

# 50

**YEARS • LEADERS • INSIGHTS**



**Leading Veterinary Professionals  
Reflect on Their Personal Journeys**



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## DEAR FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES,

AAVMC has had an incredible journey over the last 50 years. This organization—originally comprised of just 21 veterinary medical colleges—has advanced and shaped the educational landscape for aspiring veterinarians, leading to countless innovations that have made the profession what it is today.

AAVMC has served as a strong advocate for policymakers, set the standard for academic excellence and partnered with other organizations to foster progress in veterinary medicine. In the years to come, the AAVMC will continue to adapt to changes within the professional landscape while building on its core strengths of data analysis, advocacy, partnership building and catalyzing and convening around pressing issues.

In recognition of all that AAVMC and its members have contributed to the profession, Banfield Pet Hospital partnered with AAVMC to collect unique perspectives and advice from deans of member institutions as well as other leaders within the profession stemming from their own remarkable journeys. It is our hope that the collective wisdom found in these pages will inspire current and future generations of veterinarians.

On behalf of Banfield Pet Hospital, we couldn't be prouder to recognize AAVMC's legacy by sharing these personal insights with you. These pages enable all of us to pause and celebrate the contributions of this talented group, and to reflect on the passion that inspires each of us to continuously improve the lives of people and their pets.

Sincerely,



**Vincent Bradley**  
*President and Chief Executive Officer  
Banfield Pet Hospital*

Overall, four trends are present across all questions and respondents:

### Forge meaningful relationships.

Whether with colleagues, clients, mentors or mentees, build a strong and meaningful network. It will enable you to accomplish so much more than you could on your own.

**40%** of respondents mentioned the importance of mentors, either serving as one or having one

### Serve people and animals proudly.

Service can take many forms – healing animals, helping clients, contributing through advancing veterinary science or working to educate and mentor others in the profession. However you decide to use your degree, never forget the “why” behind your choice to become a veterinarian.

**50%**  
mentioned the diversity of careers available to DVMs

### Be resilient and adaptive.

The veterinary profession is hugely rewarding. However, there are also times of doubt and frustration. Keep perspective, develop strong support systems and be willing to adapt to changes as they come along.

more than  
**50%**  
of the respondents mentioned the value of an open mind and remaining adaptable

### Keep an open mind.

You may have one career or may have several, and you'll probably encounter a few surprises along the way. Be open to new opportunities, never stop learning, and you're likely to be fulfilled and satisfied.

close to  
**70%** mentioned the importance of at least some form of non-technical skills and knowledge, including teamwork, communication and business skills



## QUESTION 1

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# What do you wish you would have known after graduating from veterinary school?

## The importance of non-technical skills and knowledge

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The incredible value of diversity. It may feel comfortable if everyone in a group agrees all the time, but it's a sure sign that you've probably missed an important viewpoint.

**Andrew T. Maccabe, DVM, MPH, JD**

*Executive Director*

*American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges*

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How critical the essential skills of leadership and communication are to success as a veterinarian. I was so worried about the medicine, but that was the easy part compared to effectively communicating the importance of my medical knowledge.

**Betsy Charles, DVM, MA**

*Executive Director, Veterinary Leadership Institute*

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Every minute spent under the mentorship of an experienced veterinarian or scientist would have been a wise investment in my career.

**Calvin M. Johnson, DVM, PhD, DACVP**

*Dean & Professor*

*Auburn University College of Veterinary Medicine*

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I wish I had a better grasp of the non-technical critical skills, such as time management, conflict resolution, public speaking, consensus building, project management and dealing with problem employees.

**Mark Stetter, DVM, DACZM**

*Dean, Colorado State University*

*College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences*

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The importance of having a mentor to help guide my career.

**William M. Reed, DVM, PhD, DACVP, DACPV**

*Dean, Purdue University College of Veterinary Medicine*

## The diversity of career opportunities available with a DVM

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I wish I would have known just how many options and opportunities would lie ahead. I wouldn't have stressed so much over the minutia.

**Jennifer Welser, DVM, DACVO**  
*Chief Medical Officer  
BluePearl Veterinary Partners*

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I wish I had been better at knowing what was truly important. I also wish I had a better understanding of the fun and value of multiple career paths as a veterinarian. I learned both with experience.

**Douglas Freeman, DVM, PhD, MS, DACT**  
*Dean & Professor  
Western College of Veterinary Medicine, University of Saskatchewan*

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An appreciation for the diversity of disciplines within the veterinary profession. Over the years I was able to take advantage of several career paths even though, as a student, I was singularly focused on a career in companion animal practice.

**Ron DeHaven, DVM, MBA**  
*Chief Executive Officer  
American Veterinary Medical Association*

“There are so many career paths open to veterinarians I never imagined—it's OK to take a risk and do something completely different than your intended path. It just might open new doors.”

