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STAMATS



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Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges

National Recruitment Promotion Plan

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Introduction

In January, 2006, the Association of American Veterinary Medical College (AAVMC) contacted Stamats about the development of a national recruitment strategy designed to bolster the quality and diversity of inquiry pools and, ultimately, application pools for member institutions. Two years prior, AAVMC had completed an analysis of applications and application pool trends. The study revealed that the pool had, for all practical purposes, stagnated while application pools for several other health-related professions had experienced growth in terms of numbers and diversity. Also, the academic quality of AAVMC-member schools' application pools was waning. Finally, inquiring students were not demonstrating sufficient levels of interest in non-traditional and public sector veterinary careers where there is great unmet need, specifically in public health and homeland security.


These realizations led the AAVMC to an understanding that the Association, guided by its member institutions, needed to mount an effort to more aggressively and effectively manage the national inquiry pool, and to do so through a coordinated, centralized, collaborative national recruitment strategy. Above all else, AAVMC leaders agreed that the national recruitment strategy should be guided by same leading-edge, time-tested fundamental principles upon which the nation's best college and university recruitment programs had been built.

Based upon discussions with AAVMC leadership and a survey of the recruitment landscape as it pertained to veterinary medicine, Stamats identified a series of issues facing the profession.

Immediate Issues

What is the nature, condition, and efficiency of current AAVMC marketing and recruitment programming? Have strategic and tactical plans been built on the foundation of reliable (outward-looking) market research and with the benefit of a clearly articulated set of Association goals and objectives, all directed by a clear and compelling organizational vision?

What professions/disciplines are luring prospective veterinary medicine students away? What veterinary medicine-related messages are falling on deaf ears, and why? Irrelevant messages simply waste precious marketing resources. Where do prospective students and undergraduate advisors turn for information about veterinary medicine? Are the sources reliable, trusted, and effective? Is the information available considered sufficient? Does that information position veterinary medicine in the best possible light?



What types of undergraduate institutions, or specifically what institutions, have traditionally served as “feeder” programs for veterinary medicine programs? What is the nature of the relationships AAVMC and the profession have established with these schools? Are we meeting their needs and expectations?

Is the Association effectively creating and managing opportunities for “earned media,” or has it defaulted to a marketing strategy that defaults to discussions of expensive paid media?

Are we developing, promoting and managing a program of robust “experience marketing,” including bridge experiences like internships, shadowing, secondary school and undergraduate research, summer camps, career fairs, early visit programs, and other experiential/exploration initiatives, many of which will help prospective veterinary school candidates to bolster their record of hands-on experience, consequently strengthening their candidacy for veterinary school.

Do end users view the AAVMC web site as both a compelling promotional tool and a helpful resource?

Is the AAVMC application process uncomplicated and easily accomplished?

Intermediate Issues

AAVMC must increase public awareness about the surprisingly broad scope of professional veterinary practice, and the opportunities therein.

Stamats experience suggests that students’ career aspirations begin forming early in life, making outreach to elementary and middle-school students a smart recruiting strategy. What logical partnerships and co-branding opportunities exist that can effectively position veterinary medicine more prominently and attractively among youngsters?

Monitoring the impact of AAVMC marketing initiatives on an annual basis through the use of externally focused market research is essential for maximizing the return on the Association’s annual marketing investment.

Long-term Issues

Consistent execution and evaluation of the fundamentals outlined above to maximize efficiencies and return-on-marketing investment (mROI).

Embracing a continuous quality improvement model for AAVMC’s marketing program.



Program Components

AAVMC engaged Stamats for this national recruitment promotion planning initiative, which ultimately included four highly integrated components:

1. A national web-based survey of college and university undergraduates enrolled in pre-vet and other pre-health programs to assess their perceptions and misperceptions about veterinary medicine, to better understand the process by which they compared and set their sights on a particular profession, and to profile that segment of undergraduates who might be particularly receptive to considering veterinary medicine if they were more fully informed more about it. The survey also included an examination of the tools and practices undergraduate students employ to compare and apply to professional schools, along with the expectations they bring to the process. The full report of this survey is appended to this document.
2. A national web-based survey of undergraduate pre-vet and other pre-health advisors to assess their levels of accurate awareness about veterinary medicine, to identify trusted sources of information about veterinary medicine and distinguishing features of individual programs specifically, and to identify unmet advising needs that AAVMC may be best-positioned to address. The full report of this survey is appended to this document.
3. An assessment of recruitment marketing strategies and tactics currently managed by AAVMC. Findings from this assessment are woven throughout this document.
4. The development of a strategic plan designed to elevate the profile of veterinary medicine among prospective students, and to ultimately bolster the quality and diversity of member institutions' applicant pools.

This document, designed to be a perpetual working tool rather than a definitive and static plan of action, is divided into the following sections:

1. Background
2. Strategic Guiding Principles
3. Marketing Observations
4. Situational Analysis
5. Collaboration
6. AAVMC Brand Portfolio
7. Brand Messaging Strategy
8. Marketing Action Plans (MAPs)



Background

All About Brand

Marketing practitioners in and out of higher education recognize the enormously influential role that “brand” plays in the success of nearly any person, place or thing. Simply put, a brand is the collection of emotions, thoughts, images, words, sounds, smells, tactile sensations and memories—both good and bad—that are evoked at the mention of a product, place, person, experience, or organization. Properly managed, a powerful brand can be the kind of asset that is worth more than money. Mismanaged or ignored, a brand can be the kind of liability that leads to failure or even disaster.

Most brands land somewhere between these two extremes.

Such is the case with the veterinary medicine brand. Our research revealed that among prospective students and those who influence their career choices, veterinary medicine is assumed to be a narrow field (traditional private clinical practices) demanding long hours, commanding low salaries, and requiring a deep and abiding love for animals. While there is some truth to this profile, the extent to which the stereotype pervades the populations we studied is genuinely alarming. Our findings suggest the profession’s struggle to attract the nation’s best and brightest will continue to increase in severity unless perceptual myths can be “busted” and a more complete and accurate understanding of the breadth of veterinary medicine can be routinely shared with, and by, key audiences.

The overall purpose of a recruitment marketing or recruitment promotion initiative like this one is to develop an integrated marketing plan with specific communication strategies that will more consistently convey the intended brand to internal (practicing veterinarians and veterinary medical faculty and administrators) and to external constituents (prospect students and those who influence their career aspirations).

The best recruitment and marketing campaigns contribute to the momentum of progress toward their organization’s strategic goals. As such they must celebrate and sustain widespread awareness of the essential value of veterinary medicine (and its associated professional programs, schools and colleges) among its most important constituencies by executing specific steps that breathe life into the veterinary medicine brand and powerfully connect with key audiences.




Communications Support

The AAVMC commissioned a communications audit report in the winter of 2005/2006. PR Solutions, Inc of Washington, DC was selected to conduct the audit, and they delivered the final audit report with recommendations to the AAVMC in May, 2006. The audit was widely distributed to AAVMC members and other interested parties.

