

DAIRY VETERINARY NEWSLETTER

January 2026

The Latest News on the Utah State University College of Veterinary Medicine

My recent request for some updates on the new - replacing the School of Veterinary Medicine that existed from 2012 to 2024 - USU College of Veterinary Medicine (CVM) for inclusion into this newsletter was answered promptly with quite a bit of current information about the college. This came from Dr. Kerry Rood, the CVM Associate Dean for Clinical Programs. Many of our readers know him as a former instructor when they came through the School of Veterinary Medicine program, and/or as a USU Extension Veterinarian for many years.

USU CVM Update by Kerry A. Rood (kerry.rood@usu.edu)

If you've been following the development of the Utah State University College of Veterinary Medicine, you already know we're building something exciting for the Intermountain West - one that reflects how veterinary medicine is actually practiced across our region: varied geography, diverse animal production systems, and clinics that are both medically complex and operationally lean.

This update is a "where we are now" snapshot - curriculum, building, accreditation, and the semi-distributive clinical teaching model - with a specific aim: keeping alumni and regional practitioners in the loop as we get closer to the clinical-year (fourth year) launch.

Competency-based curriculum

USU CVM is a competency-based education program. We are building the curriculum around clearly defined Program Learning Outcomes and Clinical Competencies (some of which came from UVMA membership polling) that serve as the backbone for instruction, assessment, and progression. The goal is straightforward: graduates who are ready to think, decide, communicate, and perform to a measurable standard, not simply graduates who have "completed the time."

For practitioners, the practical implication is this: when you eventually host a fourth year student, you should expect purposeful, structured learning objectives tied to observable skills and professional behaviors. Our goal is to make the student experience predictable and useful for clinics and mentors, including the reality of a busy day in veterinary practice.

The new Veterinary Medical Education Building: on time, on budget, and sized for the next phase

Good news regarding the USU Veterinary Medical Education Building is that construction is on schedule to support our larger class sizes, numbering 80 students, with the first class of that size entering in August 2026.



The new Veterinary Medical Education Building - recent construction photo

The new building capacity for fall 2026:

- Our first four-year class (41 students) is currently being educated on main campus in existing classrooms and labs
- In August 2026, both the incoming first-year (80 students) and returning second-year students will be in the new building
- That puts us at a combined student population of approximately 120 learners under one roof

Accreditation is on track, with the usual milestones

Our accreditation process with the AVMA Council on Education (COE) is on schedule, and we've received positive feedback on our plan to deliver the full curriculum.

We are currently designated as "provisionally accredited." That status is universal at this stage and reflects the reality that full accreditation cannot occur until we graduate our first class of veterinarians and meet the COE's key performance benchmarks, especially:

- student performance across clinical rotations
- outcomes on the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE)
- submission of reports and milestone documents to the COE every 6 months, and hosting comprehensive site visits every 2 years
- USU's next in-person COE site visit is scheduled for November 2026

Clinical fourth year:

The clinical year (fourth year) in our model is semi-distributive. In practical terms, that means most - though not all - clinical rotations will occur at affiliated practices and other partner sites rather than in a campus-based academic teaching hospital. That approach is aligned with how our region delivers veterinary services and how our graduates are likely to practice.

Our first class will begin their clinical year of training in May 2028. While that feels a bit out on the time horizon, we're using the time wisely, as that time will come quickly.



Hands-on learning is an important part of the curriculum

Summer simulations in 2026 and 2027: stress-testing the system before it matters most

USU CVM will simulate key components of the clinical year during summers 2026 and 2027 by placing a small number of students into select affiliated sites. The reason is to evaluate the processes and work out logistics so that by May 2028, we are executing a refined system that works as smoothly as possible when larger numbers of students and affiliated practices and partners are engaged.

Interested in hosting a student? Here's what it looks like:

If you or your clinic is interested in becoming an affiliated host site, please reach out to:

- Melisa Bishop: melisa.bishop@usu.edu
- Dr. Holly Clement: holly.clement@usu.edu

(NOTE: For any type or practice or veterinary activity, either one of the above can be contacted, DW)

A common question is: *“What does a typical day look like with a veterinary student?”*

Our aim is to send students who are meaningfully involved, progressively trusted, and coached within real clinical flow. In general, you can expect students to be engaged at varying levels of veterinary supervision in:

- case workups and daily decision-making
- participation in procedures and surgeries (as appropriate to setting and competence)
- client communication
- understanding the rhythm of clinic operations across the day/week cycle

Importantly, we recognize clinic reality: there will be slower periods. During those times, students will be expected to use “down time” appropriately working on structured curricular deliverables (case reports, case logs, required reflections/assignments) and managing professional communications.



College of Veterinary Medicine
UtahStateUniversity

5600 Old Main Hill
Logan UT 84322-5600

Compensation, student costs, and diagnostics support

Because there are real costs associated with hosting clinical-year students, USU CVM will provide \$1,250 in remuneration per student per week. Typical rotations are four weeks in length.

Students will receive a modest travel stipend, but it will not fully offset the cost of dispersed clinical experiences. Travel and lodging logistics and associated expenses are the student's responsibility, and the university will not coordinate housing.

That said, if your practice can offer "upsides" (for example, help locating affordable lodging, access to local housing options, or other practical supports), it can make your site more attractive to students and help us place learners where the caseload and mentorship are strongest.

To help students follow cases through with meaningful diagnostic closure, each student will have access to a diagnostic credit through the Utah Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (UVDL). There will be guardrails to ensure submissions are tied to high-impact learning opportunities and appropriate case selection, and we'll share more details as that process finalizes.

The next 2 years are going to be busy, exciting and pass quickly. Please let us know your feedback. We're building this program with input from the people who will ultimately work alongside our graduates.

Thanks again to Dr. Rood for the updates and information.

Please let us know your comments and suggestions for future topics. I can be reached at (435) 760-3731 (Cell), or David.Wilson@usu.edu.

David Wilson, DVM, Dairy Extension Veterinarian

"Utah State University is an affirmative action/equal opportunity institution."