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Dear Colleagues,

I write to request your service on a working group that will explore the need for a central facility at UC Davis that acts as a recharge-based storehouse for consumable items used in campus research programs. Over the history of the campus, the challenge of maintaining ready access to consumables has been addressed through individual lab storage, departmental storerooms, and college or school-level storehouses. Most recently, this need has been met for many at UC Davis through the VMCS, or Vet Med Central Services.

Unfortunately, over recent years this facility, while providing excellent service to campus researchers, has operated with a significant and chronic budget deficit that has been covered by the School of Veterinary Medicine. It is not reasonable to expect the SOVM to continue to subsidize this service for the entire campus, and the VMCS is currently scheduled to cease operations in June.

The significant concern that the scheduled closure of this facility has engendered among campus researchers clearly demonstrates the desire of many for a convenient on-campus source for commonly used consumables, and although individuals differ regarding which aspect of the service they find most critical (convenience, ability to buy just one of something, price, etc.), most are in agreement that this service significantly supports their research productivity.

I ask the work group to include among their deliberations several topics:

1. If the campus uses a central approach, what are the most efficient and cost-effective ways of delivering the services and products that should be offered?
2. Given that the current facility operates at an unacceptable deficit, what are the best strategies to create a financially sustainable operation?
3. Given that the current location in Haring Hall is in a building that is below current seismic standards and slated for eventual renovation or demolition, what are the alternatives for offering this service on campus?
4. Are there alternative strategies that would meet the same needs as a storehouse in a more economical manner?

I ask that the work group begin to meet as soon as possible, with a goal of making recommendations that can be considered for implementation in a time and manner that minimizes insofar as possible the negative impacts of the VMCS closure. The group should keep in mind during their deliberations that under the current campus budget circumstance, any solution requiring significant central campus financial contributions will likely come at the cost of reducing some other campus investment, and should consider at all times the most effective use of campus resources to support our research mission.

Thank you in advance for your contributions to this working group. A response is only necessary if you are unable to serve.

Sincerely,



Ralph J. Hexter
Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor

c: Interim Dean Berglund
 Interim Vice Chancellor Carter
 Dean Dillard
 Dean Lairmore
 Vice Chancellor Ratliff
 Dean Spiller
 Dean Winey