



Understanding the North American Veterinary Educational Consortium (NAVMEC)

The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) promotes excellence in academic veterinary medicine to prepare the veterinary workforce with the knowledge and skill required to meet societal needs.

We take seriously our mandate to prepare veterinary students for long lasting and meaningful careers in veterinary medicine. Graduates of veterinary schools must have a well rounded foundation that prepares them to protect animal health, relieve animal suffering, conserve animal resources, promote public health, and advance medical knowledge.

In looking to the future of veterinary medical education we launched NAVMEC in 2009, because the demands on veterinarians and veterinary medical education have changed considerably since the last comprehensive review.

NAVMEC seeks to:

- bring over 100 stakeholder and beneficiaries of veterinary medical education and experts from within the profession together to discuss what is meant by and needed to meet societies needs from the veterinary community. This represents a great challenge because our profession is so diverse with many fields of expertise, and a wide range of responsibilities to society;
- join together the best minds and experts in academic veterinary medical education to identify and share a range of educational models that would achieve the educational goals identified;
- explore the relationship between education, accreditation, and licensure as we ensure societal needs are met; and
- from these discussions, develop a plan for the future.

Here's what the veterinary community should understand about NAVMEC:

- 1) NAVMEC is about building consensus on what will make an outstanding education that produces excellent future veterinarians to meet societal need. NAVMEC is not about building consensus on issues within veterinary medicine.**

That's why over 360 different organizations were invited to be involved in NAVMEC. We sent invitations to organizations covering as wide a range as realistically possible, at least attempting to have the major points of view represented. The groups range from our AAVMC member institutions, AVMA, licensure groups, state veterinary medical associations, private industry groups,

laboratory animal science groups, animal welfare and activist groups, relevant publishing groups, and various other interested organizations and individuals.

2) Our ability to successfully educate the next generation of veterinarians depends on our openness to listen to the breadth of views reflected in society and our profession. Education should never be about closing our minds to views that differ from our own.

The next generation will need to have a strong enough foundation to effectively address commonly found, divergent positions held by society and within the profession, so that they will have a basis for their own point of view when confronted by various positions, including those that differ from his or her own views.

Good education comes from the inclusion of as many diverse points of view as possible. Students will eventually exit veterinary school and enter a world filled with divergent opinions and expectations on all types of issues. In addition to our goal of providing students with a foundation for providing quality care and services, is to provide a foundation that will inform the positions they will take on the controversial issues of the future.

To include a range of views with regard to meeting societal need, over 360 organizations representing all perspectives of different stakeholders of veterinary medical education and groups within the profession were invited to participate in the discussions.

The veterinarian in downtown Boston must have an appreciation for the vital role of veterinarians providing best food production practices in the Midwest. Similarly, veterinarians in rural Iowa should appreciate the issues veterinarians in highly urban areas will confront through their clientele often influenced by animal rights and activist organizations. We believe the best way to identify what education is needed to meet this need is to begin with a discussion among those holding different perspectives and points of view, within our profession and other stakeholders of veterinary medical education on the educational needs for tomorrow's veterinarians.

3) We sought as many points of view to participate in discussions as reasonably possible and we invited everyone to contribute to funding the initiative, if they were able, so that the product would be owned by stakeholders across the profession.

The over 360 groups that were invited to participate in discussions were also invited to contribute to the initiative if they could afford to. Participation in discussions was guaranteed irrespective of any financial contribution.

- 4) Participation in discussions and sharing of views is just that, and is not equivalent to agreement or adoption of any particular view in the final report. Well respected, established leaders in AAVMC, AVMA, and licensure groups will make the final decisions concerning NAVMEC policies, procedures, and product content.**

AAVMC is providing the leadership for this initiative. Governance of the Consortium involves AAVMC leadership and a soon to be named NAVMEC Board of Directors. The AAVMC Executive Committee (current AAVMC President, President-Elect, and Immediate Past President), on behalf of the AAVMC Board of Directors, will appoint members to the NAVMEC Board of Directors and will make final decisions concerning NAVMEC policies, procedures, and content of products.

A NAVMEC Board of Directors will be composed of members representing education (AAVMC representatives), accreditation (AVMA), and licensing (licensure groups) arms of veterinary medical education. The NAVMEC Board of Directors will work closely with the NAVMEC Project Manager and develop recommendations to the AAVMC Board of Directors concerning NAVMEC governance policies, criteria and procedures of the consortium, including admitting new NAVMEC participants and co-sponsors, and drafting the final “national report” to be recommended to the AAVMC Board of Directors.

The project manager, Dr. Mary Beth Leininger, is well known and respected among the veterinary profession. Her responsibilities include implementing the direction of the NAVMEC Board of Directors and development of the final “national report”.

About AAVMC

AAVMC’s mission is to provide leadership for and promote excellence in academic veterinary medicine to prepare the veterinary workforce with the scientific knowledge and skills required to meet societal needs through the protection of animal health, the relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge.

AAVMC pursues its mission by providing leadership in advocating on behalf of academic veterinary medicine, serving as a catalyst and convener on issues of importance to academic veterinary medicine, providing information, knowledge, and solutions to support members’ work, and building on global partnerships and coalitions to advance our collective goals.