AUBURN UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

STRATEGIC PLAN
Mission: The mission of the Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine is to prepare individuals for careers of excellence in veterinary medicine, including private and public practice, industrial medicine, academics, and research. The college will provide programs of instruction, research, outreach, and service that are in the best interests of the citizens of the state of Alabama, the region, the nation, and the world.

Vision: The Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine will be recognized nationally and internationally as a preeminent comprehensive college of veterinary medicine, a national resource in veterinary medical education, a preferred provider of veterinary medical care in the Southeast, and the home of a scholarly research enterprise that drives discovery and innovation. Successful pursuit of the college’s mission will advance the health of animals, humans, and the environment. The college will promote and advance Auburn’s reputation through a culture of accountability, efficiency, entrepreneurship, and a commitment to quality in every aspect of its mission.
The College of Veterinary Medicine’s faculty unanimously adopted this ambitious strategic plan that sets a clear vision for the college and establishes a roadmap for achieving its priorities. When implemented, the plan will advance Auburn’s reputation in training proficient entry-level veterinarians, conducting impactful research that expands medical knowledge, providing state-of-the-art veterinary care, and maintaining a spirit of the “Auburn Family” in the workplace. The plan is designed to be a working document. It defines measurable steps toward achieving each goal; progress in achieving each step will be assessed annually.

I wish to thank the Strategic Planning Advisory Committee, which has represented many of the college’s key constituency groups as the plan was developed. Members and their areas of representation include: Dr. Jamie Bellah (CVM Administration), Dr. William Bledsoe (Alabama VMA), Ms. Sherry Compton (CVM Staff Advisory Committee), Dr. James R. Crum (Referring Veterinarian – Large Animal), Dr. Charles Franz (CVM Alumni Advisory Council), Dr. Rebecca George (Graduate Student/Resident), Ms. Josie Hamilton (CVM Student; Class of 2016), Dr. Doug Martin (CVM Faculty Advisory Committee), Dr. David McClary (AU Research Advisory Board), Dr. Vicky Owens McGrath (Kentucky VMA), Dr. Glen Puckett (Referring Veterinarian – Small Animal), and Dr. Sharon Roberts (Client).

I thank you for your support of Auburn’s College of Veterinary Medicine and would welcome your input and assistance as we move forward together.

Calvin M. Johnson, ’86
Dean
“From being one of the vets involved in developing the prosthetic solution for Winter, the young dolphin in the feature film Dolphin Tale, to providing counseling for people whose animals have been diagnosed with canine cancer through my Stryder Cancer Foundation, I rely on the values and support system of the Auburn Family.”

— JULI GOLDSTEIN ’99, DVM ’03

THIS IS PREPARATION FOR A COMPETITIVE EDGE.
Strategic Priority 1: Enhance Student Success

Vision: The Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine will be recognized nationally as one of the top educational programs in the country. The college is committed to continuous quality improvement in education through outcomes assessment, periodic curriculum review, and centralized management of the curriculum by the faculty. The college will teach critical-thinking skills during every year of the veterinary curriculum to facilitate student transitions from classroom to clinic and from enrollment to employment.

The college aspires to prepare graduate students, including clinical residents and interns, for a breadth of careers in the basic sciences, comparative medicine/pathology, clinical sciences, and specialty practice, and to promote a lasting spirit of inquiry, scholarship, and advancement.
Goal 1: The professional veterinary curriculum will build a broad and integrated base of knowledge and will cultivate the core competencies required for success of an entry-level veterinarian.