It is important to note that the work of Dr. Chaddock and AAVMC's communications division must be recognized as integral to the successful execution of any national recruitment strategy. **Stamats strongly recommends that AAVMC carefully weave together the execution of the tactics outlined in the audit report with the recommendations contained in this document to facilitate the greatest return on the Association's recruitment marketing investments.**

General recommendations from the communications audit (presented here in no specific order) include, but are not limited to:

- AAVMC should develop in-house or commission access to a media database that allows for email, mailing and faxing capability.
- AAVMC should establish a primary spokesperson and put in place policies to guide which interview opportunities are fulfilled and who gives interviews.
- AAVMC should quickly determine which issues will serve as its core focus issues and form the foundation of its media outreach program for the next two-to-three years.
- AAVMC should identify the program areas, publications, legislative work and other efforts that fall under its core issues and discuss which of those issues should be promoted with the media. Following that, Dr. Chaddock in concert with senior staff and consultants, should put together an outreach plan that includes those items.
- AAVMC should develop a set of fact sheets on itself and its core issues – each no more than two pages long. Those materials can form the foundation of a press kit that will also include institutional materials, bios of key spokespersons, recent issues of *JVME* and other pertinent information.
- AAVMC should develop a set of talking points for each of its core issues that it distributes not only among staff who speak with the media, but also to its Board members.
The press kit, along with Dr. Chaddock's business card and a cover letter, should be distributed widely to approximately 400 reporters, columnists, editors and producers who cover public health, food safety, bioterrorism, agriculture, higher education



and related issues. To widen the circle, the kit could be distributed electronically to other reporters who cover these issues, but not as a part of their regular beat.

If the legislation is still in play, AAVMC should implement an op-ed strategy in support of the Veterinary Workforce Expansion Act, drafting and placing op-eds cosigned by Dr. Heider and deans of veterinary medical colleges in key districts.

- AAVMC should make the revisions to its web site outlined in this audit, post new information on its core issues and promote the web site with the media.
- AAVMC should engage a designer to develop an electronic version of its logo and a sheet with the rules for use and placement and ensure that all subsequent publications and materials adhere to those rules.
- AAVMC should begin work to expand the reach of its newsletter and investigate the possibility of producing a legislative update.
- AAVMC should explore what would be involved in opening its symposia and workshops to the press – timing, media materials, etc and develop a plan for inviting journalists to attend a few key meetings that address the core issues to educate them and their readers about AAVMC's role in acting on these issues.
- AAMVC should review its annual meeting agenda and consider opening up the next annual meeting to a few select journalists from trade publications.
- AAVMC should review the schedule for releasing the results of the VMCAS applicant survey and begin a regular schedule of releasing that data through a news release to reporters who cover veterinary medicine and higher education.
- AAVMC should determine what other data about applicants or graduates it might be able to gather that is not already gathered by another organization and begin a plan for gathering that data with an eye toward releasing it to media and using it to reinforce the messages that support AAVMC's core issues.
- AAMVC should update and edit the profiles of non-traditional veterinarians on its web site and draft and distribute a news release on them to reporters who cover children and youth issues.
- AAVMC should canvass the veterinarians profiled on its web page to learn whether they would be willing to be interviewed by journalists for profiles on kids' pages or on children's radio or television programs.



Audience Prioritization

Like most of its member colleges, AAVMC's marketing resources are, in our opinion, severely limited. Consequently, the clarification and prioritization of the AAVMC's key audiences must be guided by the Performance Investment Model (P.I.M.), which recognizes that limited marketing and communication resources are a reality that must be faced, no matter how big the opportunity, no matter how big the challenge.


Competitive advantage typically comes from one (or both) of two disciplines:

1. **Focus:** Too often higher education marketers try to say or do too much...and ultimately don't say or do anything with enough impact to matter.
2. **Resource Allocation:** Too often higher education marketers fail to analyze and prioritize the audiences they must sell to—and through—before communicating with their larger target market(s).

The P.I.M. strategy helps prioritize limited marketing resources and increases return on marketing investment. The first step is to prioritize audiences by ranking them in order of size from smallest to largest. This is important because the larger the audience, the more it costs to communicate effectively with that audience, and that communication is necessarily more generalized and therefore less efficient. To increase return on marketing investment, AAVMC must communicate to and through those audiences who can multiply your key organizational messages with greater efficiency than the Association could achieve of its own accord.

Ranked in size from smallest to largest AAVMC's key audiences include:

1. AAVMC staff members
2. NRS Steering Committee members
3. AAVMC Board members
4. Other AAVMC committee members
5. Member institutions' deans and chief recruitment officers
6. Undergraduate pre-health/pre-vet advisors at "feeder schools"
7. Other undergraduate pre-health/pre-vet advisors
8. Practicing veterinarians (younger than 40 years)
9. Practicing & retired veterinarians (older than 40 years)
10. *Prospects* (undergraduates and others who have expressed interest in the profession, primarily via VMCAS registration)
11. *Suspects* (undergraduates and others who are equipped and inclined to pursue a career in health sciences, and who may be receptive to considering veterinary medicine if their accurate awareness about the profession was heightened)

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12. U.S. middle school students
 13. U.S. High school students
 14. U.S. Elementary school students

After audiences are prioritized by size, they are prioritized by their relative importance to achieving the Association's stated core issues (as presented on www.aavmc.org):


The AAVMC works on many important veterinary medical education issues and responds to the needs of its member institutions. However, the Association capitalizes on its strengths, expertise, and the public's interest in veterinary medical education and exhibits leadership by:

1. *Advocating for the veterinary medical colleges to build capacity and graduate more veterinarians to join the workforce, especially in clinical practice for underserved rural and inner cities, and public practice for public health, research, biodefense, food safety, and zoonotic diseases*
2. *Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities*
3. *Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors*
4. *Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine*

Practically speaking, it is important that the core issues be identified that communication strategies are designed to address before tactics are determined. In the case of AAVMC, priority #3 above blesses this initiative with a singular focus. However, all four priorities will benefit from the tactics recommended in this plan.

Preliminary budgets are then allocated accordingly, with the caveat that AAVMC must do a good job of communicating with one audience before moving to the next in the prioritized list. This way, when the Association exhausts available resources of time or money (or both) each fiscal year, the limited marketing resources will have been strategically used to maximize the return on the investments your recruitment marketing program has made.

Based on our research-centric understanding of fundamental recruitment theory, coupled with the Association's strategic objective of "Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment



sectors,” Stamats recommends that AAVMC’s prioritized audiences for any and all recruitment strategies should be, in order:

1. Practicing veterinarians (younger than 40 years)
2. Undergraduate pre-health/pre-vet advisors at “feeder schools”
3. Other undergraduate pre-health/pre-vet advisors
4. *Suspects* (undergraduates and others who are equipped and inclined to pursue a career in health sciences, and who may be receptive to considering veterinary medicine if their accurate awareness about the profession was heightened)
5. *Prospects* (undergraduates and others who have expressed interest in the profession, primarily via VMCAS registration)
6. U.S. elementary school students
7. U.S. middle school students
8. U.S. high school students
9. Member institutions’ deans and chief recruitment officers
10. AAVMC staff members
11. NRS Steering Committee members
12. AAVMC Board members
13. Other AAVMC committee members
14. Practicing & retired veterinarians (older than 40 years)

Practically speaking, AAVMC cannot support a national strategy to address all, or even a significant portion, of these audiences. We have limited our recommendations to target segments that Stamats researchers and strategists believe offer the greatest and soonest potential for return-on-investment. Our overarching goal for this project is to equip and energize specific audiences who are best positioned to multiply key messages designed to ultimately raise the nation’s accurate awareness of the breadth and significance of veterinary medicine in today’s world.



Strategic Guiding Principles

AAVMC Mission Statement

The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) coordinates the national and international affairs of all veterinary medical colleges in the United States and Canada, nine departments of veterinary science, eight departments of comparative medicine, two animal medical centers, and four international colleges of veterinary medicine. We foster the teaching, research and service activities of our members, both nationally and internationally.

Our mission is to improve the quality of life for people and animals by advancing veterinary medical education, improving animal health and welfare, strengthening biomedical research, promoting food safety and food security, and enhancing environmental quality.

NRS Steering Committee Charge

The charge to the National Recruitment Strategy (NRS) Steering Committee is to provide guidance and recommendations towards the development of a National Recruitment Strategy. In addition, the committee works with the NRS consultant to implement new initiatives.