**Karyl Hurley, DVM, DACVIM**  
*Director, Global Scientific Affairs  
Mars Petcare*

## The value of perspective early on

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Not everyone will love you and that's fine. Focus on finding the people who do connect with you and like you, and then serve them. It's exponentially more rewarding for everyone.

**Andy Roark, DVM, MS**  
*Practicing Veterinarian and founder of DrAndyRoark.com*

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The profession is about people: our clients and ourselves and how we work together for societal good.

**Timothy H. Ogilvie, DVM, MSc, LLD, DACVIM**  
*Dean  
St. George's University School of Veterinary Medicine*

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You never stop having to make decisions about how you will live your life. When you choose to go through one door, new opportunities arise even as other doors close.

**Elizabeth Arnold Stone, DVM, MS, MPP, DACVS**  
*Professor & former Dean  
Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph*

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You will always worry about your patients, regardless of how many years out you are!

**Justine Lee, DVM, DACVECC, DABT**  
*Chief Executive Officer  
VETgirl, LLC*

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The global impact of the veterinary profession.

**Stéphane Martinot, DVM, PhD**  
*Director General  
VetAgro Sup*

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How prepared I was for my chosen career: I might have spent a little more time enhancing my competence, rather than worrying about proving it.

**Phillip D. Nelson, DVM, PhD**  
*Dean  
Western University of Health Sciences*

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I wish I would have paid more attention to relishing the experiences I faced early in my career. Those first 10 or 15 years after graduation were a blur where I was intensely focused on achieving a set of goals. I certainly could have paid more attention to valuing the path along the way.

**Mark D. Markel, DVM, PhD, DACVS**  
*Dean  
University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine*

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How much the profession was going to broaden its impact on health, food security and international economics and how little the general public would understand that impact.

**Joan Hendricks, VMD, PhD**  
*Dean  
University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine*



## QUESTION 2

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# What advice do you have for new veterinarians on establishing their career in veterinary medicine?

## Build meaningful networks and relationships

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Don't hesitate to ask questions, find good mentors and surround yourself with positive people. Pay attention to life and always remember the 'why' behind your choice to be a veterinarian.

**Ellen I. Lowery, DVM, PhD, MBA**

*Director  
U.S. Professional and Veterinary Affairs, Hill's Pet Nutrition, Inc.*

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The animal you need the most education on is probably people!

**Beth Thompson, VMD**

*Vice President & Medical Director, North American Veterinary Community*

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Work collaboratively with seasoned veterinarians. Look for a mentor who is willing to provide meaningful veterinary and life counsel.

**James P. Thompson, DVM, PhD, DACVIM, DACVM**

*Dean, University of Tennessee College of Veterinary Medicine*

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Keep your options open and network. You never know where your career will take you if you embrace opportunities and follow your passion.

**Peter Constable, BVSc, MS, PhD, DACVIM, DACVN (Honorary)**

*Dean, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Veterinary Medicine*

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Maintain a network of colleagues. You need to know you are not alone in the challenges and trials and tribulations of daily work life.

**Michael T. Cavanaugh, DVM, DABVP**

*Chief Executive Officer, American Animal Hospital Association*

## Remain open and adaptable

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Stay on an exploratory path that you illuminate, and remain unfailingly kind.

**Theresa Entriken, DVM**  
*Medical Director  
UBM Life Sciences*

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Be a proud member of our profession, sustain a positive outlook, bring your enthusiasm and thirst for knowledge to every step in your career.

**Bernadette Dunham, DVM, PhD**  
*Director  
Center for Veterinary Medicine, U.S. Food and Drug Administration*

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Be open-minded and flexible, whether you're performing your first spay, deciding whether to track in large or small animal or signing your first contract.

**Indu Mani, DVM, ScD**  
*Chief Veterinary Officer  
Brief Media*

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Be open to all opportunities to serve animals, people and the environment. Veterinarians are natural leaders. With our comparative biomedical training we serve as invaluable resources to address our societal needs.

