Summary Report
Unit Review for the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Calgary

Date of Site Visit: November 19-21, 2024

Names and Affiliations of Reviewers:

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Executive Summary/Overview:

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Calgary (UCVM) recently underwent a comprehensive review to assess its academic, operational, and strategic directions. This review comes at a time of significant change, including a planned expansion of class sizes, new organizational structures, and preparations for an accreditation site visit in 2026. The review team comprised experienced academic leaders who conducted interviews with faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders and evaluated UCVM's alignment with institutional priorities and external standards.

UCVM is recognized as a well-funded and high-performing academic unit, with a robust research program and strong relationships with strategic partners both internal and external to the University, such as the Cummings School of Medicine (CSM), the Alberta Veterinary Medical Association (ABVMA), and privately-owned veterinary clinics across the province. The unit demonstrates a commendable focus on community engagement, including partnerships with Indigenous communities and efforts to diversify its leadership. UCVM has developed an Indigenous engagement strategy that aligns with broader university goals, emphasizing cultural competency in veterinary education and fostering Indigenous participation in veterinary sciences.

Faculty and students have expressed satisfaction with the positive changes in administrative support, open communication, and resource availability. UCVM's approach to student engagement and the development of graduation competencies for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) programs reflect alignment with both internal and external competency frameworks.

The unit is undergoing significant change as it undergoes a class expansion and has adopted a new organizational structure in the last two years. Given these stressors, the overall culture and attitude within the unit is very positive. Within the new organization structure there were a few areas where certain members of the team feel markedly less supported compared to their positions under the prior departmental structure. The Review Team focused heavily on the impact of expansion and the change in organization structure during each session. Additionally, the Review Team made observations and will make recommendations based on international program accreditation standards for which the unit will be up for a comprehensive review and site visit in 2026.

Recommendation 1: Faculty Expectations
Develop a structured framework to define faculty roles, teaching assignments, and workload expectations.

Faculty Response:
- **UCVM's workload guidelines:** document was approved at UCVM's Faculty Council (12/03/2025). This document provides a structured framework and defines faculty roles, workload expectations and outcomes for faculty roles. It provides increased transparency regarding service loads and expectations. These guidelines will support our Associate Dean Faculty Affairs and Development (ADFAD) team in equitable teaching allocations with respect to each faculty member's Distribution of Effort (DOE). UCVM's Faculty Guidelines will be amended to include teaching expectations that align with research expectations.
- **Teaching assignments:** The assignment of teaching has transitioned to a central assignment process which will roll out later this year. The ADFAD team inherited teaching assignments in 2022-2023 and communicated that they would change the assignment structure from coordinator-led assignments to ADFADs led assignments for 2025-2026 in time to align with the new curriculum. We have put measures in place to assist with workload allocation while we await implementation of a UCalgary centralized management system. As a result, this year will be a mixture of manual and semi-automated approaches.
- **New faculty onboarding process:** We have developed a comprehensive faculty onboarding process that includes personalized one-on-one onboarding with a dedicated staff member, structured 30-and 90-day progress checks-ins, and ongoing follow-up meetings. This process ensures that faculty members receive clear guidance on institutional processes, procedures, available resources and professional development opportunities. Additionally, we have implemented a structured approach to scholarly activity, requiring faculty members and new hires to apply annually. These applications undergo a yearly review as part of the DOE evaluation. This process enables us to identify faculty members, particularly those in the teaching stream, who would benefit from enhanced mentorship support, further strengthening our commitment to faculty success and professional growth.
- **Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) service duties:** We are implementing a structured system for assigning Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) service duties, ensuring alignment with the streamlined process for lab instructors receiving equal credit. This initiative coincides with the upcoming increase in lab instructor credits and will take effect in the 2024-2025 academic year. Under the new workload guidelines, lab assignment credits will formally include OSCE examination responsibilities. To ensure clarity and transparency, assignment letters will specify exam details, including scheduled dates and times for midterms, finals and OSCE assessments.
- **Service assignment:** We are aware of service assignment concerns and have advocated for open calls for all committees and working groups in UCVM. We will work toward assignment of duties where possible in the current year following our faculty guidelines within the framework of the Collective Agreement.

Recommendation 2: Staff
Encourage collaboration among staff between the two campuses and amongst departments. Engage staff in upcoming changes where possible (class expansion and curriculum revision).

