SAC members:

Attached is some information on the proposed UAF - CSU collaboration in Veterinary Medicine. I will have a brief information item today at SAC, and more extensive presentation/discussion at a subsequent meeting.

Susan
History:
- In November 2009 Regent Cowell asked Chancellor Rogers if Alaska had considered a veterinary college. The answer was no. The cost of a veterinary teaching hospital is prohibitive ($150 to $200 million plus $30 million in operating costs), which is why only two new veterinary colleges have been created in the USA in the past 30 years.
- UAF currently employs five veterinarians, along with several other faculty with experience in medical programs, and we initiated discussion about a possible veterinary and environmental health science graduate (non-professional) program.
- In January 2010 John Blake visited the College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences at Colorado State University. Dean Lance Perryman asked if UAF would consider an articulated 2+2 program with his College. (Dean Perryman used to teach in the WWAMI program.)
- The North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium (NAVMEC) has identified formation of 2+2 programs as an ideal mechanism to address the national shortage in veterinarians.
- In early 2010 a veterinary medical task force was formed at UAF and this group developed several different options for consideration and arranged for a needs assessment. Results were presented to the Board of Regents at their September 2010 meeting.

Why did CSU ask UAF to do this? Why is CSU an excellent potential partner?
- From prior experience CSU knows that UAF can train high quality students. Prior to 1995, when Alaska still funded the WICHE professional student exchange program, CSU regularly complimented us on how well prepared UAF students were for the rigors of a professional degree program.
- CSU cannot increase current enrollment above 140 students per year due to space constraints in the 1st and 2nd year of the DVM program; however, they can take more students in their teaching hospital during their 3rd and 4th year.
- Several CSU faculty have affiliate appointments with UAF, enabling them to sit on graduate committees.
- UAF has several research collaborative efforts already in place with CSU.
- This 2+2 program has already been approved at CSU at the College level but also has the full support of the CSU Provost and President.

Why do we need to act now?
- We must gain approval soon because of the accreditation process at CSU.
- Veterinary medical programs are accredited through the American Veterinary Medical Association and CSU is up for renewal. They have asked that we aim for a 2013 freshman start date, allowing them to announce the new 2+2 program to the AVMA in early 2012. For UAF to accommodate professional students in fall of 2013 we need to act now.
- Although we might be able to pursue this two years from now, CSU might seek another partner in the interim.

Proposal:
- The initial focus will be a 2+2 professional veterinary medical program with Colorado State University leading to a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree.
- In brief, students can take their 1st and 2nd year of the professional veterinary medical program at UAF and their 3rd and 4th year at the veterinary teaching hospital at CSU.
- Following consultation with our colleagues at CSU, the initial plan is to enroll 10 veterinary students in year 1 of the professional program starting in fall 2013. After that UAF will have 20 professional students enrolled in years 1 and 2 of the DVM program. The first Alaskans would graduate with a DVM in 2017.
- The proposal has similarities to the WWAMI medical program between UAA and the University of Washington.
- Our program will lead to a DVM granted from Colorado State University.
- As the UAF veterinary medical program develops we will consider developing M.S. and Ph.D. level graduate programs and a combined DVM/PhD program. These could be offered at minimal additional cost and would enhance research programs for both faculty and students. These degree offerings will be requested following the standard UAF and UA processes.

Why does Alaska need to train veterinarians?
- Alaska students interested in obtaining a degree in veterinary medicine currently face almost insurmountable barriers. First, they are placed in a pool of “out of state” applicants at U.S. veterinary schools (which are all at public
universities). Only a very few students from hundreds of “out of state” applicants are accepted per year. Secondly, the student must face “out of state” tuition costs, typically in the $50,000 per year range.

- Well-qualified undergraduates aiming for a DVM almost all leave Alaska for college elsewhere, to establish residency in a state with a vet school. UAF could give them the option to remain here; there are 3-4 such students, typically, for every one that is ultimately admitted.

- UAF conducted a Veterinary Needs Assessment in June-August 2010. There is a need recognized by the Alaska-based veterinarians as well as the general public, and strong support from both groups.

- Veterinary medicine offers a wide variety of career choices to those entering the profession. Veterinarians are the only professionals qualified to address the health and welfare of animals and to work at the interface of animal and human health. Veterinarians work closely with other professionals in biomedical sciences and this would be reflected in the construction of the proposed 2+2 program.

- Veterinarians are engaged in a broad spectrum of health disciplines such as clinical practice, teaching and research, regulatory medicine, public health, military service and wildlife medicine among many others. Veterinarians are involved in local, state and federal governments, working with legislators to shape laws that protect the health, welfare and well-being of animals and people.

- At present there is a nationwide shortage of veterinarians that extends to Alaska. This is particularly apparent in rural veterinary medicine, public health, food safety, and in biomedical research. At UAF we are uniquely positioned to address all of these areas. The primary reason we currently have so many veterinarians with advanced degrees and certifications is because of our biomedical research infrastructure building programs, such as the Alaska INBRE program.

Will this program produce too many veterinarians for Alaska?

- No. The Needs Assessment is quite clear about the difficulty Alaska veterinary clinics have in recruiting and retaining clinical veterinarians – and this is just for clinicians. Alaska is desperately underserved when it comes to addressing animal health and welfare, food safety, public health, emerging diseases, biomedical research, and environmental health.

- In the late 1980s to mid 1990s, when Alaska fully participated in the WICHE PSEP, we sent 5-7 students to a vet school every year. Alaska had no problem accommodating these vets and WICHE had approximately an 80% return rate. Today Alaska has a much greater need than 15-25 years ago.

One Health? What is that?

- The One Health Initiative is a concept that strives to break down barriers that prevent the advancement of medicine and public health. “One Health” fits perfectly with the needs of Alaska and the strategic efforts of the UA statewide biomedical planning group.

- From http://www.onehealthinitiative.com, “One Health” shall be achieved through:
  1) Joint educational efforts between human medical, veterinary medical schools, and schools of public health;
  2) Joint communication efforts in journals, at conferences, and via allied health networks;
  3) Joint efforts in clinical care through the assessment, treatment and prevention of cross-species disease transmission;
  4) Joint cross-species disease surveillance and control efforts in public health;
  5) Joint efforts in better understanding of cross-species disease transmission through comparative medicine research;
  6) Joint efforts in the development and evaluation of new diagnostic methods, medicines and vaccines for the prevention and control of diseases across species and;
  7) Joint efforts to inform and educate political leaders and the public sector through accurate media publications.

Benefits for research at UAF:

- Having a professional program at UAF shows a high level of credibility and commitment to biomedicine. Creating this new program also highlights a major emphasis of the INBRE and SNRP (Special Neuroscience Research Program) funding.

- Awards specific for DVMs or for translational needs that can come from a health professional program can now be targeted. DVMs seeking graduate degrees will be attracted to UAF and we can work with CSU to increase opportunities for students wishing to pursue a combined DVM/PhD program.

- The 2+2 program faculty and staff can also play a significant role with existing IAB faculty and the UAF Animal Resources Center to develop our animal research base. Specifically, we can focus on new and unique animal models of human disease that can be quite prominent in Alaska.