The AVMA CVM will develop and assess the nine competencies as defined by the American Veterinary Medical Association Council on Education:

1. Comprehensive patient diagnosis (problem-solving skills), appropriate use of clinical laboratory testing, and record management
2. Comprehensive treatment planning including patient referral when indicated
3. Anesthesia and pain management, patient welfare
4. Basic surgery skills, experience, and case management
5. Basic medicine skills, experience, and case management
6. Emergency and intensive care case management
7. Health promotion, disease prevention, biosecurity, zoonosis, and food safety
8. Client communications and ethical conduct
9. Critical analysis of new information and research findings relevant to veterinary medicine

Moreover, the professional competencies for entry-level veterinarians developed by the North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium (NAVMEC), www.aavmc.org/roadmap, will be cultivated and assessed in the veterinary medical curriculum. NAVMEC competencies include:

1. Multispecies knowledge plus clinical competency in one or more species or disciplines
2. One health knowledge: animal, human, and environmental health
3. Communication
4. Collaboration
5. Management (self, team, system)
6. Lifelong Learning, scholarship, value of research
7. Leadership
8. Diversity and multicultural awareness
9. Adaptability to changing environments
**Goal 2:** The college’s curricula will train students to think critically, solve problems, and communicate effectively.

Students in the veterinary and graduate curricula will be trained to pursue a breadth of professional opportunities. For graduate veterinarians, these include private practice (general and specialty practice), public practice (government), academia, laboratory animal health, biomedical research, and others. For graduate students, these include employment opportunities in corporations, academia, government, and research foundations (e.g., non-government organizations).

**Aim 1:** Recruit and enroll students with the greatest potential for achieving career success through a direct personal evaluation (interview) of each qualified applicant achieving a defined academic threshold.

**Aim 2:** Knowledge and competencies will be assessed throughout the curriculum. Information will be integrated across courses so that linkage between disciplines is emphasized. Clinical cases or research problems will be used to integrate information and to develop skills in critical thinking and communication.

**Aim 3:** Faculty will be trained in the art of teaching critical-thinking skills and cultivation of professional competencies. Faculty will be supported in attending workshops, multi-institutional working groups, and continuing education seminars designed to build teaching skills.

**Aim 4:** Veterinary students and graduate students (e.g., interns, residents, and basic science graduate students) will be trained to achieve professional competencies, as defined by the faculty. Assessments of competencies will be used to continuously improve the curriculum through the oversight of a college-level faculty committee (Veterinary Medical Curriculum Committee or Biomedical Sciences Graduate Committee).

**Goal 3:** The veterinary curriculum will be efficient, responsive, and adaptable based on outcomes assessments.

**Aim 1:** Assess the effectiveness of the veterinary curriculum.

1. NAVLE pass rate
2. NAVLE performance in specific subject categories
3. Five-year post-graduation surveys
4. Senior debriefing surveys
5. Course evaluations
6. Preceptor surveys
7. Employer surveys

**Aim 2:** The college will maintain a curricular map that identifies the learning objectives of each class taught within the veterinary curriculum.

**Aim 3:** The College Curriculum Committee will regularly review the veterinary curriculum with respect to student outcomes and will manage the curriculum to maximize student performance and teaching efficiency.

**Aim 4:** The curriculum will introduce students to clinical scenarios by incorporating discussions of key topics throughout the pre-clinical curriculum (e.g., end-of-life counseling, tiered treatment options based on financial constraints, etc.).

**Aim 5:** The curriculum will train students in the promotion of sustainable, humane, and efficient animal production to meet the dietary demands for high-quality protein by a growing worldwide population.
**Goal 4:** Faculty members will focus on teaching effectiveness, student learning, and the scholarship of teaching.

**Aim 1:** The college will recognize and support faculty excellence in teaching through annual reviews of teaching efficacy (student reviews and peer reviews as requested by the faculty member), recognition of teaching excellence, sponsorship of teaching workshops, and appreciation of teaching merit during assessments of performance.

**Aim 2:** The college will develop a workload policy that defines, to the greatest extent possible, expectations for specific job assignments and rewards scholarship in all assigned areas, including instruction. College-wide changes in instructional strategies (e.g., greater emphasis on development of critical-thinking skills), will be carefully assessed and managed with respect to impact on faculty workload.

**Aim 3:** Student evaluations of teaching will be improved with respect to validity as an assessment tool for teaching effectiveness by providing clear instructions to students regarding the need for constructive/appropriate comments, achieving a sufficient response rate (75% is proposed), timing with respect to exams, and other published best practices to ensure their validity as an assessment tool.

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**Goal 5:** Produce proficient graduates by optimizing student exposure to live animals throughout the curriculum.

