

## 2021 Board Chair Speech

Dr. Arce and members of the House—Since your last session in January 2021, the Board of Directors has met in-person twice and has held 5 video conference calls. The minutes from those meetings have been made available to the House throughout the year at AVMA Connections. The Board of Directors completed its last meeting of the 2020-2021 Association year on July 27, and those minutes will also be available at AVMA Connections once they've been approved.

Today I would like to provide an update on Resolution 2, which was proposed at the 2021 winter session. As a quick refresher, this resolution proposed an additional dues discount for recent graduates in addition to the 50% discount this important group of members currently receives.

At that time, the AVMA had just concluded comprehensive research on recent graduate needs. Additionally, we reached out and heard directly from our recent grads and our SAVMA representatives. Their perspective was very clear: recent graduates do not MOST value further discounts. They continue to be highly satisfied with the AVMA, and they prefer additional benefits and programming that support them during the early part of their career journey.

Once the resolution was referred back to the Board and ultimately to the BFRC and SMC, staff from multiple departments worked together to enhance AVMA's member retention and acquisition strategy and continues to strengthen the benefits to both students and recent graduates.

To better ensure we understand the specific needs of these two groups, many members of staff evaluated existing and recent market research to build an even deeper base of insights on each group. This was a truly deep dive and produced actionable insights for exploration of program development, which includes understanding these groups' perspectives on the important topic of diversity, equity and inclusion. Next, staff worked to identify clear goals for each group.

- For students, our goal is to work supportively and collaboratively with SAVMA leadership to encourage participation in SAVMA, which ultimately benefits both organizations. It helps SAVMA and also builds a robust pipeline of AVMA members.
- For recent graduates, the goal is to further develop an emotional connection to AVMA as their professional home by increasing engagement with AVMA resources that are designed for and specifically support this group.

After determining our goals, work has been done to identify specific tactics, including new communications and new programs, to meet those goals and further support these two groups.

These tactics include:

For students:

- There will be improved communications to students regarding AVMA Trust products, particularly Professional Liability, because we know how important these products are, and – more importantly – we know that students don't necessarily understand that importance.

When I am on clinics, I frequently do a rounds session with students that includes discussing liability insurance, amongst other things—what it means, why they need it, not only for alleged liability complaints, but also for license defense.

- We are working with SAVMA leadership to develop a SAVMA Brand Tracking Survey which we will design, field and evaluate on their behalf;
- We are developing a SAVMA Chapter Membership Retention and Acquisition Tool Kit;
- And we are working to help improve the SAVMA Group Pay process to provide quicker access to complimentary Trust Benefits

For recent graduates:

- To start, we will be refreshing all of the existing communications and programs that target this group – initiatives and outreach that were created in 2017 when we launched our recent graduate strategy such as My Veterinary Life.com -- to ensure that the tools and resources we developed continue to remain relevant and highly engaging.
- At the same time, we will be launching new communications to increase our bond with this group and let them know that we care. This includes:
  - a New Member Onboarding Campaign, which will help welcome new members to the AVMA and introduce them to their new benefits
  - an “Automated Nurture Campaign” that will provide them with information on their specific interests on a continual basis over time, focusing on building engagement with those benefits of specific interest.
  - increased alignment with the AVMA Trust on communications to recent grads
- In terms of new programming:
  - We are launching the Financial Counseling Program Pilot that will provide critical support and guidance regarding educational debt
  - We will be developing a Veterinary Career Center Brochure specifically designed for Recent Grads to help them navigate their career journey
  - We will also develop specific resources for Interns and Residents, who have some unique needs compared to recent grads who are entering practice.

These are just a few of the tangible programs and initiatives that are emerging from this work to more deeply engage our recent graduate members as well as build deeper connections with students for both SAVMA and AVMA. Look for future updates on this important initiative, as well as an improved strategy plan focused on mid-career veterinarians as well.