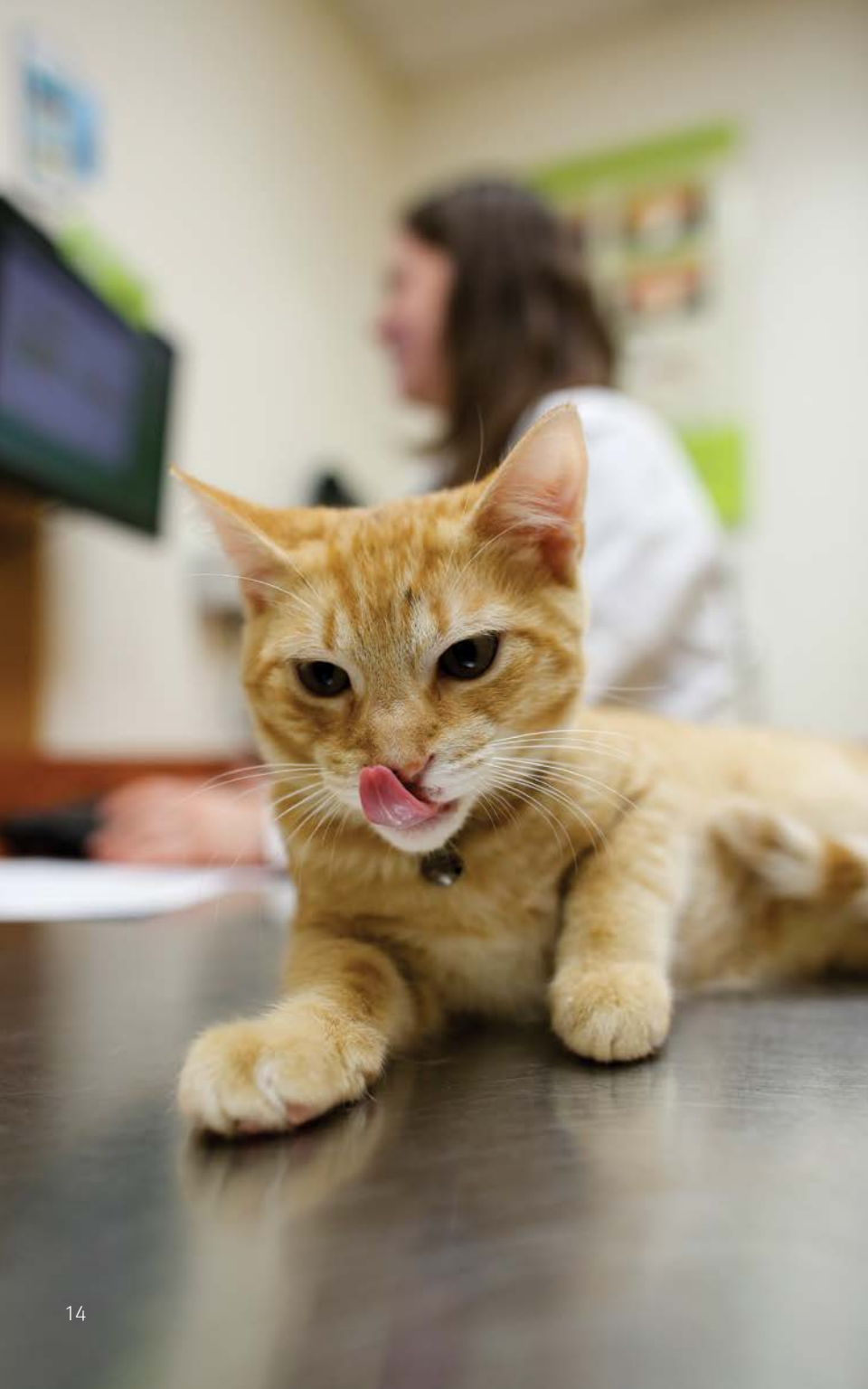
**Michael Lairmore, DVM, PhD, DACVP, ACVM**  
*Dean & Distinguished Professor  
UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine*



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The degree prepares you for life, not just for veterinary science, and you should take the opportunities as they come your way.

**Peter Irwin, BVetMed, PhD, FANZCVS, MRCVS**  
*Principal, College of Veterinary Medicine  
& Professor of Veterinary Clinical Science  
Murdoch University*





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The profession will continue to evolve and the future will be different—even better. Adapting to change and creating a vibrant future is key to success.

**Eleanor Green, DVM, ACVIM, ABVP**  
*Carl B. King Dean of Veterinary Medicine  
Texas A&M University College of Veterinary Medicine & Biomedical Sciences*

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It is okay not to know everything, but it isn't okay not to learn everything you can. Don't shy away from things you don't know or aren't good at.

**Jean Sander, DVM, MAM, DACPV**  
*Dean  
Oklahoma State University Center for Veterinary Health Sciences*

## Be bold

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You have a world of opportunity in front of you—look forward to new opportunities and take a chance. Listen carefully to advice—but follow your heart.

**Alastair Cribb, DVM, PhD, FCAHS**  
*Dean and Professor of Clinical Pharmacology  
University of Calgary Faculty of Veterinary Medicine*

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Consider a wide range of career options, be bold and have fun!

**Trevor R. Ames, DVM, MS, DACVIM**  
*Dean  
University of Minnesota College of Veterinary Medicine*

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Challenge yourself intellectually and technically, within reason, at every stage of your career. Feeling comfortable is very much over-rated.