**Aim 1:** Maximize the teaching value of hospital patients while also maintaining exceptional services.

**Aim 2:** Maintain and effectively utilize teaching herds to enhance instruction.

**Aim 3:** Expand teaching opportunities through cooperation with the College of Agriculture, the Alabama Agricultural Experiment Station, or other regional partners, and by integrating teaching with research.

**Aim 4:** Incorporate simulation models to improve efficient and responsible animal use.

**Aim 5:** Build mutually beneficial partnerships that enhance student exposure to animals (e.g. Lee County Humane Society, other regional humane societies, State Diagnostic Laboratory, corporate animal centers etc.).

**Aim 6:** Consider restoring some key surgery laboratories to increase competency and proficiency in surgery and anesthesiology.

**Aim 7:** Develop partnerships for students to complete rotations at other schools with strengths that complement the Auburn program (e.g., swine rotation at Iowa State, Illinois, or NCSU; dairy rotation at Wisconsin or Cornell; shelter medicine at Florida). In exchange, provide opportunities for visiting students to engage in strengths of the Auburn program (e.g., raptor center, theriogenology, imaging, oncology, cardiology, etc.).

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**Goal 6:** Auburn graduates will be well-prepared and highly competitive nationally for employment or advanced training.

**Aim 1:** Graduates from the veterinary and graduate programs will be proficient at assimilating, assessing, and integrating new information into practical situations.

**Aim 2:** Develop elective rotations for students to experience the breadth of career opportunities in the veterinary profession (public health, food chain safety, regulatory medicine, etc.).

**Aim 3:** Success of the college’s graduates will be tracked to identify and to integrate key alumni back into the program in a “virtual college” of experts and mentors. Auburn has many internationally recognized graduates who often seek to give back to the college through instruction and mentorship opportunities. By integrating successful graduates back into the CVM training environment, students will become familiar with the breadth of opportunities available to them professionally including, but not limited to, government, academia, general practice (small animal, large animal, exotic species, etc.), specialty practice, veterinary animal health, veterinary pathology, and others. While the faculty cannot be all things to all areas, the college’s alumni are a vast, untapped resource that can be cultivated for mentorship and networking.

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**Goal 7:** Auburn-trained specialists in clinical and laboratory sciences will become leaders in their individual specialties.

**Aim 1:** Residents in clinical and laboratory sciences will be motivated and successful candidates for board certification and desirable employment opportunities.

**Aim 2:** Residents in clinical and laboratory sciences will be prepared to contribute to the scientific and technical advancement of their specialties.

**Aim 3:** Provide opportunities for Auburn-trained specialists to contribute to education/continuing education activities at the CVM.
THIS IS MEANINGFUL RESEARCH AND DISCOVERY.
Strategic Priority 2: Promote Discovery

Vision: The Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine aspires to become the top southeastern CVM in research and graduate education, with programs built from innovation and existing strengths, through a pervasive culture of scholarship.
**Goal 1: Increase faculty numbers through strategic hires that build nationally and internationally competitive research teams.**

**Aim 1:** Implement a faculty-hiring strategy that recognizes two components: (1) a unit need for faculty expertise in a specific discipline; and (2) an institutional need to create synergistic teams that will advance the research mission of the college and university. Through this strategy, new faculty will be placed in a position where they can most effectively advance the three missions of the college: instruction, research, and outreach, and promote the college’s national reputation.

**Aim 2:** Strategically search for, and hire, tenure-track or research-track faculty to advance the research mission of the college.

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**Goal 2: Enable faculty productivity and success.**

**Aim 1:** Promote the success of the Scott-Ritchey Research Center in pursuing its mission.

**Aim 2:** Establish college-wide guidelines for mentorship and clear expectations for productivity of faculty during their initial five to six years of employment.

**Aim 3:** Encourage new faculty to engage in interdisciplinary teams.

**Aim 4:** Provide excellent core services (e.g., biostatistics support) and facilitate access to well maintained and professionally operated shared equipment.

**Aim 5:** Mentor new faculty with regard to research and research resources within the CVM and in other units on the Auburn campus. An accessible database will be established to describe research resources, methods for gaining access to them, and contacts for their use.