Faculty Response:
We have been fostering inter-campus collaboration by organizing in person events and encouraging people from both campuses to interact and get to know each other through working together on projects, in working groups and committees. The UCVM hosts a wide range of in person events, including social events, research focused and teaching focused events, and faculty and staff development events. We take great care to take turn between the campuses and encourage attendance by facilitating transport. We have also established a faculty wide newsletter that allows people to showcase and view the work of the different units and people on both locations.
- **Social events:** Our social calendar aims for a monthly in-person occasion for people on both campuses to get together. The social events include UCVM Awards Night, Winter Wonderland Celebrations, Spring has Sprung Faculty-Wide Luncheon, Welcome Back BBQ in September, Monthly Staff Get-Togethers, New Faculty and Staff Meet and Greets and the UCVM Graduation Banquet and Awards Ceremony.

- **Research events:** The research focused events include the weekly Work-in-Progress seminar series (featuring internal speakers), the monthly Comparative Biology and Animal Health seminar (with external speakers), as well as regular meetings and ad hoc seminars organized by the seven Research Groups through the Associate Dean Research (ADR) office. These events are delivered in-person, virtually, and in hybrid formats to maximize opportunities for collaboration across campuses. Participation is encouraged from research group members, trainees, and students from both campuses
- **Teaching events:** On the teaching side we have hosted several events to encourage faculty and staff development in the educational sphere, including a Learning Outcomes Workshop, Indigenizing Veterinary Education, Foundations of Course Design, and Self-Regulated Learning. Staff from both campuses have been integral members of the curriculum revision working groups during the initial consultation and broader planning sessions. As we transition into the logistics and implementation phase, staff will continue to play a critical role. Staff have been consulted regarding the expanded, revised, and emerging demands of the new curriculum. They were also invited to share their perspectives on how their roles align with these changes and to identify any additional expertise they believe the teams may require.
- **Staff and faculty development opportunities** that foster inter-campus collaborations are listed in section 5 below.
- **Informal gatherings:** To encourage informal gatherings on each campus and create collision points we are shortly installing professional coffee makers in the staff and student lounges at each campus.

Recommendation 3: Curriculum Revision
Develop a timeline (and update it as inevitable changes occur) for faculty to understand how the revisions will be implemented over time so they can understand the impact on their personal workload. Consider hiring/contracting instructional design/instructional technology personnel to support faculty through the curriculum revision. Engage staff who are impacted by the revision in the implementation planning, particularly in the areas of anatomy and clinical skills. Continue to develop a strategy to integrate specialists into curriculum delivery as sessional instructors for areas where it is challenging to maintain a full-time person. Use non-specialist DVMs strategically, particularly in delivery of clinical skills curriculum.

Faculty Response:
- **Curriculum revision timeline**: A timeline for the curriculum revision was created at the beginning of the curriculum revision process and has been shared at each of the monthly Curriculum fora and the dean's fora, at each Faculty Council meeting, in the UCVM newsletter (weekly), and on the Curriculum Revision Teams channel (living document). All members of the UCVM community have also been encouraged to meet with the Associate Dean Curriculum (ADC) team should they have any questions about the Curriculum Revision. We will engage with the faculty to elicit what other communication channels they may find useful.
- **Instructional design/instructional technology personnel**: During recruitment planning for the curriculum expansion an instructional design position was prioritized and is in the process of being posted. The intention is to have this position in place as soon as possible to support faculty, and faculty and staff were informed of this plan during the Curriculum fora, the monthly update on hiring at the dean's forum and at Faculty Council (March 2025).
- **Specialist hires:** Recruitment planning for the class expansion and curriculum revision has also included analysis and discussion of current and anticipated program gaps and needs, encompassing tenure-track faculty positions, temporary positions, joint appointments, and sessional positions. Where a full-time tenure track specialist may be difficult to recruit and maintain then a split appointment with UCVM and one of the specialty practices in our community has been successful. When content does not require a specialist, a hiring plan is underway to recruit more teaching focused non-specialist DVMs. The faculty is updated on hiring plans, current state of hires and completed hires through the monthly for a, Faculty Council meetings and the weekly newsletter.
- **Hiring of sessionals:** We have implemented a new process for identifying sessional hire to facilitate and support transition to the new curriculum.
- **Staff engagement:** Clinical skills and anatomy staff have been specifically engaged as outlined in the Recommendation 2 response.

