Plan for Faculty Excellence through Diversity at the School of Veterinary Medicine

Penn’s stature as an eminent and innovative University rests on our conviction, combined with compelling evidence that excellence and diversity go hand in hand. The School of Veterinary Medicine (SVM) is eager to move decisively forward in building an ever more diverse and eminent faculty, and in fostering an inclusive and equitable community. Our Action Plan for Faculty Diversity and Excellence outlines three major goals; these goals will be addressed through the following initiatives that will help us recruit, retain, foster and mentor an ever more eminent and diverse faculty:

**Goal 1: To assess and support “diversity”**

A. Define metrics to assess diversity in the SVM student body, and in faculty within the four Departments and two tracks;

B. Establish sustainable leadership and commitment within SVM to oversee faculty recruitment, climate and retention. Integral to this are the appointments of a Diversity Search Officer/Faculty Affairs Liaison Officer, and Diversity Search Advisors (DSAs) for each track;

C. Institute commitment within the SVM for diversifying faculty by establishment of a centralized Office for Faculty Diversity that would oversee all initiatives outlined in the SVM Diversity Plan;

**Goal 2: To increase faculty diversity**

D. Develop outreach programs for students at all levels of education to inform them about careers in veterinary medicine. This should help build a pipeline to SVM, with hopes of changing the face of future professoriate;

E. Establish recruitment/hiring/retention plans;

F. Ensure a broad outreach and proactive faculty searches;

**Goal 3: To sustain faculty excellence and diversity**

G. Maximize efforts to provide effective mentoring to junior and more senior faculty and to promote mentoring programs;

H. Establish an inclusive and supportive climate by promoting opportunities that support faculty development, inclusion and retention.

These initiatives will require the energy and commitment of all faculty of the SVM. Faculty are being asked to assess what the needs for diversity are for each Department, and will help define Department-specific search strategies that would broaden the applicant pool. Enhancement of SVM climate will involve refining mentoring policies and promoting networking opportunities for faculty at all ranks and tracks. Finally, a broad outreach for students and faculty alone is likely to be ineffective without financial backing. In the current economic climate, it is becoming increasingly difficult for the School to recruit faculty when debt load is high and faculty salaries are lower than those offered in private practice. Incentives for faculty, including a program of educational debt repayment and opportunities for professional development are proposed to ensure faculty retention.