

DEFINITION OF DIVERSITY

The concept of diversity encompasses respect for and appreciation of differences and a state of being valued, respected and supported. It is the recognition and understanding of individual difference and uniqueness. It also involves the concept of recognizing the value and strength of diversity in a team or group. Our collective understanding of diversity is framed by many factors including race, ethnicity, gender, historical and political eras and dynamics, demographic trends and projections (i.e., growing racial and ethnic diversity), racial and ethnic-based health disparities, substantial under-representation of expanding demographic groups in the health professions and minority discrimination.

Diversity Definition

Increasing diversity in the health professions also requires recognition of many dimensions, including, but not limited to gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, cultural background, language, cognitive style, nationality, age, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political beliefs, and other forms of differences, both visible and invisible. In defining diversity, it is also incumbent to acknowledge the concept of intersectionality; no single dimension of diversity exists in isolation. We acknowledge that each individual is a reflection of multiple diversity dimensions.

URVM Definition

Historically, AAVMC has identified and recognized the presence of specific historically underrepresented populations in veterinary medicine (URVM) whose advancement in the veterinary medical profession has been disproportionately impacted due to legal, cultural, or social climate impediments in the United States. The specific dimensions are: gender, race, ethnicity (African Americans, Asian Americans, American Indians, Native Alaskans and Hawaiians, Hispanics), and geographic, socioeconomic, and educational disadvantage.

We recognize that internationally, there may be broad similarities in historically marginalized populations, such as indigenous and/or First Nations peoples; however, there may also be continental and country specific differences in the characterization of historically underrepresented populations outside of the United States.

The benefits of diversity are seen in our desire to meaningfully explore these areas of difference, as well as our areas of commonality in a manner that promotes self-awareness and confronts conscious and unconscious bias in a safe, positive, and inclusive manner.

Jurisdiction:	Diversity Committee	Date of Last Review:	February 2, 2017
Approved by:	Board of Directors	Date Last Amended:	
Date Approved:	February 2, 2017	Date of Next Review:	2022
Historical References:	On February 2, 2017 the Board of Directors approved replacing the "Definition of Underrepresented in Veterinary Medicine" position statement with this "Definition of Diversity" position statement.		