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AURIC (Auburn University Research Initiative in Cancer) is human medicine, animal medicine, research, and diagnostics where faculty, students, and staff are working together to solve the complex puzzle of cancer. AURIC is based within the College of Veterinary Medicine, but AURIC is everywhere, from the laboratory to the clinic.
Goal 3: Grow the graduate program by recruiting and retaining the best students (a broad national and international pool).

Aim 1: Support the Biomedical Sciences (BMS) Graduate Committee and the CVM Graduate Student Association in promoting the BMS graduate program within the CVM.

Aim 2: Develop a funding model that expands the tuition fellowship program and improves efforts to recruit talented graduate students.

Aim 3: Use the breadth of the college’s research expertise to strengthen graduate education throughout the college.

Aim 4: Capitalize on the international diversity of the graduate program by partnering with other countries in support of graduate student fellowships.

For more than 40 years, a team of researchers currently led by Dr. Doug Marin has fought GM1 gangliosidosis, a disease in the Tay-Sachs family, which occurs in animals and humans. The research is in its final trial stage at the College of Veterinary Medicine before moving into clinical trials. Inspiration to continue the push for a cure comes from 2-year-old Porter Heatherly. His parents, Auburn graduates Sarah and Michael, are hopeful the research will help children like Porter.
**Goal 4: Complement CVM expertise and technology through partnerships with other colleges, institutions, government laboratories, and corporate entities.**

**Aim 1:** Create and support shared research infrastructure (e.g., core laboratories that contain shared equipment and technical expertise, centralized statistical services, and responsive services in accounting, purchasing, and hiring).

**Aim 2:** Maximize the CVM’s share of funding from the provost or vice-president for research by competing for start-up funding and the Intramural Grant Program, or equivalent university-level research initiatives.

**Goal 5: Establish a development program and strategy to support discovery.**

**Aim 1:** Assist development officers in identifying, engaging, and cultivating research-oriented donors.

**Aim 2:** Develop research programs that bridge faculty expertise with recognized needs in the animal industry (e.g., regenerative orthopedic medicine research in support of the performance horse industry or gene therapy research for organizations focusing on new treatments for inherited brain diseases).

**Goal 6: Develop laboratory space in support of the college’s research mission.**

**Aim 1:** Long term: Develop a funding plan and scope for a new research building on the CVM campus.

**Aim 2:** Short term: Identify funding for strategically developing laboratory space in Hoerlein Hall and the terrace level of the Bailey Small Animal Teaching Hospital.

**Aim 3:** Develop college-wide criteria (e.g., similar to departmental promotion and tenure guidelines) for the assignment of laboratory space and apply them as needed to reward productivity.

**Goal 7: Gain a strong national and international reputation by promoting a culture of scholarly productivity and competitiveness.**

**Aim 1:** Define measures of scholarship for clinicians, scientists, and clinician-scientists and apply these in hiring and in promotion and tenure decisions.

**Aim 2:** Benchmark Auburn CVM research productivity against comparable peer institutions in the Southeast and nationally. Criteria will include various metrics of peer-reviewed publications, extramural funding, invited research presentations, intellectual property, and others as defined in departmental promotion and tenure guidelines.

**Aim 3:** Reward excellent scholarship through merit-based salary increases, incentive payments, laboratory assignments, and provision of technical assistance.
THIS IS MEDICAL ADVANCEMENT AND PRECISE SCIENCE.
Strategic Priority 3: Practice the Highest Standards of Veterinary Medicine

Vision: The Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine will be a premier provider of primary, secondary, and tertiary veterinary care in the southeastern United States, and in this environment, serve as a national resource to educate the profession’s best practicing veterinarians and veterinary specialists.
Goal 1: Recruit, retain, and promote faculty who have achieved, or have the potential to achieve, internationally recognized expertise in their areas of specialty.

Aim 1: Pursue a plan of strategic hiring that builds teams with complementary expertise in clinical service, research, and teaching.
A. Hire faculty that fill a critical need and also complement areas of existing strength.
B. Provide resources to promote and sustain faculty success (e.g. sources of intramural funding for new scholarly initiatives).
C. Facilitate the productivity of clinical research teams by hiring dedicated research technicians that are not doubling as veterinary technicians. This improves the efficiency by which clinical faculty can pursue multiple activities.