AAVMC Communications Principles

AAVMC supports and advocates for a culture and environment that includes communications principles for all events, issues, and publications. As AAVMC staff members and AAVMC volunteer members plan, develop, and implement programs, four principles are reviewed and, where appropriate, included in the event planning and execution. These principles are:

- The AAVMC operates in a culture of inclusiveness in all its issues and programs
- The AAVMC is a preferred source of veterinary medicine education information for its members, veterinary students, stakeholders, and the public
- The AAVMC offers opportunities for individuals, organizations, and industry to support the Association's core issues and programs
- The AAVMC proactively markets and communicates the Association's core issues and programs



Marketing Observations


Stamats' team of recruitment and marketing specialists launched this initiative with a review of Stamats' primary research, available secondary research, and related marketing communications initiatives from a variety of sources, many of which were provided to us by AAVMC staff. These findings were supplemented by a series of interviews with members of the NRS Steering Committee and a selected group of current and former chief recruitment officers at member institutions. Because we assured their anonymity, we will not include their names in this report. Their candor was much appreciated, and our recommendations have been largely influenced by these conversations.

The following is a collection of what we consider mission-critical findings and observations:

Role of Influencer

- For 71% of prospective students surveyed in the Association's national study of undergraduates, the most important source of information about the veterinary medical profession is a practicing or retired veterinarian
- Encouragement to consider a career in veterinary medicine increases the likelihood of a student to consider becoming a veterinarian from 56% to 84% for non-VMCAS students (the largest impact of any options)
- Likewise, knowing a veterinarian increases the likelihood of becoming a veterinarian from 40% to 60% for non-VMCAS students (the second largest impact of any options)
- The most important information to convey to prospects and suspects is about the career paths of veterinarians
- Secondly, there is a clear need to overcome misperceptions about earnings and number of hours worked
- Is the AAVMC positioned to efficiently connect with veterinarians? Based on our discussions and observations, the realistic answer is "no."

By virtue of their charter, the AVMA is better positioned to equip and energize veterinarians so they can serve as more effective, inspiring ambassadors for the profession. However, our blind contact with AVMA headquarters (a telephone call seeking information about the profession for prospective students currently in elementary school, high school and college) proved less than encouraging. The receptionist with whom we spoke admitted she had very little information to send our way, and



could offer no other suggestions for where we might be able to find the resources we sought. This left us wondering if the Association was even interested in recruiting prospective veterinarians into the profession.

A second call, placed to the AVMA's Communications Office, offered a much more rewarding—and encouraging—experience. Joanne Clevenger is a Special Projects Manager in the AVMA's Communications Division and she volunteered to serve as the primary point of contact for any and all joint AAVMC + AVMA promotional collaborations. With nearly 75,000 member veterinarians, the AVMA's involvement in any national recruitment strategy is essential. And even a cursory review of the Pet Week Web site suggests that the AVMA fully understands the need to connect early and often with elementary school students in an effort to expose children to the profession.


Based only on our conversations with chief recruitment officers at AAVMC member schools, our sense is that current veterinarians may need to be convinced that theirs is a profession worth pursuing. Clearly, additional research is needed to explore veterinarians' feelings about the profession. Such a study could serve as a first collaborative activity between AVMA and AAVMC with the goal being to use findings as a launching pad for shifting commonly held misperceptions among members of the profession.

In the long-term, Stamats recommends that AAVMC lobby (or partner with) the AVMA toward supporting and/or executing the following fundamental tactics:

- A publication describing career resources and how to become a veterinarian in every vet office
- More robust promotional career resources on the AVMA Web site; the current information is not very engaging nor is it designed to meet the needs of younger students or college students
- National “career shadowing” days or other national activities
- More effective resources for middle school and high school science teachers.
- A national spokesperson who can effectively become the “persona” of veterinary medicine in the U.S.

Among prospective students who participated in the national study, secondary influencers include the following:

- 36% - faculty and staff at students' undergraduate schools; primarily four year publics with 20,000 + enrollment
- 30% - current veterinary students
- 25% - internet/online; 69% cited specific veterinary college Web sites

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- 21% - organizations/associations
 - 21% - personal visitations to veterinary colleges

Note the primary and secondary influencers are people-centric, which strongly supports the development of people-to-people networks designed to influence prospective students.

Is the AAVMC positioned to work with faculty and staff members at large public undergraduate schools? Not really, except perhaps pre-health and pre-vet advisors who connect with AAVMC through the VMCAS program. Even PR Solutions' communications audit report suggested AAVMC has low visibility with nearly all audiences except admissions offices.


Is the AAVMC positioned to work with current veterinary students? Again, not really. VMCAS puts the Association in touch with applicants, but not with currently enrolled veterinary students. That being said, however, AAVMC member schools could make this happen.

Is the AAVMC a resource for prospective students considering a career in veterinary medicine? Arguably, yes. But not based on a critical evaluation of the current AAVMC Web site which provides logistic information regarding the application process, but scant information designed for prospective students (of any age) about the profession. Some of these resources are scattered about the current site, but certainly not organized for prospective students. For example, we discovered lots of specific examples about various veterinary careers people have pursued, but very little overview information about specialty careers available in the profession...one of the NRS Steering Committee's primary concerns. Additionally, the design, architecture and navigation of the site does is not as engaging or functional as prospective students may expect based on their experiences with other higher education and profession-specific resource sites.

Are the current veterinary colleges doing all that they can to promote personal visits to their campuses? Our conversations with chief recruitment officers suggests that some member institutions actively encourage and accommodate visits, while others are willing to host but don't go out of their way to recruit visitors to campus.

Apparent Myths and Stereotypes

1. Veterinary medicine doesn't help or serve humans
2. Practicing veterinarians work ridiculously long hours
3. Almost all veterinarians are in private practice
4. It is nearly impossible to get into veterinary school unless a candidate has an extraordinarily strong G.P.A. and GRE/MCAT scores to match



The profession must unity to shift a significant paradigm about veterinary medicine so practicing veterinarians can get excited about recruiting prospective vets to the profession, and excited about being a veterinarian. Further research is necessary to fully understand the cause and effect of what appears to be a generally negative professional self-image within the profession.


AAVMC member schools must be made to understand that they need to be promoting the breadth, depth, and significance of veterinary medicine as much as they concentrate on laying out details about their respective programs.

For most audiences, the profession assumes the persona of the family veterinarian or, absent that, the local veterinarian who has been practicing for some time. Given the apparent negative self-image of the profession, it's not entirely surprising that prospective students and their influencers have developed negative misperceptions. The profession itself may benefit from the selection and positioning of a celebrity (or celebrity-like) spokesperson with altruistic appeal who can become the voice, the face, and the disposition of an accurate portrayal of veterinary medicine.

