

# Commission for a Diverse, Equitable and Inclusive Veterinary Profession

## Strategic Recommendations

Approved by the commission: Oct. 28, 2021

Short-term – Planned launch in 2021-2022

Medium-term – Planned launch in 2022-2023

Long-term – Planned launch in 2023-2025

Note: many of the activities listed below require ongoing work and may overlap short-, medium-, and long-term periods. The Commission will refine the scope and exact nature of the activities, as well as periodically assess progress and adjust this plan as necessary in future years. The organizations associated with the Commission recognize and appreciate the collaborative nature of these activities and the value derived from involving veterinary associations, colleges, industry, and others.

### 1. Short-term activities (launch in 2021-22)

#### Primary and secondary school:

Promote and expand awareness among diverse primary and secondary school students about the career options and opportunities in the veterinary profession. Elevate the profile of veterinary medicine as a STEM career.

- Identify and evaluate those offering pipeline programs as potential partners the Commission can leverage, promote, and support. Examples include but are not limited to League of VetaHumanz, Pawsibilities, This is How We Role, National Math and Science Initiative, When I Grow Up, Kids Vet Club/Junior Vet Academy, Vet Start (University of Florida), Boys & Girls Clubs of America, FFA, 4-H, Smithsonian Institution, and 5Network Mentoring Program.

#### Veterinary school:

- Collaborate with AAVMC in developing additional guidance to colleges of veterinary medicine on creating a DEI strategic plan, including metrics, oversight, coordination at the university level, creating a brave space for DEI issues and discussions, implicit bias and microaggression training, promotion of program in local organizations, schools, or groups that serve marginalized and underrepresented communities, and promotion of external DEI courses within the institution.

#### Early career:

- Gather feedback from this demographic subset of the profession to develop recommendations in the following priority areas: safety, communication, and employer of choice concept. [Note that a working group has developed a list of activities to be considered within each of those priority areas.] Conduct focus groups and leverage early career stakeholder groups such as the AVMA Early Career Development Committee and its online community.

### **Mid/advanced career:**

Encourage and support mid/advanced career veterinary professionals to serve as active, educated DEI ambassadors. Create or amplify opportunities to promote and practice DEI in workplaces and other settings within veterinary medicine, including state/allied/local and other VMAs.

- Identify self-assessment tools veterinary professionals can use to deepen understanding of DEI concepts.
- Identify and highlight educational and training resources to build DEI competencies for veterinary professionals.
- Create profession-wide visibility for DEI assessment tools and training resources, accompanied by messaging from key opinion leaders.
- Highlight resources focused on building healthy workplace cultures that advance DEI.

## **2. Medium term activities (launch in 2022-23)**

### **Primary and secondary school:**

- Develop model for pilot pipeline programs for state and local communities to distribute to state and local VMAs.
- Create or identify outreach resources for veterinarians and schools such as toolkits and other materials.

### **Undergraduate/pre-professional:**

Expand awareness of the options and opportunities for those underrepresented in the veterinary profession. Provide information and resources regarding recommended courses of study, experiences, professional school application and financial preparation that are appropriate for age and educational level.

- Explore support and expansion of current programs working to provide additional opportunities and training for high school and undergraduate students in populations underrepresented in the veterinary professions (e.g. Purdue and NC State).
  - Consider regionalizing selected current successful programs.
  - Engage VMAE and state/local/allied VMAs to broaden experiential and mentorship opportunities for undergraduate and preprofessional students.
- Build veterinary profession awareness campaign that targets undergraduate students to be piloted and rolled out with identified minority-serving institutions and other organizations, e.g. MANNRS, etc.

### **Veterinary school:**

- Collaborate with AAVMC in developing additional guidance to colleges of veterinary medicine on how to measure success of their DEI programs.

#### **Mid/advanced career:**

Build awareness and help reduce the barriers to advancement for individuals of marginalized and underrepresented groups in employment, service, and leadership within veterinary medicine.

- Provide a safe platform through which individuals from marginalized and underrepresented groups can share observations and experiences that advance understanding of real and perceived barriers.
- Develop a summary narrative of conversations about barriers with actionable steps that can be shared broadly throughout veterinary medicine.
- Encourage individuals and organizations to undertake actionable steps defined in the summary narrative to reduce real and perceived barriers to employment, service, and leadership.
- Encourage veterinary organizations to develop and make visible clear pathways into employment, leadership, and service positions.
- Identify active ways to recruit underrepresented individuals into service and leadership opportunities.

### **3. Long term activities (launch in 2023-25)**

#### **Primary and secondary school:**

- Identify additional potential partners, such as pre-K/day care establishments, school superintendents, and guidance counselors.

#### **Veterinary school:**

- Collaborate with AAVMC in developing additional guidance to colleges of veterinary medicine on creating a permanent DEI position, creating an evidence-based mentor program for underrepresented students and faculty, and utilizing the Competency-Based Veterinary Education (CBVE) framework to incorporate DEI content in the professional program.

#### **Mid/advanced career:**

Use personal circles of influence to encourage others to become engaged and impactful in advancing DEI.

- Create, utilize, and promote materials and toolkits that reflect a deeper understanding of barriers and more effectively create awareness of opportunities in veterinary medicine for individuals from marginalized and underrepresented groups. Such resources will encourage peer-to-peer connections that foster two-way exchanges of lived experience and becoming an active ally to underrepresented populations in the profession.