Our sister program at the School of Veterinary Medicine, Purdue University graduates an average of 27 students with an enrollment limit of 30 per

year. The Purdue Veterinary Technology Program, which was modeled after the MSU Program, was accredited in 1976 and is the only other Program integrated into a College of Veterinary Medicine. The Purdue Program faculty is 7.5 FTE (4.5 DVM, 3.0 VT). The Veterinary Technology Program faculty at MSU is 5.75 FTE (1.5 DVM, 4.25 Veterinary Technician) and delivers 50 credits which include 19 laboratory sections of didactic veterinary technology course work per year. The low faculty to student ratio is crucial in meeting the requirements of our external AVMA accrediting body. Each student must be assessed for clinical competency in over 250 psychomotor skills in 9 domain categories. In addition to the psychomotor skills, each student must be assessed for decision-making abilities (i.e. integrated judgment and problem-solving skills) for each domain. It is difficult to assess a student's ability to determine a patient's anesthetic risk status, the appropriate anesthetic protocols to be used and management concerns in a multiple choice examination format. For consistency purposes, the AVMA requires the assessment and completion of these essential skills in the pre-clinical phase of instruction. Also, and even more importantly, the AVMA requires that the faculty student ratio ensures time on task and safety of students, animals and instructors. Novice students must practice and perform physical tasks on all animals ranging from a 1,500 pound cow to a 10 pound unhappy, fractious cat. The safety and well-being of the student and animal is paramount...the faculty are there to ensure their safety and well-being.

The Veterinary Technology Program is a limited enrollment major with a competitive secondary application process. Based on capacity within the Program and Veterinary Teaching Hospital, the enrollment limit is 40 students per year. The "optimal" student enrollment is 30-32 students per year. Students apply to the Program by January 15th for Fall Semester admission of the same calendar year. As of Friday, December 11th, there are 115 applications pending. Thirty-seven of the applicants are current MSU students or MSU alumni. Seven of the applicants have already earned MSU degrees and are applying for a second degree, 15 are in other majors on campus, 10 applicants are Veterinary Technology Majors and for 5 applicants, administrative access is denied. Also, there are 32 MSU students declaring Veterinary Technology as their major preference code that have not submitted an application. In addition, it is estimated that 7-10 students in the Veterinary Technology Program Year One class will be recessed due to academic difficulties and will return in Fall 2010. Even with a maximum enrollment of 40 students, the Program will not be able to accommodate MSU students or attend to our strong transfer student population with one additional admission cycle.

The salary and supplies budget for Program Faculty (5.75 FTE) is \$450,000 per year or 2.1% of current CVM General Fund Distribution. It is estimated that two additional admission cycles are needed to attend to the educational goals of current MSU students. Completion of pre-clinical and clinical phases will not occur until Spring Semester 2014. A minimum of 1.8 million dollars will be expended before a "savings" is realized.

On October, 28, 2009, the Program was informed that its discontinuation was a component of the CVM's strategic response to the mandated budget reductions. On October 29th, the decision was shared with the Program students by the Program Director and through an email from Dean Brown, to the College on October 30th. The moratorium was not viewed or discussed by CVM Curriculum Committee.

The Program students, faculty and I oppose the moratorium on admissions and the discontinuation of the Program. We believe that this decision will have serious long-term negative ramifications on the College, the University and the Veterinary Profession.

Sincerely, Helene E. Pazak MS, DVM, PhD, DACVN
Director, Veterinary Technology Program

Appendix 1: Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) and State of
Michigan Performance 2005-2009 for MSU

Veterinary Technician National Examination Scores 2005-2009												
Content Area	2009 MSU	2009 National Average	2008 MSU	2008 National Average	2007 MSU	2007 National Average	2006 MSU	2006 National Average	2005*MSU U	2005 National Average	MSU 5-year Average	National 5-year Average
Total***	608	500	625	483	601	499	620	507	629	507	616.6	499.2
Pharmacy and Pharmacology	604	506	608	499	610	475	591	512	620	517	606.6	501.8
Surgical Preparation and Assisting	638	514	620	491	637	517	606	453	661	506	632.4	496.2
Dentistry	692	564	638	507	657	568	725	610	636	553	669.6	560.4
Laboratory procedure	549	476	599	481	619	539	620	542	554	474	588.2	502.4
Animal Nursing	586	490	612	453	573	504	617	510	686	540	614.8	499.4
Radiology and U-sound	645	498	666	489	597	451	662	465	595	426	633	465.8
Anesthesia	615	498	668	503	543	453	598	510	618	521	608.4	497
Number of candidates	28	3310	17	2966	36	2671	33	3040	25	2833	27.8	2964
Number passing	28	2459	17	2140	36	2036	33	2314	25	2187	27.8	2227.2
Passing rate (%)	100	74.29	100.00	72.18	100.00	76.23	100.00	76.12	100.00	77.20	100	75.20

*** Passing score =425

State of Michigan Licensing Examination scores 2005-2009												
	2009 MSU	2009 All Michigan	2008 MSU	2008 All Michigan	2007 MSU	2007 All Michigan	2006 MSU	2006 All Michigan	2005 MSU	2005 All Michigan	MSU 5-year Total	All MI 5-year Total
# of Candidates	26	199	17	200	37	210	27	195	23	206	130	1,010
Pass Rate(%)	92	83	100	83	97	82.4	96	88	96	84	96	84
# passing	24	165	17	166	36	173	26	171	22	173	125	848