The Role of Academic Advisors

Pre-health and pre-vet academic advisors are gatekeepers for the future of the profession. The research conducted as part of this initiative clearly identifies a series of widely held misperceptions about not only the profession, but also about the admission process. Specifically, those findings include the following:

- Advisors demonstrate remarkable consensus in terms of their assumptions and perceptions about the profession and what careers in veterinary medicine demand and offer. Of particular note was the large majority (99%) who said typically veterinarians work in private or corporate clinical practice
- This finding may suggest that while advisors may consider themselves well-informed, they may not know enough about “non-traditional” specialty areas of the profession to properly advise their students or even pique their interest in lesser-known career opportunities
- As much as AAVMC would like to create awareness and bolster positive perceptions of the profession on a non-statistical basis, advisors still find these numbers (i.e. placement tests and admission standards) extremely important and of primary interest as they advise their students
- Advisors are primarily driven to veterinary medicine information from two main sources: individual vet school Web sites and the



VMCAS/AAVMC Web site. Because of this, AAVMC has a unique opportunity to effectively control what information is communicated to this audience, and how it is communicated

- At this time, most advisors are satisfied with the current level of information available on the AAVMC Web site; however, many expressed interest in having more information about individual veterinary schools, as well as job and internship opportunities available on one resourceful site
- AAVMC should also utilize print/mail communications with advisors that will drive advisors and their students to your Web site, complement your Web site in terms of design and editorial tone, and address key areas of interest
- Advisors tend to take a decidedly passive approach to career and professional school counseling. They do not appear to be quick to recommend veterinary medicine to their students unless the students express a specific interest or demonstrate a specific, albeit all-too-narrow, set of characteristics
- These same characteristics were mentioned often by respondents throughout the advisor study. Students well-suited for the veterinary medical profession possess...
 - A deep passion and love of animals and the profession as a whole
 - Tend to have a high aptitude in the biology/science areas
 - Overall, are academically strong and talented, and
 - Have researched the profession on their own and have hands-on experience and knowledge about their area of interest
- While these may well be important interests for some segments of the profession, AAVMC can benefit its cause by expanding this list and identifying other traits that would be advantageous in specialty careers not often associated with the profession
- The key will be for AAVMC to better instill, or promote, the positive aspects of the profession and the contributions veterinary medicine plays in various industries (a good way is through student/alumni profiles—mentioned as an area advisors would like to see on the AAVMC Web site)
- By doing this, advisors' rather narrow assumptions about potentially successful veterinary medicine students will be broadened to a new level that will encompass more specialty areas of the profession for an expanded set of prospective students



There appears to be opportunity for AAVMC to establish itself as something akin to a “one-stop shop” for academic advisors who feel ill-equipped to provide enlightened counsel on the subject of veterinary medicine. For example, the Association might consider giving marginally prepared academic advisors a set of simple, easy-to-use, web-based advising tools and resources to help them give good advice to pre-vet students...and equipping them with a consistent flow of accurate info about veterinary medicine so they can confidently direct prospective students toward the profession.




Situational Analysis

Drawing from our discussions with AAVMC staff and member institution volunteers, along with primary and secondary research, Stamats' consulting team used the following collection of challenges and opportunities to formulate marketing action plans.

Apparent Challenges

1. Chief veterinary medical school recruitment officers (or those staff/faculty members who serve in that capacity without having that specific title) across all member institutions do not uniformly demonstrate a sufficiently advanced level of marketing and recruitment sophistication necessary to compete as effectively as they would like in today's demanding marketplace.
2. There does not appear to be uniform commitment to this marketing initiative among all AAVMC member institutions.
3. AVMA and AAVMC are not collaborating effectively enough to successfully reverse the stagnation of veterinary school applicant pools.
4. Practicing veterinarians are alleged to be less-than-positive ambassadors for the profession.
5. AAVMC volunteer leadership appears less-than-fully-enlightened about generational issues that are having a significant impact on interest in, and pursuit of, the profession
6. AAVMC is decidedly under-resourced (staff, budget, collaborative support from member institutions, etc.) in terms of mounting a national recruitment strategy
7. While the Association represents veterinary medical colleges, AAVMC's specific role as a marketing entity for the profession generally, and for member institutions specifically, is not entirely clear. For example, the AAVMC web site (the single-most powerful marketing tool available within complete control of the Association) is a repository for data, a portal for application-minded students, and a gateway to member institutions' web sites. As such, its value as a marketing tool is not being fully realized.
8. Multiple AAVMC committees appear to be working on discreet projects that absolutely must be more proactively integrated, namely the Diversity Matters initiative, the communications committee's audit, the future of veterinary medicine initiative, and this national recruitment strategy project.

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9. Misperceptions about the profession are perpetuated by multiple sources (AVMA, Occupational Handbook, etc.).
 10. Prospective (and enrolled) veterinary medical students consistently report being influenced to consider the profession at a very young age.

Apparent Opportunities

1. Prospective student participation in the AAVMC-sponsored career fairs appears to be on the rise, and AAVMC staff members are seeing more traffic at their exhibits at national recruiting events (FFA, NAMME, SACNAS, HACU, ABRCMS, AAMC Health Professions Career Fair, AIEHC, National Institute of Science, and MANRRS). The Association is clearly establishing marketing momentum, largely driven by efforts focused at underrepresented populations.
2. The nine (9) AAVMC member schools in the Southeast Region have done some collaborative marketing work, thereby establishing a model after which similar initiatives might be attempted in other regions.
3. AAVMC member schools suggest that regionalized strategies would be more attractive to them simply because they are not necessarily interested in a national reach.
4. Prospective (and enrolled) veterinary medical students consistently report being influenced to consider the profession at a very young age.
5. AVMA evidently sponsors an annual veterinary medicine awareness week sometime each March, but it isn't promoted very well.
6. There is a record of support for AAVMC initiatives from major corporate sponsors, namely Hills, Iams, Bayer, Purina, Waltham, Pfizer, and Novartis among others.
7. AAVMC is viewed by many member institutions as a unifying body, a support group, and an effective partner in their work.
8. There are good models for AAVMC in terms of launching a large-scale awareness initiative, most notably the American Association for Colleges of Nursing which mounted a national awareness campaign to draw attention to the predicted nursing shortage, and the National Fire Protection Association which sponsors the annual National Fire Prevention Week.



Collaboration

Both the World Veterinary Association (WVA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) appear to be aggressively engaged in the promotion of the veterinary medical profession.

The WVA's annual World Veterinary Day (April 28, 2007) is billed by the organization's president as "the day to celebrate a great profession and show its greatness throughout the world." On the WVA's Web site are resources to help veterinarians land media attention for activities they may sponsor or host on World Veterinary Day.

The AVMA's annual National Pet Week (May 6-12) is showcased on an attractive and resource-rich Web site (www.petweek.org) where elementary school educators can find professionally prepared classroom lesson plans, Web links, and a great deal of current, accurate information about the profession.

We understand that twice every year, the presidents, presidents-elect, and past presidents of AVMA and AAVMC meet to discuss issues of mutual concern. It is our hope that the recommendations and action plans presented in this document will find their way to that discussion.

From what we see in materials produced by WVA, AMVA and AAVMC, all three organizations are attempting to address similar issues in their promotions. Unless and until the promotional efforts of all three organizations are more proactively integrated, the three "silos" will certainly not realize the greatest—and most efficient—return on their respective marketing investments.



AAVMC Brand Portfolio

A brand promise is a concise articulation of what any organization promises to its target audience—something that the audience views as an offer with intrinsic or extrinsic value. The promise should be distinctive, reflect your mission, heritage and institutional goals and be eagerly embraced by your audiences. AAVMC’s brand promise statement, crafted by Stamats, was founded on organizational priorities and derived from a combination of interviews with volunteers and staff members, a review of AAVMC-provided documents, and findings from the two national studies completed as part of this initiative.

Brand Promise Statement

For its member institutions and the diverse constituent groups they serve, the AAVMC is the primary facilitator of the collective and collaborative efforts designed to improve the quality of life for people and animals through advancing veterinary medical education.

Brand Attributes

AAVMC’s brand attributes are the public face of its organizational brand. Attributes publicly and prominently highlight the essential characteristics of the AAVMC brand experience. They serve as the bridge from the behind-the-scenes brand promise to the way it is communicated publicly. As such, brand attributes are specific words and phrases that the Association’s communication programs must showcase at every opportunity.

From the Executive Director’s speeches to VMCAS promotional materials, from strategic planning assumptions to event promotions, from news releases and committee agendas to way finder signage in Suite 301, these words and phrases must be used purposefully and liberally. The ultimate goal is to condition AAVMC’s audiences to equate these words and phrases with the Association and equate the Association with these specific words and phrases. Only then can it be said that AAVMC is effectively managing its brand.