Recommendation 4: Accreditation Site Visit Preparation
Strengthen curriculum mapping to track and report outcomes aligned with newly developed competencies. Engage faculty in quality control programs and clinical educator training to ensure readiness for the upcoming visits to clinical sites. Ensure that all faculty are aware of how research opportunities are made available to students.

Faculty Response:
- **Curriculum mapping:** Curriculum mapping and outcome blueprinting have been developed and are available to the faculty as living documents for each course. Faculty have been trained in this and are expected to regularly review and update their course outcomes as they design, deliver, and assess course content. This is under the supervision of the AD curriculum.
- **Quality control:** To support quality and consistency within our distributed model, a dedicated quality control position has been established within the Associate Dean, Clinical Affairs portfolio, this role also supports the work of our Distributed Veterinary Learning Community (DVLC) liaisons. As part of this ongoing initiative, clinical educator training modules have been developed and will be mandatory for all veterinarians involved in assessing students during core fourth-year rotations going forward.
- **Research opportunities:** Students are exposed to research during mandatory (VETM 506 Investigative Medicine and Science Communication course), elective (Investigative Medicine rotations), and extracurricular Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (SURE) opportunities. Faculty are advised of these opportunities via UCVM fora and the UCVM newsletter.

Recommendation 5: Faculty Development
Enhance support for early-career faculty through mentorship programs and professional development opportunities, particularly for faculty in the teaching track. Address challenges related to faculty promotions, particularly for those on teaching tracks.

Faculty Response:
- **Early career mentorship**: We have established an early-career mentorship community offering regular meetings, workshops, and mentoring events. Monthly workshops have also been offered on topics related to teaching and planning for the new curriculum.
- **Comprehensive mentorship:** we are currently in the process of developing a comprehensive mentorship program to support faculty throughout their career.
- **Further development funding support:** To further support professional growth, the Conference Attendance & Learning Fund (CALF), administered through the ADFAD Office, provides financial support for faculty to attend conferences and pursue training opportunities.
- **Research application support:** Our Internal Peer Review program is available to support Tri-Council and other major grant applications, helping to enhance proposal quality and improve funding success rates. We plan to increase awareness of this resource by broadening its promotion to ensure all faculty are able to benefit from it.
- **Tenure and promotion support:** The development of workload guidelines and clear assignment of duties should address any concerns by ensuring faculty can focus their efforts on tasks that support the growth of their academic portfolios. We are also collaborating with our Communications team to develop a centralized Faculty Affairs website, which will hold key documents related to tenure and promotion—a recognized and ongoing priority. We hold meetings and workshops to support our people in the application process.
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Recommendation 6: Administrative Support
Ensure that Associate Deans who support teaching and clinical faculty are familiar with the duties of teaching and clinical faculty to better inform the support and advocate for those faculty.

Faculty Response:
Regular meetings have been established between the AD Faculty Affairs, AD Reseach, and AD Curriculum teams to facilitate open communication regarding workload allocation, ensuring that any changes are clearly communicated, documented, and appropriately reflected in faculty responsibilities.

Recommendation 7: Operational Efficiency
Refine shared leadership models to balance administrative, research, and teaching responsibilities. Conduct an annual evaluation of Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) to ensure equitable resource distribution and workload, particularly in the area of teaching and clinical time.
Faculty Response:
- **Refine leadership model:** In addition to open communication channels and regular touchpoints, the leadership team is actively participating in training to strengthen leadership skills and improve the effectiveness of our shared leadership model. We recognise that a well-functioning shared leadership structure is critical not only for balancing administrative, research, clinical, and teaching responsibilities, but also for supporting long-term sustainability and succession planning. By involving early- and mid-career faculty in leadership opportunities, we aim to build capacity within the organization and foster a culture of shared responsibility and mentorship.
- **Annual evaluation of Full-Time Equivalents:** Annual evaluations of faculty workload, including teaching, research, clinical duties, and service, are already in place. These evaluations are being refined under the framework of the updated workload guidelines.

Recommendation 8: Infrastructure and Resources
Continue to invest in infrastructure upgrades, including research facilities, to support growth. Ensure adequate funding for clinical rotations and distributed learning sites to meet the demands of class expansion. This will be a focus of an AVMA COE site visit.