Aim 2: Engage the entire college in the search, interview, and selection processes to promote collegiality, cross-college collaboration, and enhanced productivity.

Aim 3: Advance standards of veterinary care by performing leading-edge research with direct clinical application.

Aim 4: Elevate the level of scholarship through increased peer-reviewed, high-impact publications, acquisition of extramural funding for research, lecturing to national/international audiences, and other measures of national/international recognition.

Goal 2: Develop a case load that serves as the economic engine for sustaining and improving patient services and veterinary education.

Aim 1: When possible, teach based on caseload.

Aim 2: Advertise faculty expertise on the website, through CVM publications, and through active participation in continuing education courses throughout the region.

Aim 3: Increase efficiency, reduce costs, and appropriately bill for hospital operations.

Aim 4: Expand opportunities for anatomy and surgery training through cadaver acquisition (animal shelter donations, donated bodies, State Diagnostic Laboratory, etc.).
The College of Veterinary Medicine’s Anatomy Laboratory has undergone a $1 million renovation and recently opened for first-year students to begin their veterinary education. All veterinary students begin their education in anatomy laboratory, and anatomy is seen as a rite-of-passage into veterinary medicine.

**Goal 3: Evaluate market trends and employment capacity to guide the development of new clinical services and diagnostic capabilities (e.g., exotic wildlife medicine service, expanded laboratory services, outpatient imaging services, etc.).**

**Aim 1:** Manage growth by ensuring sufficient support for existing services and judiciously establish new services based on anticipated demand.

**Aim 2:** Explore and develop ways to provide outpatient services to regional veterinarians.

**Aim 3:** Encourage research-driven expansion of laboratory services (e.g., the Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory).

**Goal 4: Provide an exceptionally positive client experience from appointment scheduling to post-discharge follow-up.**

**Aim 1:** Implement surveys to monitor the satisfaction of clients and referring veterinarians.

**Aim 2:** Train students in client communications by engaging them in the process of providing regular updates to clients via phone or e-mail. Ensure a smooth transition between rotations.

**Aim 3:** Manage expectations of clients with respect to cost and timeframe of services.

**Aim 4:** Develop a user-friendly website with a portal for clients and referring veterinarians to efficiently determine the status of a case.

**Aim 5:** Establish and maintain consistent policies (e.g., a policy governing when to request an increased deposit from a client as the treatment plan expands).

**Goal 5: Elevate national and international competitiveness in every aspect of hospital operation.**

**Aim 1:** Promote international and national recognition of the faculty.

**Aim 2:** Maintain realistic faculty assignments by developing a college-wide workload policy.

**Aim 3:** Develop core laboratories to support clinical research teams (e.g., the Sugg Laboratory).

**Aim 4:** Invite visits from internationally recognized guest clinicians and ask them to participate in wet labs for small groups of faculty and house officers.

**Aim 5:** Achieve full faculty and staff capacity in each existing service based on case load and teaching responsibilities.

**Aim 6:** Provide prompt and responsive accounting services.
Goal 6: Exceed expectations of all stakeholders (students, animal owners, referring veterinarians, funding agencies, etc.) through a culture of efficiency, prompt communications, and high-value services.

Aim 1: Improve services to, and communications with, referring veterinarians and owners of referred patients.
A. Prompt and efficient communications with referring veterinarians and owners
B. Develop and implement hospital-wide standard operating procedures for:
   i. Preadmissions
   ii. Referral Coordinator engagement
   iii. Appointment scheduling and changes thereof
   iv. Front-desk scheduling and operations
   v. Emergency case receiving and transfer between services
   vi. Post-visit surveys of clients and referring veterinarians

Goal 7: Complement existing expertise and technical capabilities through partnerships with other academic units and the private sector.

Aim 1: Engage in a veterinary technician program to help improve both the quantity and quality of trained technicians available. This must be balanced with the need to preserve opportunities for competency development by veterinary students on clinical rotations.