AAVMC Brand Attributes:

- *Veterinary medicine education*
- *VMCAS*
- *Resource*
- *Collaboration*
- *Career in veterinary medicine*

Elevator Speech

The power of an “elevator speech” is to have a succinct, prepared statement that can be used by anyone associated with the Association as a conversation guide in a casual setting. It is an abbreviated description of AAVMC that incorporates elements of the brand promise and brand attributes in a way that will resonate with the listener and foster the Association’s reputation.

Ideally, everyone associated with AAVMC should be able to recite this statement with ease and enthusiasm:

The Association of American Veterinary Medical College was formed in 1966 and is a remarkable collaborative venture among more than 50 institutions of veterinary medical education representing nearly 15,000 students and 10,000 faculty and staff members around the world. The AAVMC’s primary focus is in improving the quality of human and animal life by facilitating member institutions’ collective dealings with governmental bodies, veterinary medical organizations, the animal and human health industry, educational and scientific organizations, and the public. One of the Association’s most visible and appreciated programs is its Veterinary Medical College Application Service (VMCAS) which serves as the central distribution, collection, and processing service for applications to the veterinary medical colleges.



Brand Message Strategy

Audience-Specific Messaging

Even though the brand attributes apply generally to each of AAVMC's primary target audiences, the type of emphasis or value each audience places on them is slightly different. For example, "resource" means something different to a prospective student than it does to his or her parents or professors. In developing messaging strategies to support the various tactics recommended in this plan, great care must be taken to ensure the use of audience-relevant language to breathe life into AAVMC's brand promise and each supporting attribute.

Visuals and Photography

Audiences are becoming increasingly visual, which means that effective communication requires *showing* your audience the AAVMC story rather than simply telling them about it. It's difficult to simply hear and fully appreciate the rich diversity of "career in veterinary medicine;" people need to see it and feel it. Stamats recommends the investment in a professional photo-shoot to capture the images that will convey the depth, breadth and nuance necessary to support the creative expression of the Association's work in all its iterations. Specific visual suggestions include:

- Photography should capture and highlight the highly emotional human element of veterinary medicine.
- Care should be taken to showcase multiple veterinary careers within single promotional initiatives rather than defaulting to (and thereby perpetuating the stereotype of) the traditional small-animal clinic veterinarian.
- As often as possible, practitioner profile photos should include cut lines identifying her/his name and a descriptive career statement, again to demonstrate the breadth of the profession.
- Photo images should feature veterinary medical professionals in action, actually doing their work, and appearing to be happy about it.
- Finally, photography should be of sufficient quality to accurately represent the professionalism the industry deserves.



Voice

The tone or “voice” of the copy of all marketing materials—particularly big pieces like the Website, major publications, and advertising copy—should be consistent. Stamats recommends a serious, contemplative and yet inspirational tone so the reader is encouraged to reflect on his or her life while also stopping to check out a career in veterinary medicine that will change and enhance his/her life, and the lives of others, both humans and animals.

Web

The Web is usually the first “moment of truth” a constituent has with an organization. The AAVMC Web site must therefore offer a powerful, perhaps even emotional representation of the brand promise brought to life. The home page should be clean and present key elements of people and place in a way that illustrates the Association’s brand attributes.

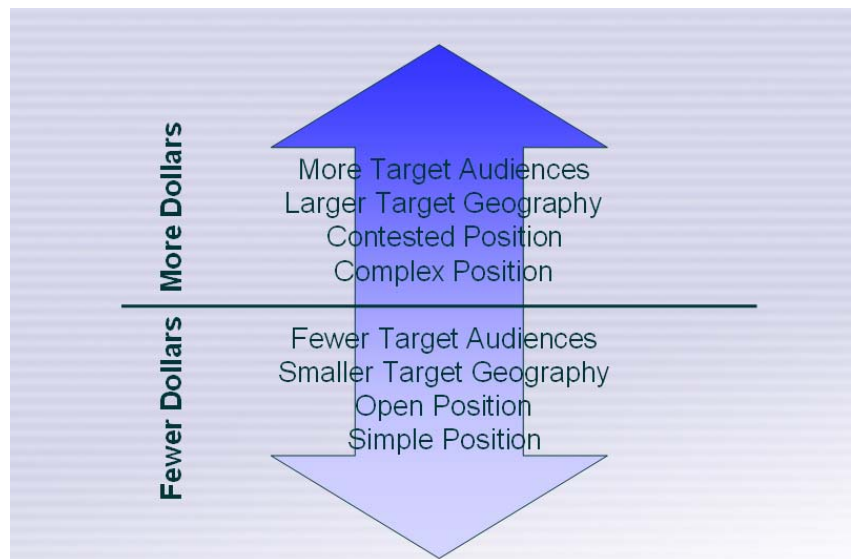
Stamats recommends the use of student, faculty, and practicing veterinarian profiles that will powerfully illustrate the ways in which veterinary students and faculty **collaborate** toward a common goal of a fulfilling **career in veterinary medicine**, the positive impact veterinarians have on the quality of human life in the world because of the breadth of their **veterinary medical education**, and the confusing process of applying to vet school made easier by the **resources** provided by AAVMC. Ideally, images and stories should be refreshed upon re-entering the home page to add depth and nuance to the brand concept.

Marketing Resources

Time, Talent and Treasure

The law of recruitment marketing resources dictates that more dollars/resources enable an association to effectively address more target audiences, to serve a larger set of target markets, and to compete successfully as a complex organization (more programs) in a highly competitive environment.

Conversely, fewer dollars/resources limits an association to addressing fewer target audiences, to effectively serve fewer target markets, and to compete successfully as a simpler organization (fewer programs) in a less-competitive environment.



Many associations make the mistake of assuming an all-or-none approach to the implementation of a recruitment promotion plan. They aspire to creating for themselves robust national visibility and mounting a nationwide promotional initiative to get there, yet their visibility is arguably nonexistent to anyone who is not already among its membership ranks. The fact of the matter is that few professional associations have sufficient resources to successfully execute all-or-none initiatives. Such is the case with AAVMC.



Think Regionally

For this reason, Stamats encourages the AAVMC to consider building its national recruitment strategy on the foundation of a carefully coordinated series of regional initiatives. This approach, recognized in the marketing industry as a more prudent and effective one for organizations with limited marketing resources (time, talent, and treasure), serves as one of the foundational elements of AAVMC's recruitment promotion plan: helping collaborating member schools to "own their backyards" first by investing in whatever regional marketing momentum they may already enjoy. In our interviews with members schools' chief recruitment officers, it became apparent that while they may support the need for a national visibility initiative designed to drive prospective students toward veterinary medicine, they would be much more likely to attempt to secure financial support for localized or regionalized activities that would offer greater likelihood to influence their own application pools. We believe this approach will effectively maximize the AAVMC's potential for realizing most immediate return on your marketing investment.



Marketing Action Plans

National Recruitment Promotion

Marketing Action Plans (MAPs) provide an outline of activities that, when done together, will contribute to the accomplishment of AAVMC's most important organizational recruitment marketing goals.

It is critically important to understand that the MAPs detailed on the following pages **do not** comprise the entirety of AAVMC's larger marketing communication program. Rather, the MAPs included in this planning document have been developed to complement the existing and ongoing initiatives of the AAVMC's Communications operation, all of which are addressing a specific set of challenges and goals. The specific MAPs presented in this plan have been developed to complement the many effective promotional initiatives recommended in the 2006 PR Solutions report and those already in place.

It is also important to note that the marketing action plans detailed in the following pages are individually and collectively works in progress. Some will be eliminated over time, others will be added, and most will be modified to capitalize on emerging opportunities, to reflect organizational paradigm shifts, or to reflect resource fluctuations (time, talent, and treasure). By design, this is not a static document and these are not static action plans. Rather, the dynamic and responsive spirit of AAVMC is reflected in the dynamic nature of this recruitment promotion plan.

