Members of the 25th graduating class of the School of Veterinary Medicine had cause for more jubilation than most other graduates this spring. Aside from the fact that a critical shortage of veterinarians virtually assures them all a good living, they saw the potential future value of their degrees increase considerably when Governor Bond signed a bill appropriating $6 million for the start of a new veterinary complex, and the Board of Curators approved a name change making the school a college.

All of this happened within 48 hours of graduation, and Dean Kenneth D. Weide undoubtedly spoke for both faculty and students in saying, "These events show the progress made by this college in reaching the status of excellence in education, research and service."

Weide said great strides have been made in the college and in the veterinary field as a whole since the first class graduated in 1950. And indeed they have. In those days the veterinarian was a doctor who went from farm to farm treating sick livestock, and occasionally an ailing dog, if his master valued him enough. Today the D.V.M. is part of a complex and varied profession dealing not only with a broad range of animal diseases, both prevention and treatment, but also playing a greater role in improving human health through research.

Dr. E. Allen Corley, associate dean for academic affairs, appraising trends in the profession today, says "Looking down the road, the whole field is becoming more sophisticated. Group practice and specialization are increasing in private practice. Schools, as a result, are providing residencies and internships along these lines.

"Industry is demanding board-certified people. Major drug companies, the FDA, animal food companies, all need veterinarians.

"There will, of course, be some one-man practices in Missouri because some areas of the state can support only one man, but the trend is in the other direction. Food-animal medicine is calling for more sophistication. The emphasis is on consulting, management and preventive medicine. Today's concept is herd health. There is little demand for treating individual animals."

Besides these changes, the number of practitioners working mainly with pets has exploded in the past decade. Dr. Emmett McCune, a member of the faculty since 1956, said, "I have just been amazed over the years at how ready, willing and desirous people are of paying for pet care." He said the trend began in the early 1950s and is perhaps at a peak, adding that there now are more horses in the state being used for pleasure-riding and show than there were in the days when farmers were working them in the fields.

Research being done on the Campus also reflects the sophistication of veterinary medicine today. Much of the work has important implications for human health, although that is not its primary purpose.

Research has been done, for instance, on possible contamination by metals in the food chains.
Dean Kenneth D. Weide shows an architect's drawing of the new veterinary complex, which will include the Veterinary Medical Building (large flat building on left) and the Diagnostic Laboratory (center right). A total of $6 million has been appropriated for the complex.
of man. That project studied the ways in which four trace metals — lead, copper, zinc and cadmium — move through air, soil, vegetation and dairy cattle, ultimately ending up in the meat and milk produced by cattle grazing on contaminated pastures.

Since 1972, Dr. Hans Adldinger has been doing research on viruses which cause tumors in animals. Several kinds of abnormal growths in humans are suspected of being caused by the kinds of viruses Adldinger is studying, including Hodgkin's Disease, Burkitt's lymphoma, cancer of the cervix and nasopharyngeal cancer.

In another project with profound implications for human health, Dr. Donald Blenden may be close to a breakthrough in the early diagnosis of rabies.

Studies which may shed light on hypertension in man are being done at the new Equine Center located on the University's Middlebush Farm, south of Columbia. Because laminitis, one of the diseases being studied, occurs concurrently with hypertension in horses, the research may help define hypertensive mechanisms in man.

Construction on the vet complex is scheduled to begin this fall. A large new building adjacent to the present clinic will house the college's administrative offices, the department of pathology, part of the department of anatomy-physiology, the library, educational resources center, office of continuing education, and expansion of the teaching hospital.

Besides the main building, there will be a second structure used for a diagnostic laboratory.

These buildings represent the first phase of a modern complex which will ultimately cost around $20 million, if the money can be found, and will put the entire College under one roof.

The college now consists of four buildings, two of which were considered temporary when the first class was graduated 25 years ago. One of these two buildings is an airplane hangar that was dismantled at a military base and re-assembled in 1948 just east of Connaway Hall. The other is also of World War II origin, and once served as a prisoner-of-war barracks. Connaway Hall, which houses the dean's and other administrative offices, is 64 years old. The clinic building was completed in 1961.

A staff member described the barracks building as "unbelievably bad, with termites and floors falling through." It will be the first to be torn down.

The airplane hangar building appears to be in relatively good condition, and the clinic might be adequate except that it was built to serve an enrollment of about 30 new students a year in the four-year program. Now there are 72 new students each year.

Among faculty members, there seems to be unanimous agreement that the $6 million is much needed, but various shades of cautious optimism exist as to the completion of the total complex.

McCune says, "There is no question that this will improve the status of the college. It will benefit the diagnostic, pathology, anatomy and clinic operations." He added, "I talked with a young man just today who's joining our staff. We couldn't have attracted him if we hadn't been able to promise him better facilities in the new building."

Whether or not the $6 million can be considered the first installment on the total of $20 million that the college needs is another matter. "I think the legislature will watch to see how well we use this first money," McCune said. "It will be up to us to prove we've spent it wisely, then hope to get more. At this point, we've assumed an obligation — now let's prove ourselves."

In explaining how facilities affect the faculty as well as the students, Corley said, "Our strength..."
right now lies in our faculty and our students, certainly not in our facilities. We have excellent faculty, excellent students. The problem will be to hold the faculty to educate the students. Competition for faculty people is keen. Besides the 18 schools already in existence, there are several new ones staffing now. They must draw from about 2,400 faculty members nationwide, so they are aggressively recruiting. When someone leaves our faculty to take a job at about $4,500 more than he's making here, what can you say? When a person is offered better facilities and better pay, you can't really expect him to stay purely out of loyalty.”

Dr. Corley said other schools like to get veterinary educators from Missouri because of the high quality of the faculty here. “We've been the trainers of deans and professors for other schools,” he said. “Some of these people are in very important key positions at places like Purdue and Texas A&M, to name a few. We develop them, but they're hired away.”

An ironic twist to that situation is the fact that these much-sought-after teachers are affiliated with a college that has never been fully accredited. Because of its inadequate facilities, the college has been on probation with the American Veterinary Medical Association since members of that organization's Council on Education first visited the campus in 1950. Faculty and administrators are hopeful that the buildings started this fall will help win full accreditation.

In the meantime, the college will continue doing that which has built its present reputation—turning out superior veterinarians. Because this is the only college of veterinary medicine in Missouri, faculty members say they feel a special responsibility for the quality of the graduates they turn out.

McCune commented that the importance of veterinary medicine education today can easily be seen even if one looks at the food animal industry; the raising of beef, dairy cattle, swine and poultry. In Missouri, these industries have a value of $100 million a year. This state leads the nation in feeder pig production and is second in feeder calf production, he said. These industries depend on veterinarians to help prevent serious losses.

The fact that two new colleges have recently been started and three others are in the planning stage may indicate a new awareness nationwide of the need for more veterinarians. The benefit to human medicine of some of the research being done now may also influence legislatures here and across the country to look more favorably on requests for funding.

The big obstacle in the way of turning out more practitioners will continue to be the fact that it costs a great deal of money to educate a D.V.M.—much more than to educate students in most other fields.

Despite the recognition of this continuing problem, there is an air of expectancy and eagerness to get on with the business of the next 25 years at the college. — Monica O'Reilly