



The Veterinary Medicine Interview

Up to 300 students may be interviewed, on one day, for admission to the University of Illinois College of Veterinary Medicine. Interview teams are comprised of one veterinarian, one CVM faculty member, and one 3rd or 4th year CVM student. Each interview is twenty to thirty minutes long.

A behavior-based interview style is utilized. Success in this style of interview is dependent on being aware of your personal life skills (interpersonal communication style, decision making approach, problem solving ability, leadership skills, innovative thinking etc.) and how you have applied them successfully to various experiences.

When you respond to this kind of interview question, we encourage you to:

1. **Examine** the problem/situation you are given.
2. Describe the **action** you would take or took in a similar past situation.
3. Predict the **results** of such action or share the outcome of the similar action in your past.

Sample behavior-based interview question:

When was the last time you solved a difficult problem with classmates or friends? What was the situation? How did you involve yourself in solving the problem?

Sample answer:

(Remember to first **examine** the question well and prepare to respond to all three parts of the question.)

Action: A club I belonged to in undergraduate school was invited to a leadership gathering in another state. We received money to pay travel for three students, but there were six officers of the club. All six wanted to go...and go for free. It created a real problem. Everyone agreed the President should go for free. That left funds for two more people and five people who wanted the dollars. There were some harsh words and strong feelings about what should happen. I was the treasurer of the group and, therefore, responsible for money coming in and going

out of the club. The officers wanted me to decide who would get the travel funds. I decided the club membership should vote about this issue because the funds of the club belonged to all members.

I presented a proposal to the membership that all five remaining officers could go, if we equally divided the remaining funds and the officers paid the extra dollars needed out of their own pocket. If someone felt they could not afford to pay the extra dollars, they could take a short term loan from our treasury that had to be paid back, interest free, by the end of the academic year or not take the trip. If anyone decided not to go on the trip, the dollars would be re-divided among those who would go. A majority of the membership agreed this is how the travel funds should be distributed.

I found this a very difficult proposal to make because the officers were my friends as well as classmates. I also knew some of them would really use the information from the gathering to the great betterment of the group, and some of them would just go for the fun of a trip. But I was trusted with responsibility for the treasury of the group. I made every effort to come up with a proposal that would be fair to everyone.

Results: Not every officer was happy with the vote or with me, but they all had to admit it probably was a fair way to use the money. In the end only two other people actually went to the gathering and so all three went free. I didn't lose any friends in the experience and I had a great time at the gathering.

This question would give the interviewers insight into an interviewee's ability to work with groups of people, utilize good problem solving skills and be a strong decision maker.

With behavior-based questions you are expected to give more detailed descriptions of your probable action in the situation/problem posed. They can never be completely answered with a simple sentence or two. These kinds of questions require you to do some really detailed thinking under pressure. It would be expected you might take a minute or two to frame your thoughts and answer. It is acceptable during such a pause to break eye contact and stare at the ceiling or a corner of the room in silence. Don't get stressed over the silence. **It is important to do the thinking necessary to answer completely and effectively.**

So, you CAN prepare for this kind of interview...think about who you are in terms of initiative, drive, achievement, conflict management, leadership, creativity, decision making, problem solving and you will be able to provide strong answers to the questions.