Primary Goal: Multiplying The Message

The MAPs detailed on the following pages have been developed with one overarching goal in mind: **to create a highly efficient mix of cost-effective marketing initiatives that will purposefully expand AAVMC's collection of "ambassadors" (namely younger practicing veterinarians and enlightened academic advisors) who are able and willing to accurately and aggressively multiply the Association's message generally among key constituent groups, and specifically among targeted under-represented populations.**

For this reason, we purposely do not include MAPs that involve paid media because, generally speaking, advertising is not a cost-effective "investment" for the purpose of enhancing visibility. It is our opinion that the AAVMC simply cannot afford to advertise with sufficient reach or frequency to justify the associated expenses, which would undoubtedly run into millions of dollars annually.



It is incumbent upon AAVMC marketing practitioners (staff members and volunteers from member institutions) to familiarize themselves with this plan, to participate in the dynamic discussion that makes this a working tool rather than a static set of marching orders, to regularly assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the promotional initiatives for which they are responsible, and to re-tool (or eliminate) any ineffective or inefficient initiatives within the framework provided by this plan.

MAPs focus on what is to be done by target audiences, when it is to be done, the estimated budget, the metrics for the plan, and who is responsible for managing/accomplishing the plan.

The proposed MAPs have been constructed based on primary goals assumed for each target audience. While individual MAPs are assigned to specific target audiences, in many cases a particular MAP can obviously apply to multiple audiences.

For planning purposes, the budgets provided are informed estimates, based on experience. When a select collection of MAPs are approved by AAVMC, tighter budgets must be developed by program managers. Budgets for ensuing years will need to be adjusted based on the dynamics of the market and the success or failure of the individual MAPs.

All Hands On Deck!

Tactic	Monthly e-mail marketing campaign that heightens awareness about the need to actively sustain the profession, and profiles younger veterinarians who are successfully influencing prospective students to consider careers in veterinary medicine. E-mail pushes recipients to a Web “catch site” that offers suggestions and cost-free resources for having a similar impact in their respective communities.
Tactical Description	Without question, practicing veterinarians are the profession’s most influential ambassadors and recruiters. Their active and enthusiastic involvement in a sustained national recruitment initiative is essential if the profession aspires to thrive. This MAP is designed to engage younger practicing veterinarians in the cause to broaden prospective students’ awareness of, and interest in, careers in veterinary medicine. Of particular interest are younger practicing veterinarians from under-represented populations who might serve as role models and mentors for prospective veterinary students.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors
Target Audience(s)	Practicing veterinarians age 40 and under
Begin Date	TBD
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collaborate with AVMA to compile list; may need to mount a “pre-campaign” to solicit e-mail addresses and “profilees” 2. Enlist an advisory group representing the diversity of the profession to develop audience-centric messaging strategy and compile Web-based resources for catch site 3. Write, design, deploy and monitor 12 profile e-mails (one per month), the catch site, and appropriate follow-up. The profiles must be developed with an eye toward demonstrating the dynamic professional, geographic, ethnic, and gender diversity of the profession.
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	Outsource estimate for step 3 above: \$15,000-\$25,000 Funding source: TBD
Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Click-through rate to catch site; level of veterinarian participation in the program
When to Evaluate	Quarterly
Who Evaluates	John Roane or designee
Report results to	NRS Steering Committee

World Veterinary Day & National Pet Week

Tactic	AAVMC should lead an initiative to partner with the World Veterinary Association and the American Veterinary Medical Association to launch regional campaigns promoting World Veterinary Day and National Pet Week
Tactical Description	A prospective student's interest in veterinary medicine is profoundly shaped during her/his elementary school years, particularly in grades 3 and 4 when interest in science is highest. An annual visibility initiative targeted to this population, modeled after the National Fire Prevention Association's annual National Fire Prevention Week, makes sense. Fortunately, such events already exist. The AAVMC should spearhead the coordinated involvement of sponsoring organizations, and also engage its membership to capitalize on the opportunity by hosting media events in their classrooms and clinics featuring students and professors working together on activities of interest to elementary age students. A particular emphasis should be placed on engaging elementary schools that traditionally serve under-represented populations, and those schools which might not be inclined to participate due to limited access to practicing veterinarians. AAVMC should develop a resource-laden Web site suggesting possible activities for specific kinds of audiences (rural, suburban, metropolitan, under-represented, etc.); sample press releases, advertisements and invitations; strategies for maximizing participation; etc.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors
Target Audience(s)	Third- and fourth-grade students across the nation
Begin Date	TBD
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Convene a joint meeting of AAVMC, AVMA and WVA representatives (preferably a single "point person" from each who will spearhead) to inventory existing activities and brainstorm possible collaborations 2. Develop a jointly-sponsored resource Web site with sections for AAVMC faculty and students, AVMA members, and WVA members 3. Develop a second jointly-sponsored "catch site" for third- and fourth-grade teachers (this may be the existing www.petweek.org site) 4. Develop a third highly interactive Web site full of games, activities and downloadable information (not unlike some of the resources on www.petweek.org) for third- and fourth-grade students 5. Assemble regional planning teams composed of representatives from AAVMC, AVMA and WVA (where applicable) who assume responsibility for promoting the events in their respective regions. 6. Collaborate on the regional promotion (with heavy emphasis on public relations and buzz marketing; minimal advertising) of the annual event, planning at least a year in advance to facilitate maximum exposure
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	Outsource estimate for three Web sites as described above: \$50,000-\$75,000 Funding source: Corporate, foundation, AVMA and veterinary school co-sponsorship must be secured to mount and sustain this coordinated national promotional initiative
Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Web traffic, downloads, click-throughs to catch sites
When to Evaluate	Immediately following each year's events
Who Evaluates	Regional planning teams
Report results to	NRS Steering Committee

WVA + AVMA + AAVMC Integrated Marketing Team

Tactic	AAVMC should assume the lead role in facilitating a regular and collaborative dialogue between chief marketing officers for the WVA, AVMA and AAVMC
Tactical Description	Clearly, these three organizations share similar (nearly identical) concerns about the future of veterinary medicine. Likewise, all three are engaged in creative marketing activities designed to elevate the profile of the profession and encourage prospective students to consider veterinary medical careers. It is apparent that most promotional activities are neither developed nor deployed with significant appreciation for how they might be strengthened by weaving them into a more strategic and integrated campaign. A quarterly meeting of chief marketing officers from each organization could easily address this concern. The idea here is not to develop new initiatives. Rather, it is to inventory existing goals and activities with an eye toward creating efficiencies of scale and greater return-on-investment.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors
Target Audience(s)	Chief marketing officers and other appropriate staff members from the AAVMC, AVMA and WVA
Begin Date	Immediately
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AAVMC's chief marketing officer contacts his/her counterparts at AVMA and WVA to propose the concept 2. Establish a meeting schedule (could be a web-based conference call) 3. Bring an inventory of goals and initiatives to each meeting and brainstorm possible collaborations
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	None required
Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Attendance at meetings; resulting collaborative initiatives
When to Evaluate	Annually
Who Evaluates	Chief marketing office
Report results to	President