Faculty Response:
- **Infrastructure upgrades**: The new Veterinary Learning Centre (VLC) remains on schedule and on budget, and renovations to existing facilities are progressing as planned to meet the evolving needs of both faculty and students. These infrastructure investments represent a significant opportunity to strengthen UCVM's capacity to support the class expansion, faculty growth, and interdisciplinary collaboration. We are actively exploring ways to enhance support by increasing income (eg through philanthropy and industry partnerships) and optimize existing resources to ensure sustained excellence and innovation.
- **Support of Clinical rotations:** Fourth-year rotation sites are undergoing evaluation and assessment for both core and elective rotations as we prepare for the upcoming class expansion. These evaluations will inform decisions on resource allocation, site development, and training needs for clinical educators. Ensuring adequate funding and support for our partner sites is a top priority and we are planning on hiring two additional faculty to strengthen our liaison with our partner practices.

Recommendation 9: Student Experience
Consider establishing a centralized academic support system for DVM students. This will become important as the admission standards have changed and the class is expanding. Taken together, incoming students will likely have greater academic challenges than previous cohorts, which will require administrative support. Monitor the North American Veterinary Licensing Exam (NAVLE) outcomes closely and be prepared to provide more support for NAVLE preparation.

Faculty Response:
- **Academic support:** UCVM has partnered with the University of Calgary's central academic support services to pilot a collaborative initiative between UCVM and the Student Success Centre's *Thrive Priority Support Network*. This pilot is designed to provide early alerts and support to students experiencing academic challenges. As we anticipate increased academic diversity due to class expansion this centralized model will be critical for sustaining student success and well-being.
- **NAVLE support**: The UCVM's pass rate for the NAVLE has been between 98-100% since the inception of the faculty. We have developed tailored introductory NAVLE sessions for incoming fourth-year students. These sessions provide an overview of fourth-year programming and include practical guidance on NAVLE registration, study strategies, and processes for requesting academic accommodations. We recognize that as our student body grows, the need for NAVLE preparation resources and mentorship will also increase, and we are committed to expanding support to meet these needs**.**

- **Counseling services:** We have hired two experienced therapists to provide counseling services to our DVM students. They offer in-person therapy sessions twice a week during the students' independent study time, as well as a variety of evening and weekend hours to accommodate the needs of our 4th-year students.
- **Student support oversight**: In response to the evolving needs of our student body, we have also expanded our Student Experience team by adding a full-time Student Support Advisor, Academic and Wellness. This advisor will be a key resource for students, assisting them in navigating academic support, mental health resources, and other student services.

Recommendation 10: Research Integration with DVM program
Maintain opportunities for DVM students to engage in research through continued funding and programmatic integration.

Faculty Response:
- Opportunities for DVM student engagement in research remain a priority and are being maintained through both core and elective components of the curriculum. As noted in the response to Recommendation 4, research exposure is embedded in the core program to ensure all students gain foundational experience in scientific inquiry. In addition to this core exposure, funded elective opportunities are available for students to pursue faculty-mentored, student-led research projects.
- The new curriculum further strengthens research integration by offering DVM students opportunities to work directly in research labs. Programs such as SURE (Summer Undergraduate Research Experience) allow DVM and graduate students to collaborate, share training experiences, and present their work in joint forums.
- Regular contact points between DVM and graduate students have been established. Up to six graduate student Teaching Assistants (Tas) help to teach in the hands-on skills labs throughout years 1-3 of the DVM program. Graduate student TAs also support roughly half of our pre-clinical DVM courses and engage with student research projects. DVM students are also encouraged to participate in the Canadian Emerging Veterinary Scholars Symposium (CEVSS)—an annual event hosted at UCVM that brings together DVM and graduate students from all Canadian veterinary schools to present and discuss their research.

Recommendation 11: Student Exposure to Advanced Training
Consider developing combined degrees such as a DVM/Ph.D. or residency programs with a combined graduate degree. Develop at least one residency program (pathology may be easiest) to meet the new requirement of the AVMA COE that all students directly interact with residents during clinical training.

Faculty Response:
- **Combined degree program:** A combined degree program (DVM +MS/PhD) already exists: Leaders in Veterinary Medicine https://calendar.ucalgary.ca/pages/vXEYpoAjlSwsIFnwZqWJ
- **Graduate student and resident exposure:** DVM students regularly engage with graduate student Tas within their DVM courses. Additionally, clinical interns often serve as supplemental instructors in Clinical Skills laboratories. Currently UCVM has residents in Small Animal Surgery, Diagnostic Imaging, and Parasitology, with plans underway to expand residency opportunities across additional disciplines.