Aim 2: Provide value-added continuing education programs and courses for veterinary and pharmacy technicians and veterinarians.

Aim 3: Create offsite relationships, services, and clinics through partnerships with the private sector. These must be mission-specific, financially stable, and supported to the greatest extent possible by local stakeholders.

Aim 4: Benchmark the hospital against peer institutions.
A. Clinicians provide comparative feedback after completing locums or visiting professorships.
B. Engage clinicians and administrators from other colleges to visit and provide feedback (i.e., periodic external reviews).
C. Engage practitioners in other states to gauge their experiences (positive and negative) with other colleges.

Goal 8: Operate the hospital under a balanced budget and allocate additional revenue to its continued improvement.

Aim 1: Effectively market instruction, research, and hospital services.
A. Promote the Teaching Hospital and Veterinary Clinic to Auburn faculty, staff, and students.
B. Professionally market the CVM and VTH services to the general public.
C. Offer CVM employees and students a substantial discount for services (e.g., 20%). Offer other Auburn University employees or students an appropriate discount for services (e.g., 10%).
D. Maintain competitive and valid prices for services, including annual evaluation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) as a measure of potential price increases.
E. Offset unfunded mandates (university-mandated salary increases that are not supported by state funding) by increasing revenues either through raising prices, increasing caseload, or a combination of both.
F. Create a committee to promote revenue generation and responsive service in the hospital (or a hospital service enrichment committee) to consider hospital service enhancements, alternative methods for producing revenue, and novel approaches for marketing the hospitals.
G. Train clinical students to become referring veterinarians by consistently demonstrating respect for RDVMs, achieving uniformly high quality of patient services, and practicing excellent communications with RDVMs and clients.
H. Elevate the hospital’s electronic presence.
   i. Create and maintain a valuable, efficient, and dynamic website: Promote an individual service on the CVM website each month.
   ii. Enhance marketing by social media.
   iii. Produce excellent electronic and print media (e.g., brochures, flyers, etc.) under appropriate university guidelines.
I. Provide benefits for referring veterinarians (initiate referring veterinarian appreciation days or continue Friday afternoon CE for small groups of practitioners in the fall before weekends of home football games).
J. Engage the AU Employee Benefits Office on the AU campus to include pet-wellness plans administered through the Auburn University Veterinary Clinic.

Aim 2: Maintain transparency in hospital budgeting (income and costs at the service and administrative levels) and benchmark these figures against peer institutions.
THIS IS PRODUCTIVITY.
THIS IS VETMED.
Strategic Priority 4:
Create an Optimal Workplace

Vision: The college will support its employees by continually improving the work environment and by accommodating an individual’s need to establish a balance between professional productivity and personal responsibilities.
Goal 1. Streamline operations and remove obstacles to productivity.

Aim 1. Make the College of Veterinary Medicine a preferred place of employment by cultivating a college-wide spirit of teamwork.

A. Increase face-to-face time between employees and the college leadership.

B. Remove the sense of separation and promote group efforts that incorporate multiple units.

C. Increase personnel in response to expanding mission, but do not overly depend on temporary employees.

D. Promote intramural and extramural collaboration.

E. Cross-train employees for related job functions and rotate work responsibilities as feasible.

F. Develop an online directory of all employees.

G. Ensure appropriate access (e.g., keys, swipe cards) to work areas.

Aim 2. Enhance opportunities for faculty productivity:

A. Alleviate as much as possible the bureaucratic demands on faculty.

B. Improve efficiency of all processes.

C. Reward productivity (e.g., widespread implementation of scholarship incentive plan).

D. Eliminate barriers to teaching effectiveness, such as the unknowns of underlying student health concerns (but respect privacy laws).

E. Have sufficient staff and equipment to facilitate quality instruction.

F. Facilitate participation in self-improvement activities (fellowships, online courses, seminars, etc.).

Goal 2: Provide professional development opportunities for staff.

Aim 1. Offer existing employees an orientation to give them the same information as new employees.

Aim 2. Encourage and facilitate staff attendance at professional development courses offered by the Auburn University.