Professional Development in Recruitment Theory and Practice

Tactic	Six (6) web-based professional development seminars designed for, and delivered to, chief recruitment officers (or those assigned the task) at AAVMC member institutions.
Tactical Description	<p>Levels of <u>advanced</u> enrollment management and recruitment marketing expertise vary widely among AAVMC member schools' chief recruitment officers. An annual professional development workshop series would provide opportunity for recruitment and admission staff to approach their work with greater confidence. Topics and content should be developed in collaboration with an AAVMC advisory committee (a 3-person subcommittee of the NRS Steering Committee), and delivered by respected authorities in the field of higher education marketing. Possible topics might include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment and enrollment management theory 2. Recruitment strategies targeting under-represented populations 3. Basic sales skills <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. sales models b. features versus benefits c. prospecting d. listening skills e. cultivating skills f. closing skills 4. Maximizing return-on-recruitment-investments 5. Managing and motivating staff 6. Presentation skills 7. Goal setting <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. understanding the funnel b. finding leads c. yield d. prioritizing 8. The essential role of market research 9. Direct marketing <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Publications b. E-mail c. Postal mail 10. Emerging recruitment technologies 11. Legal issues <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. FERPA b. Confidential/privacy
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	<p>Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities</p> <p>Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors</p> <p>Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine</p>
Target Audience(s)	Chief recruitment officers charged with managing the recruitment and/or enrollment management functions at AAVMC member institutions



Begin Date	Immediately
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Enlist subcommittee2. Engage content development counsel3. Develop and promote the series via existing AAVMA communication channels4. Deliver and evaluate programs in the series
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	Outsource estimate to develop and deliver the series: \$15,000-\$25,000 Funding source: TBD
Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Participation levels and session evaluations
When to Evaluate	Immediately following each session, and at conclusion of the series
Who Evaluates	Participants
Report results to	Subcommittee, and ultimately to NRS Steering Committee

Represent!

Tactic	AAVMC representatives—either staff members or volunteers—must continue to seek out and attend major regional and national conferences, conventions and other events that put them in touch with prospective students and their influencers.
Tactical Description	AAVMC, representing member schools, must be present at all national events that provide audiences of (1) prospective students with high propensity to consider the profession, (2) under-represented minority students who are logical candidates for a career in veterinary medicine, and (3) influencers such as elementary and high school guidance counselors, undergraduate academic advisors, veterinarians, and even parents of high-achieving students. By enlisting volunteers within each region to represent AAVMC and its member schools at regional events, the Association will be able to increase its coverage exponentially (it's entirely likely that member schools are attending these events already).
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	<p>Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities</p> <p>Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors</p> <p>Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine</p>
Target Audience(s)	Prospective students and those who influence their career choices
Begin Date	TBD
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enlist regional volunteers 2. Prepare comprehensive AAVMC materials for distribution at events, including a comprehensive viewbook and data cards 3. Secure a database system to track and distribute inquiries to member schools 4. Inventory available opportunities 5. Assign regional team members to events
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	<p>This is largely a logistical project to be coordinated by AAVMC staff members and not requiring additional budget support for organization. However, promotional materials (namely an AAVMC “viewbook”) and travel reimbursement budgets will be required. 100,000 16-page viewbooks can be produced for approximately \$110,000; 100,000 24-page viewbooks can be produced for approximately \$150,000; and 100,000 32-page viewbooks can be produced for \$175,000 (these costs are provided for perspective only; this should not be construed as a definitive recommendation as specifications have not yet been established for the finished product)</p> <p>Funding source: TBD</p>
Accountability	Lisa Greenhill
Measure of Success	Traffic (as measured by data cards collected) at each event
When to Evaluate	A report should be submitted, along with the data cards, following each event. Traffic should be tracked to determine if AAVMC should be present at the same event in subsequent years. A year-end analysis should be completed, including an evaluation of return-on-investment
Who Evaluates	John Roane
Report results to	NRS Steering Committee

“Our Changing Landscape” Workshop

Tactic	Keynote addresses at AVMA and AAVMC conferences/conventions addressing the topic of generational differences and the impact they are having, and will have, on the profession; recorded and distributed to key leaders who were unable to attend, and made part of new leader orientation
Tactical Description	AVMA and AAVMC leadership demonstrate a lack a depth of understanding regarding the drastically changing landscape of prospective students (generational differences, challenges inherent in recruiting increasingly diverse populations, heightened expectations bordering on an entitlement attitude, increased involvement of parents in college/program selection, etc.), as well as the sophisticated marketing strategy required to effectively connect with those students. Executive developmental workshops in this area are available and highly recommended.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	<p>Advocating for the veterinary medical colleges to build capacity and graduate more veterinarians to join the workforce, especially in clinical practice for underserved rural and inner cities, and public practice for public health, research, biodefense, food safety, and zoonotic diseases</p> <p>Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities</p> <p>Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors</p> <p>Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine</p>
Target Audience(s)	AAVMC and AAVMA leaders
Begin Date	TBD
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Present this concept for approval at the next joint meeting of AAVMC and AVMA presidents 2. Inventory available presenters 3. Secure funding, if necessary (it is entirely possible that AAVMC member institutions have qualified presenters among their faculty members) 4. To ensure greatest visibility, ensure the presentation gets good placement on the conference/convention agenda 5. Promote the presentation aggressively 6. Present 7. Review evaluations and create follow-up publicity to ensure maximum return-on-investment
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	If funding is required beyond existing programming budgets, this topic would be of high interest to foundations dedicated to the cause of diversity, since such a significant component of generational change involves the evolving role of minority populations.
Accountability	TBD



Measure of Success	Ultimately, the measure of success that matters is an appreciable shift in leadership attitudes with greater demonstrated appreciation for changing work styles, workplace expectations, etc.
When to Evaluate	Following the presentations
Who Evaluates	John Roane
Report results to	NRS Steering Committee

AAVMC Web Site Renovation

Tactic	Redesign the AAVMC Web site
Tactical Description	AAVMC must aggressively leverage the efficiency and proven effectiveness of leading-edge interactive technology (content management systems, search engine marketing, search engine optimization, instant messaging, RSS and XML feeds, online conferencing, chat rooms, etc.) into its marketing programming. Key target audiences, namely prospective students and academic advisors, are adroit users who expect the functionality these applications facilitate. In terms of design, architecture, navigation and functionality, the current AAVMC Web site is a marketing liability for the Association.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors
Target Audience(s)	All users of the AAVMC Web site, but primarily prospective students and academic advisors
Begin Date	Immediately
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Solicit input from staff and AAVMC member institutions regarding recommendations and “wish list” functionality for a re-designed Web site 2. Conduct research with key target audiences, especially targeted under-represented populations, to gather input regarding current design and functionality, and to assess their expectations for what should be available on the site 3. Issue an RFP for site re-design with as much specificity as possible with regard to apparent design and functionality needs 4. Select Web developer and launch re-design
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	Outsource estimate for a complete institutional/organizational Web site re-design: \$75,000-\$125,000 Funding source: TBD
Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Traffic and user satisfaction studies
When to Evaluate	Six months after launch; annually thereafter
Who Evaluates	TBD
Report results to	TBD

Standardized Entrance Requirements

Tactic	Standardize entrance requirements and supplemental applications among AAVMC member institutions
Tactical Description	Prospective students, their academic advisors, and AAVMC member schools' recruitment and admission officers all recognize the compromising nature of "unstandardized" application and entrance requirements from school to school. Not only does this phenomenon unnecessarily complicate the admission process for prospective students (perhaps suppressing applications), it also suggests that AAVMC member schools aren't fully united or integrated in their efforts.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	<p>Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors</p> <p>Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine</p>
Target Audience(s)	Prospective students; academic advisors
Begin Date	TBD
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If necessary (to mitigate anticipated pushback from member institutions), conduct market research to assess the negative impact of unstandardized entrance requirements 2. Create an exploratory team charged with (a) identifying the degree of disparity from school to school in terms of entrance requirements, (b) building a case for standardization, (c) assessing the willingness of member institutions to entertain the notion of standardizing requirements, and (d) collaboratively developing a standardization plan 3. Present the plan to AAVMC membership for discussion and approval 4. Execute the plan
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	This will be a time-consuming initiative for AAVMC staff given the highly political nature of the topic. Funding source: TBD
Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Successful execution of the plan; increased VMCAS participation
When to Evaluate	Annually
Who Evaluates	Exploratory team (or a subcommittee thereof)
Report results to	NRS Steering Committee