Recommendation 12: Indigenous Engagement
Continue incorporating Indigenous perspectives into the curriculum (e.g., cultural competency) and expand outreach programs to support Indigenous students' access to veterinary education. Provide stable funding to sustain these initiatives.

Faculty Response:
- **Indigenous Advisory Committee:** UCVM has also established an advisory committee of Elders, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous veterinarians, pre-veterinary students and other professional students to guide the implementation of the UCalgary Indigenous strategy within UCVM.
- **Incorporating Indigenous Perspectives:** The integration of Indigenous perspectives into the revised curriculum is being actively supported through dedicated grant funding for two Indigenous consultants. These consultants have delivered faculty-wide workshops on indigenizing the curriculum and have

provided one-on-one guidance to course coordinators, helping to embed Indigenous knowledge, perspectives, and cultural competency into course design and delivery.

- **Outreach Programs**: Initiatives are also in place to support Indigenous engagement beyond the classroom. These include activities on First Nations Reserves and community-based animal care rotations, which offer meaningful, service-oriented experiences for students while strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities. Fourth-year rotations in Indigenous communities are fully funded through the curriculum and will continue as a permanent offering.

Recommendation 13: Strategic Partnerships

Continue to leverage relationships with CSM and other partners to further enhance research productivity, generate alternative funding streams, and strengthen UCVM's position within the broader university and professional community.
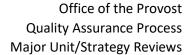
Faculty Response:

We will continue to engage in and further develop transdisciplinary research collaborations with other faculties across campus. This includes

- partnering in team grants and large-scale research initiatives, with collaborators within and outside the University of Calgary.
- fostering cross-faculty engagement by inviting faculty from other disciplines to participate in UCVM research groups. Joint events with CSM and other faculties are being held to support professional development and community-building among research trainees, including postdoctoral fellows and graduate students.
- welcoming cross-appointments of UCVM faculty with other faculties and we have currently cross-appointed faculty with the Cumming School of Medicine (CSM), Schulich School of Engineering and the Faculty of Kinesiology.
- intensifying the joint purchase and sharing of infrastructure and assets at Foothills, SpyHill and WA Ranches with CSM and other faculties
- facilitating cross-faculty collaboration in our grad students; for example within the VMS graduate program, there is a Stem Cell and Regenerative Medicine (SCRM) subdegree specialisation. This is a joint initiative with CSM, with the SCRM specialisation also offered in CSM graduate programs.
- supporting the enrollment of trainees supervised by UCVM faculty in graduate programs outside of UCVM when academically appropriate.

Recommendation 14: Governance and Communication

Improve governance structures by ensuring representative and transparent decision-making processes. Clearly define the organization structure for the AVMA COE. Consider having faculty council meetings in-person, at least occasionally, and enhancing the onboarding process for new faculty and staff.

Faculty Response:

- **Committee composition review:** we have been reviewing composition of committees to ensure equitable representation and have amended the Terms of References (ToRs) accordingly; including adding student representation to our FC and other committees
- **Publication of organisational chart:** To promote clarity and transparency in our governance, a comprehensive organizational structure chart is being developed and will be made publicly available on our website and communicated to our faculty through synchronous and asynchronous channels. This resource will clearly outline reporting relationships, roles, and responsibilities, enhancing internal understanding and fostering more effective and transparent communication across the faculty.
- **In person meetings:** As a multi-site faculty with many members regularly engaged in clinical duties or attending and presenting at conferences, virtual meetings have been essential in ensuring broad participation and accessibility—particularly for Faculty Council meetings and other governance-related forums. We have been polling the faculty and staff members of UCVM once a year to elicit their preference of in person, hybrid and online meetings and over the last three years the preference has been online. However, we recognize the value of in-person engagement in fostering community and

connection. As such, we will be polling faculty again to explore interest and feasibility around hosting select Faculty Council meetings or fora in person.

- **Structured on-boarding program:** To further strengthen communication and governance, we are in the process of enhancing onboarding for both faculty and staff. The onboarding program for new faculty is now coordinated through the ADFAD Office and is being updated to provide more comprehensive and timely information about academic expectations, governance structures, and available supports.