

Banfield Partners with Mexican Veterinary School to Offer Clinical Training Program for Students

Veterinary students at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City are receiving more hands-on clinical training while providing beneficial medical services to community animals thanks to a new partnership between the school and Banfield, The Pet Hospital.

Banfield opened a 15,000-square-foot teaching hospital on the UNAM College of Veterinary Medicine campus in Mexico City in February 2005, its first such teaching hospital outside the United States. Three full-time veterinarians work at the Banfield hospital and also serve part-time on the veterinary faculty at UNAM's College of Veterinary Medicine.

Jeff Brant, DVM, MBA, president of Banfield International, said the teaching hospital provides three new clinical training opportunities for veterinary students during their 5 1/2-year program. There are about 2,500 veterinary students at UNAM each year, and approximately 400 of these students rotate through the Banfield teaching hospital annually.

During the second year of training, students spend two weeks at the Banfield hospital learning clinical procedures, such as how to restrain an animal, how to set a catheter, how to draw blood, and how to take radiographs. The students first practice on Banfield's Web-based learning center, then observe the doctors and more senior students performing the procedures and finally perform the procedure under close supervision.

During the fifth year, the students return to the hospital for a clinical course during which they spend seven weeks essentially as a "doctor-in-training." Dr. Brant said this rotation is similar to the small animal rotations at U.S. veterinary schools. The students work directly with one of the doctors at the Banfield hospital, performing client exams, diagnosing and determining treatment, administering anesthesia, and assisting with sterilization surgeries and other procedures. If the doctors feel comfortable, the students may even take the lead on surgical procedures toward the end of this rotation.

A third opportunity to work at the Banfield clinic is also provided to some of the most qualified veterinary students during their fifth year. These students are able to complete a required 21-week course in practice experience at the Banfield hospital, which is essentially another doctor-in-training experience. Dr. Brant said the animals treated at the Banfield teaching hospital are all companion animals of families in the community.

is remodeling its existing teaching hospital into a specialty hospital to provide advanced medical services for animals referred from the Banfield teaching hospital or from local veterinarians.

Dr. Brant said Banfield considers its teaching hospital at UNAM as a model and is looking at other opportunities to partner with veterinary schools in Latin America and Europe. Banfield already works with several U.S. veterinary schools



The Banfield teaching hospital at National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).

Photo courtesy of Banfield, the Pet Hospital.

Dr. Francisco Trigo Tavera, dean of UNAM's College of Veterinary Medicine, said the college has always operated a small teaching hospital where students come into contact with clinical cases. For this reason, the school does not purchase animals to be used for clinical education. However, the new Banfield Teaching Hospital, which operates in concert with the existing teaching hospital, greatly increases the caseload capacity of the hospital systems and provides students with more opportunities to learn and to develop their clinical skills. "Our students will also benefit from their exposure to the science-based medicine that is constantly developed at Banfield, the Pet Hospital," said Dr. Trigo Tavera. UNAM

to provide clinical training opportunities for students, most closely through the campus wellness clinic at Western University of Health Sciences in Southern California.

Dr. Brant sees the new teaching hospital in Mexico City as a win-win situation because the students get hands-on clinical training, and the animals receive better medical care than they might normally receive in Mexico. "We're committed to giving students a great clinical experience and providing quality medical care to the animals," said Brant. "This benefits everyone. It benefits the students, it benefits the pets, and it certainly benefits society."