AAVMC Viewbook

Tactic	Develop and distribute an upscale “viewbook” publication showcasing each AAVMC member school/program
Tactical Description	With the support and collaboration of member schools, AAVMC can convert the current VMSAR book into more of a comprehensive viewbook serving both prospective students and academic advisors. This sponsored, highly designed piece can feature each school’s distinctive character and program, along with standard advising information...a one-stop publication that effectively demonstrates the rich diversity of the profession. Publication design must complement the newly re-designed Web site and any other AAVMC promotional initiatives. This piece, along with companion data cards, is the primary handout at all conferences, conventions and other events where AAVMC has a presence. Collateral pieces may be developed over time as needed, thereby creating an integrated suite of professional-grade marketing materials for the Association.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	<p>Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities</p> <p>Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors</p> <p>Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine</p>
Target Audience(s)	Prospective students; academic advisors
Begin Date	TBD
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect model viewbooks and guidebooks that showcase multiple institutions; inventory useful features 2. Contact current VMSAR book sponsors to secure their continued/expanded support for the new concept; identify additional sponsors and/or funding sources to cover increased costs 3. Select vendor 4. Develop a template and solicit school/program-specific information from AAVMC members 5. Write, design and produce 6. Distribute to academic advisors; supply regional teams who are covering events; develop and execute a direct mail distribution program to AAVMC Web site-generated inquiries
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	<p>Outsource estimate to create and print: 100,000 16-page viewbooks can be produced for approximately \$110,000; 100,000 24-page viewbooks can be produced for approximately \$150,000; and 100,000 32-page viewbooks can be produced for \$175,000 (these costs are provided for perspective only; this should not be construed as a definitive recommendation as specifications have not yet been established for the finished product)</p> <p>Funding source: TBD</p>



Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Data card submissions attributed to viewbook receipt; user satisfaction studies
When to Evaluate	Annually
Who Evaluates	TBD
Report results to	NRS Steering Committee

Regional Veterinary Medicine Forums

Tactic	Regional Veterinary Medicine Forum programs
Tactical Description	Using the Law School Admission Council's (LSAC) "Forum" program as a model, AAVMC can host a series of regional 2-day large-scale, sponsored veterinary "college fair" events in major metropolitan areas across the nation. All member schools must participate and collaborate on program development and execution. Rather than limit attendance to undergraduates, specific programming should be offered at specified times for elementary, middle school and high school audiences (students and teachers) as well.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	<p>Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors</p> <p>Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine</p>
Target Audience(s)	Prospective veterinary students of all ages
Begin Date	TBD
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Secure support for the concept from all member schools/programs 2. Identify regional sites (one major metropolitan area in each region) 3. Enlist a planning team for each event 4. Secure sponsorships and other funding to cover facility and promotion 5. Create a standardized promotional plan to be used for each event, including short-term regional Search Engine Marketing campaigns, e-mail campaigns, direct mail campaigns to primary and secondary schools (posters and letters of invitation to faculty members), and media releases. 6. Execute 7. Evaluate
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	Expenses for these types of events are entirely scalable depending on the facilities used and the amount of cooperation demonstrated by participating entities (AAVMC members). Estimate range: \$10,000-\$25,000 per event for facility and promotion expenses Funding source: TBD
Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Attendance and attendee evaluations; participating schools' evaluations
When to Evaluate	Following each event; comprehensive evaluation at the conclusion of the last event
Who Evaluates	Regional planning team; AAVMC staff compiles regional reports and does a comprehensive assessment
Report results to	NRS

Online Veterinary Medicine Forum(s)

Tactic	Held in conjunction with World Veterinary Day and National Pet Week, AAVMC hosts an online forum for prospective students
Tactical Description	ChatUniversity and any number of other online conferencing applications now allow for the execution of online college fair-style events, providing a general online gathering point for prospective student with separate meeting spaces for specific schools or to discuss specific topics of interest. Such an event, scheduled to occur either on World Veterinary Day or during National Pet Week, could be spun as a major media event not unlike similar online activities hosted by USA Today for college-bound students
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	<p>Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities</p> <p>Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors</p> <p>Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine</p>
Target Audience(s)	Prospective students
Begin Date	Immediately
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruit a volunteer program coordinating team 2. Select an appropriate online conferencing software (poll AAVMC member institutions' undergraduate admission offices for recommendations) 3. Recruit volunteer participants (faculty, admission professionals and enrolled veterinary medical students) to host the event 4. Develop a promotional campaign with emphasis on public relations, e-mail and Search Engine Marketing components 5. Execute 6. Evaluate
Timeline	TBD with the event scheduled Spring, 2008
Budget and funding source	Sponsorship may be required to cover the costs of the conferencing application and promotion. Estimated range: \$10,000-\$20,000 Funding source: TBD
Accountability	TBD
Measure of Success	Participation rates and participants' evaluations (captured in real time during the event)
When to Evaluate	Immediately following the event
Who Evaluates	Program coordinating committee
Report results to	NRS Steering Committee

Web-Based Advisor Resources

Tactic	Academic Advising Resource Center (on www.aavmc.org)
Tactical Description	Academic advisors play the major gatekeeper role for prospective veterinary college applicants. Unfortunately, advisors across the country are not well-informed about the state of veterinary medicine or veterinary medical school issues today. AAVMC should develop a set of simple, easy-to-use, web-based advising tools and resources to help academic advisors give good advice to pre-vet students. Further, the Association should equip advisors with a consistent flow of accurate info about veterinary medicine so they can confidently direct prospective students toward the profession.
Tactic supports these goals or objectives:	<p>Advocating for the veterinary medical colleges to build capacity and graduate more veterinarians to join the workforce, especially in clinical practice for underserved rural and inner cities, and public practice for public health, research, biodefense, food safety, and zoonotic diseases</p> <p>Building an educational workforce and culture that supports the recruitment, enrollment, matriculation, and faculty development of a wider range of ethnic and racial minorities</p> <p>Recruiting a veterinary medicine college applicant pool that reflects the face of society and meets the needs of the public and the employment sectors</p> <p>Providing to the AAVMC member institutions information, background material, and researched selection processes to identify veterinary medical college applicants with interpersonal, communication, business management, self management, leadership, and thinking competencies for personal fulfillment, balanced goals, growth, helping others, gaining respect and financial success in veterinary medicine</p>
Target Audience(s)	Academic advisors across the country who have contact with undergraduate students who might be strong candidates for veterinary medical college
Begin Date	TBD
Step-by-step execution	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enlist an advisory group of new and seasoned academic advisors (4-6) 2. Convene a facilitated meeting of this group to discuss needs, perceptions, available resources, etc. Develop a "wish list" of resources that might be developed and housed on www.aavmc.org 3. Enlist content developers to create resources 4. Work with the AAVMC webmaster or site design team to mount the resources on the site 5. Promote the availability of resources through professional associations serving academic advisors, at all events where AAVMC has contact with academic advisors, and among AVMA membership when appropriate 6. Evaluate
Timeline	TBD
Budget and funding source	Needs for this initiative are difficult to estimate given the potential scope and depth. Estimated range for convening the advisory group, developing and mounting resources, and promotion: \$25,000-\$50,000 Funding source: TBD
Accountability	TBD



Measure of Success	Site traffic and user evaluations
When to Evaluate	3- and 6-months after launch, then a comprehensive evaluation (survey of registered users) at the conclusion of one year
Who Evaluates	TBD
Report results to	NRS Steering Committee