

Working
to make
alternative
tracks the
status quo

ALTERNATIVES

IN VETERINARY MEDICAL EDUCATION



ISSUE VI, 1997

Association of Veterinarians for Animal Rights

Grants Awarded for Alternatives

The AVAR recently awarded two grants of \$2,500 each to develop alternatives in veterinary medical education, both going toward the development of computer-based alternative programs. An "alternative" was defined as an educational exercise that replaces one that harms or kills nonhuman animals with one that teaches the same or a similar lesson without inflicting harm or death.

One of the grants was awarded to a faculty member in the Department of Veterinary Clinical Sciences at Washington State University (WSU) for work on an anesthesiology computer laboratory. A commercially available computer application called GasMan®, developed by an anesthesiologist for human beings, illustrates the factors that influence movement of inhaled anesthetics from the breathing circuit to a patient's brain. It provides students hands-on experience with a myriad of scenarios of inhaled anesthetics, immediately displayed on the computer screen. The grant awarded by the AVAR is an extension of this anesthesiology computer laboratory. It will provide another opportunity for students to learn the principles and operation of mechanical ventilators and their effect on a patient's ventilatory status and will replace one of WSU's live-animal laboratories. Students can visualize these principles on a computer screen rather than on a live animal. This alternative will be implemented by

WSU in the 1997 summer alternative surgery course and in the laboratory portion of a second-year anesthesiology course. Once this application has been "beta tested," improvements will be incorporated into a final application and made available to other veterinary medical schools.

The other grant was awarded to two veterinary medical students at the University of California at Davis. These students will develop a computer program to replace the traditional first-year anatomy practical exams, which currently use dozens of animal carcasses

each quarter. Their program will include a mock practical computer study guide and a required computer exit exam to replace the final lab practical in the first-year fall canine locomotor anatomy class. Instructors in this class also use large animal dissections for anatomical comparison, so this material will be included in the database. Once this program is completed, it will be made available to other veterinary medical schools. Any profits from the sales of this computer program will be marked specifically for development of other alternatives to the harmful uses of nonhuman animals.

The AVAR received numerous other excellent grant proposals from students and faculty of other universities. It is apparent that there is a broad interest in developing alternatives to the harmful use of nonhuman animals in education, but more funding is needed. Subsequently, the AVAR plans to provide additional grants to promote alternatives and help improve the ethics of veterinary medical training.

Inside this issue

Grants Awarded for Alternatives.....	1
Accent on an Alternative.....	2
Spotlight on a School: Mississippi State University.....	4
University Update.....	5
After Alternatives.....	6

Institute for Animal Welfare.....	6
PCRM Update.....	6
Alternative Resources Available.....	7
Comparison of Alternatives Offered by Veterinary Schools.....	8