

CU responds to national veterinary shortage with state's first vet school

BY DAVID FERRARA
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CLEMSON — Clemson University is quickly moving on its multi-million-dollar plan to build the state's first veterinary school, with the first class set to enroll in about three years.

The new facilities are expected to total around 233,000 square feet for an estimated cost of \$285

million. Located just 10 minutes from campus, the facilities will include clinical skills teaching labs, lecture halls and classrooms, surgical and procedures training labs, office spaces and research labs.

The first class is expected to start in 2026 with 80 students, for a total of 320 veterinary students when fully enrolled, according

to a feasibility study prepared for the university.

A nationwide search for a founding dean of the college has begun, and some candidates are already in, provost Bob Jones said at the April meeting of Clemson's board of trustees. The university hopes to finish the search with a hire this summer.

"I think this is a hot commodity," he said.

"We're going to find a lot of interesting people wanting to come and be the founding dean to stand up a new college."

SIGNIFICANT FUNDING IN NEW 'PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE'

The South Carolina Senate last month unanimously approved \$87.5 million

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SCHOOL: \$285M cost projected

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in funding for the school. Pending final budget approval by the House, the funding is more than triple what Clemson requested on a reoccurring and one-time basis.

In its request, Clemson asked for a reoccurring \$2.5 million and one-time \$30 million to establish the school. Instead, the legislature allocated a reoccurring \$12.5 million and one-time \$75 million budget from the state's education and general budgets.

Out of the public service activities budget, the veterinary school was allocated another one-time amount of \$15 million.

FOLLOWING A DISTRIBUTED MODEL OF VETERINARY EDUCATION

Traditional veterinary schools center around a live training hospital and referral facility, the construction of which would increase the costs by several hundred million dollars. Instead, Clemson is following what's called a distributed model, where practitioners host and

mentor veterinary students in the field.

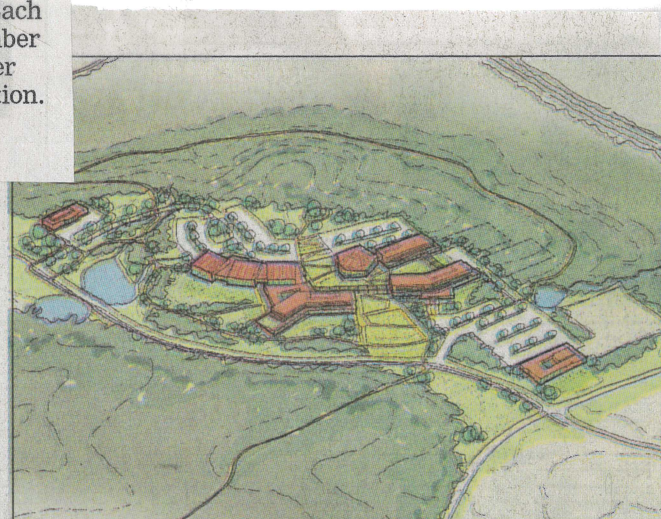
Throughout their time at Clemson, students will have on-site lecture and laboratory-based classes with occasional visits to animal research stations. Then, students' senior year will be centered around gaining clinical experience at different hubs across the state, including Greenville, Columbia, Charleston and North Augusta.

HIGH DEMAND FOR A VET SCHOOL

In the United States, there are only 33 veterinary colleges accredited by the American Veterinary Medical Association.

Under a cooperative program organized by the Southern Regional Education Board, South Carolina students studying veterinary medicine have been able to pay reduced tuition at out-of-state schools, including the University of Georgia. Each school pledges to admit a specific number of qualified students and provide either in-state tuition or reduced private tuition.

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SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

A sketch of the main Clemson University veterinary school building near the T. Ed Garrison Arena and across the street from the school's equine center. The facilities are on a hill, with a vehicle depot on the left, lecture halls, labs and office spaces within the main building and a teaching center to the right.