**Jeffrey Wichtel, BVSc, PhD, DACT**  
*Dean  
Ontario Veterinary College, University of Guelph*

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Keep an open mind as to what career path you want to pursue today, tomorrow and in the future. Be courageous and follow your dreams, don't be afraid of the future—take chances and you'll be successful and satisfied.

**Rustin M. Moore, DVM, PhD, DACVS**  
*Dean  
The Ohio State University College of Veterinary Medicine*

“Don't be afraid to ask for help and always be willing to learn. Be proud of your profession and have the confidence that is required to achieve your goals. Aim high.”

**David Argyle, BVMS, PhD, DECVIM-CA, MRCVS**  
*Dean of Veterinary Medicine  
University of Edinburgh*





### QUESTION 3

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Looking at your career,  
what are you most  
proud of?

## Serving the profession that I love

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Eradicating pneumovirus from turkey flocks in Minnesota. We worked together and we did it!

**Marion Garcia, DVM, MSc**  
*Chief Veterinary Officer  
American Humane Society*

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Starting a feline-exclusive practice in the earlier days of feline medicine and building it from the ground up into a successful 3-doctor practice. I am very proud to have been able to make a difference in my profession and for the world of cats that I love.

**Vicki L. Thayer, DVM, DABVP**  
*Executive Director  
Winn Feline Foundation*

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I really believe that our pets make us better people. I'm so happy that I've been able to help make the world a little better by enabling people to grow as human beings by helping them love and care for their pets.

**Karen Faunt, DVM, MS, DACVIM**  
*Vice President of Medical Quality Advancement  
Banfield Pet Hospital*

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Being a strong advocate for technicians as I consider them vital to the veterinary profession. Vet techs truly rock!

**Janet Donlin, DVM, CAE**  
*Chief Executive Officer  
American Veterinary Medical Association PLIT*

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Giving back to the profession I love.

**Sheila Allen, DVM, MS, DACVS**  
*Dean*  
*University of Georgia College of Veterinary Medicine*

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I am most proud of developing a very successful animal hospital with a very dedicated team, where the team came first.

**Daniel Aja, DVM**  
*Chief Medical Officer*  
*Banfield Pet Hospital*

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Combining my medical and business skills into a professional niche that allowed me to provide real value to the veterinarians and clients I work with.

**Karen E. Felsted, DVM, CPA, MS, CVPM, CVA**  
*PantheraT Veterinary Management Consulting*



“Educating others outside the profession about the tremendous value our profession brings to the health and well-being of animals and people. It’s a privilege to serve in a profession whose hallmarks are caring and compassion.”

**Deborah Kochevar, DVM, PhD, DACVCP**  
*Dean & Lois Foster Professor*  
*Cummings School of Veterinary Medicine, Tufts University*

## Those I've been able to mentor along the way

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Dialoging and sharing ideas with veterinary students. They represent the next generation of our profession and I love their optimism and energy.

**Carol McConnell, DVM, MBA**  
*Chief Veterinary Officer  
Nationwide*

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Helping struggling students to achieve their goals and be successful.

**Ted Whittam, BVSc, PhD, DACVCP, FANZCVS**  
*Associate Dean of Clinical Programs  
University of Melbourne Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences*

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The young people that I've been able to help along the way.

**Lisa K. Nolan, DVM, PhD**  
*Dean & Professor  
Iowa State University College of Veterinary Medicine*

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My commitment to and passion about veterinary education, not only for veterinary students but also for veterinary practitioners, particularly those in developing countries.

**Colin Burrows, BVetMed, PhD, DACVIM, Hon FRCVS**  
*President  
World Small Animal Veterinary Association, University of Florida*

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That in all my roles, I have been able to influence other veterinarians as a mentor.

**Christine Jenkins, DVM, DACVIM-SAIM**  
*Senior Director  
Veterinary Medical Services, Zoetis*

## The ways I've grown as a person

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That I was always looking for something else to improve personally and professionally.

**Gary Goldstein, DVM, FAVD, DAVDC**  
*Chief Medical Officer  
Best Friends Veterinary Group*

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Being willing to take a chance and go for it: to try a surgery I had never done before, to buy into the veterinary practice, to volunteer in organized veterinary medicine. I am also proud of my resiliency, which has been tested over the years. I have always being able to channel my inner Scarlett O'Hara, '...tomorrow is another day.'

**Karen Bradley, DVM**  
*Founding Board Member  
Women's Veterinary Leadership Development Institute*

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Moving from my introverted preference and 'flight' response to being able to lift my head and develop 'horizon thinking' where I can try new ways of doing things and collaborate with other people to accomplish mutually beneficial goals. Our profession has gifted us with many opportunities—we need only to look for them.

**Jane Brunt, DVM**  
*Executive Director  
CATalyst Council*

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Practicing Veterinarian and founder of  
DrAndyRoark.com

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