Past president of the CVMA George Bishop was selected as the first veterinarian in private practice to serve on the School of Veterinary Medicine Admissions Committee. He and five faculty members selected the class of 2004.

Dr. Bishop says, “I was honored to be a member of the committee and was impressed with the process. The committee members are dedicated to being thorough and fair to each and every applicant. We reviewed every aspect of the applicant's academic and veterinary experience to make a fair evaluation.

The committee was also very favorably impressed with Dr. Bishop, who worked tirelessly, providing many useful insights during both the interview and deliberation process, says the 1999-2000 Admissions Committee chair Jim Jones. “Service on the committee is a huge time commitment,” says Dr. Jones. “George Bishop was extremely industrious and very careful. He's widely experienced in the profession and is a realist. He's the kind of person you'd like to have on the committee every year.”

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Robert Hansen, associate dean for student programs says, “The perspective of someone out in the field who is familiar with the business side of veterinary practice and interaction with clients is valuable, as 80 percent of our DVM graduates enter private practice. We appreciate Dr. Bishop's service knowing that it took away from his busy practice and required adjusting his employee schedules.”

Dr. Bishop read and took notes on a few hundred applications, each of which required about half an hour to evaluate. Beginning with an orientation day in November, he spent 14 days at UC Davis, 13 of which were during the month of March while interviews were conducted. He actually drove back and forth on interview days between his practice in Carmel and UC Davis. He says, “It may have hurt my practice a bit, but it's all recoverable. Everyone including my clients was very supportive. To me it's an extremely important step for our profession to have those of us in the field involved in the admissions process. I'm dedicated to the process, and would serve on the committee again.”

Dr. Bishop wants to emphasize how seriously the Admissions Committee considers the letters of recommendation. He says, “It's a good idea to first interview a person who asks you to write a letter. It's important to be very specific in what you say about the candidate, both in terms of what is good and what might need improvement.

“In looking at the applications,” he says, “I was especially concerned with each applicant's history, veterinary experiences and letters of recommendation—his or her understanding of the profession and dedication to a veterinary career. An applicant whose academic levels might not be at the very top may have demonstrated great dedication and ability through many years of practical experience. There are many people who, rather than enter fields of academics or research after earning their DVM degree, will make awfully good practitioners.”

By far the most enjoyable part of the process was interviewing applicants, says Dr. Bishop. “It was an opportunity to meet the applicants one-on-one, ask thought-provoking questions and see how their minds work.”

“Many of the interviewees commented that they were very comfortable having a practitioner on the interview panel,” says Yasmin Williams, director of admissions in the Office of Student Programs, “they thought it was a great idea.”

Private Veterinary Practitioner Is Asset to School Admissions Process

The Admissions Committee: Selecting Future Veterinarians

Input from the practicing veterinary community is important in selecting future veterinarians.

The Admissions Committee is made up of six members—five are UC Davis faculty members who serve for two years, and the sixth is invited each year from the group of practitioners who have served previously on the Admissions Advisory Committee. (The advisory committee is a group of 10–12 practitioners, recommended each year by the school and the CVMA, who are invited to provide input to the Admissions Committee.)

Practitioners who participate in the admissions process help to build a broader understanding of the criteria for admission to the School of Veterinary Medicine—standard of academic achievement, quality of letters of recommendation, quality and quantity of animal experience and interview performance.

For more information about academic preparation, selection criteria, admission statistics or the professional curriculum, see A Guide for Prospective Students, available online (http://www.vetmed.ucdavis.edu/admission/admission.html).