REPORT OF THE AVMA VICE PRESIDENT

When I decided to run for this office, never in my wildest dreams did I anticipate a year like we have just experienced. I anticipated travel and face-to-face contact, shaking hands, giving hugs. Taking on a new position is always an adjustment but taking on a new role with a new charge during a pandemic, was very challenging to say the least. But with every challenge comes opportunities and I think we have had an amazing year!

As most of you are probably aware, the Vice President’s focus has shifted a bit in the last two years. The Vice President is still working closely with the students. We are the liaison to the SAVMA Board of Directors, participate in the SAVMA House of Delegate Meetings, and support the students in whatever else is needed. This year, I also sat on their Ventilation Depopulation Task Force. In January, we hosted a panel of 2020 graduates from various disciplines to talk to the Class of 2021. Various topics were discussed such as interviewing, your first job, and mentorship. It was a very interactive discussion and we hope to make this an annual event.

Along with our Student Initiatives Team, I continued to meet with several SAVMA chapters throughout the year as well. I have been so impressed with our chapters for their resilience. They have been using their ALL for Students funds for innovative events such as virtual yoga, virtual cooking class, and many other clever ways to allow their students to connect. There have been some struggles with SAVMA memberships, but even with that challenge the SAVMA Chapters have prevailed.

As of the summer of 2019, the Vice President was also charged with working closely with the faculty at our colleges. I have been honored to meet with the deans and faculty of 22 schools since August. From my numerous interactions, I have heard many different concerns and desires. The biggest was to be able to connect with faculty from different colleges. This led to the creation of the AVMA Online Educator Community, which launched this past February. This group is a community of individuals involved in academia and with the education of the next generation of our colleagues. It is a place to exchange ideas, learn about AVMA resources that may make their jobs easier, and discuss challenges and opportunities unique to the world of academia. We currently have over 350 members. It is important to note that this community is open to all educators, including DVMs, PhDs, AVMA members, and non-AVMA members.

To launch the Community, we started with a survey and gained valuable feedback. The top interests of the community included the ability to have discussion threads with peers, faculty-specific resources, and virtual round tables. Their top focuses included diversity, equity, and inclusion; wellbeing; and economics. Many members noted that they would like more information and help with education and curriculum. They asked for resources on course content, mentorship, and guidance for career transitions.

As a result of this feedback, we launched a speaker series, which is designed to provide faculty with a space to both hear from and interact with subject-matter experts on the topics important to them. There were two talks this summer - our June presentation was
titled Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Academia, featuring Dr. Christine Jenkins, Dr. Doug Kratt, and Dean Ruby Perry as panelists, and moderated by Dr. Allen Cannedy. It was a virtual discussion on DEI challenges unique to academia and ways to create more inclusive education. Our July session was Implementing Competency-Based Veterinary Education with Dr. Jennie Hodgson and Dr. Kristin Chaney. It was a pleasure working with these thought-leaders, and both sessions had great discussion. Our fall topics will include two sessions on wellness with Jen Brandt and Makenzie Peterson, and a session on veterinary economics and Public Service Loan Forgiveness with Dr. Bridgette Bain and Dr. Tony Bartels. On-demand viewing is available for all presentations after the event on the Online Educator Community for those unable to attend.

I have been privileged to work with a core group of individuals to develop these new faculty initiatives. A special thanks to Jim Weisman, Leisa Stone, Nicki Wise, Jessica Ward, Jim Brett, Will Sander, Tamara Hancock, and Cheryl Greenacre. We truly could not do this without you!

I am honored to be your Vice President. Thank you for choosing me - I look forward to this next year, continuing to develop these new initiatives and to deepen my relationships with our amazing students and faculty.