

Media Relations

State, UNH Announce Changes At The N.H. Veterinary Diagnostic Lab To Increase Revenue, Access To Advising For Students

April 4, 2012

DURHAM, N.H. -- The state commissioner of agriculture, the state veterinarian and the University of New Hampshire today announced a reorganization of the N.H. Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory staff that will allow for a renewed focus on increasing revenue and provide students in UNH's pre-vet and pre-med programs the advising and hands-on experience in the lab that make UNH's programs unique.

Under the reorganization, Robert Gibson, who has been with the lab for 18 years, will assume responsibility for business processes and overall management of the operation and staff. He will lead development and implementation of new and improved business practices, customer relations and service, marketing strategies, and related management activities. A part-time employee will be hired to assist with some of his current microbiological workload during the initial year, with this supplementary effort adjusted as appropriate during the second and subsequent years. This new staffing plan will support efforts to develop and implement the new business model for the lab, to include enhancing the revenue-generating potential of the veterinary pathologists and other lab staff.


"When one-time bridge funding was identified last month that allowed the lab to stay open through fiscal year 2013 we knew we still had a lot of work ahead of us to keep it viable beyond then," said Lorraine Stuart Merrill, state commissioner of agriculture. "We believe this reorganization is a significant step forward for the lab, its many clients, and the students at UNH."


The reorganization will allow Richard French, currently director of the lab as well as director of the university's pre-vet advising program, to focus his time as head pathologist on clinical veterinary diagnostics as well as his role as clinical teaching faculty and academic advisor for the university's pre-veterinary and biomedical science students.


"We appreciate Rob's willingness to take on this important new role at a critical time in the lab's history," said Jon Wraith, dean of UNH's College of Life Sciences and Agriculture. "He has our unanimous support and respect, and is highly esteemed by the lab employees and among COLSA students, faculty and staff. We also thank Dr. French for his dedicated efforts in managing the lab over the past three years. While substantial work remains in ensuring a strongly viable financial future for the lab, we are pleased to relay this important advance toward the long-term solution. The commissioner, state vet and I are more confident than ever in our abilities to secure a bright future for the lab and its stakeholders."


The NH Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory is a partnership among the state, the public, and the university, and is housed on the UNH campus. Its diagnostic services serve crucial animal and public health needs of the state, veterinary and livestock businesses and organization, and others. Having it located on campus allows the College of Life Sciences and Agriculture to integrate the lab's veterinarians and staff members into the university's pre-veterinary advising program.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

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