Greetings to the House of Delegates!

I am here to tell you that school spirit is alive and well and that the talent and abilities of veterinary students continue to amaze me. In my school visits and to student events such as the SAVMA Symposium, the demonstrated leadership and achievements of students are highly impressive. Students traveling overseas to share their skills with underserved animal health care communities, students inventing cutting-edge new animal health care products and services, students lobbying their local and Capitol Hill leadership to open legislators’ eyes to the issues and concerns of the future of our profession.

If there is a theme that I have discovered during my travels, it is collaboration. My first visit as Vice President was to Auburn and Tuskegee Universities. It was wonderful to learn how the two schools assist each other in furthering opportunities and shared teaching experiences. That was further demonstrated when I visited the 2+2 school at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and its “sister” school at Iowa State. Through technology, Iowa State invites Nebraska students into their classrooms virtually for coursework. It appears to work beautifully.

The other theme I have discovered in my visits is the power of technology. Visiting Texas A&M, I was impressed to learn about the development of their educational teaching software and fascinated by the products and services being created by veterinary entrepreneurs (students and grads alike) at their Veterinary Innovation Summit. Many schools are utilizing cutting-edge forms of technology to further the educational experience such as virtual reality and 3-D printing.

In my home state of California, I thoroughly enjoyed sitting in on a problem-based learning session from a school very experienced in that form of teaching, Western University. At my alma mater UC Davis, I enjoyed catching up on their current initiatives, such as their innovative drive to address the needs of One Health – the health of animals, people and the environment they live in.

Sorry I have not mentioned all the schools that have granted me their kind hospitality but thank you and know that I am impressed with your efforts to further diversity, student wellness, address student debt, and a multitude of other programs.
The students, faculty and administration of our veterinary schools are dedicated to helping drive our profession to levels we have never seen before and perhaps may not know about – yet.

To further the theme of collaboration, I am impressed by the unified efforts of AVMA and AAVMC in addressing the needs of students. I look forward to discovering more synergies that can be created between the two organizations as we work together on common goals.

The overarching theme I have discovered in my role as AVMA Vice President so far, is we all share many common goals and issues as we push the profession forward. It is important to know that “we are not alone.” This is a theme that I intend to communicate further in my next year of the Vice Presidency. Stay tuned for that in my oral report to the HOD.

Speaking of innovation, we are currently looking at ways to improve and enhance the office of the AVMA Vice President. I will also address that at the HOD meeting.

So, know that school innovation, collaboration, dedication, and spirit are alive and well. I have so enjoyed personally witnessing it. Thank you delegates for voting me into this position last July. It has been a very special and eye-opening experience. I look forward to my next year!