

Western Veterinary Conference COE Listening Session February 15, 2015

The session was transcribed word for word by an independent company. The audio is transcribed without editing/changing grammatical errors to preserve the session's authenticity. Filler words such as "uhh" and "umm" are removed to best represent the integrity of the recording.

Comments made during the COE Listening Session represent the opinions of the individual cited to the left of the transcript. There are several areas in which the audience spoke over one another without identifying themselves.

Jane Berkow: We're going to give it another five minutes, but at the same time, I'm going to encourage you move forward, because there's no point in having a session, if this is the size we're going to have, with everybody sitting in the rear of the room. Move on up. We'll give it five minutes, and then we'll start.

Five minutes pass

Jane Berkow: OK, folks. We've waited the five minutes, and I still encourage those of you who are sitting way in the back, please come forward and join the rest of them up here. We won't bite. Again, as I said, I'm Jane Berkow, and I'm going to be the moderator of today's listening session, and this is the second listening session that the COE has held. The first was held January 18th, in Orlando, Florida, with the North American Veterinary, C stands for ... Yeah, anyway.

This is the second listening session, and before we go any further, I'd like to have the folks that are sitting to my left introduce themselves. I'm starting with Dr. Derksen.

FDerksen: Hi, I'm Fred Derksen, and for a day job I work at Michigan State. I've been there for a long time. I'm board certified in internal medicine, PhD in physiology. I worked in the clinic, mainly horses, for decades, and I chaired the Department of Large Animal Clinical Sciences there for about a decade. Now, I chair another department, called Food Science and Human Nutrition.

That's my day job. On the council, I've been there almost six years now. They're six year terms, so I'm almost at the end of my sixth year. I represent basic science on the council. I chaired the Academic Affairs committee. I have been vice chair, and this year I chaired the council.

Nicole Roberts: I'm Nicole Roberts. I'm not a veterinarian. I work in human medicine. I am an Assistant Dean for Faculty Development and Medical Education. I

represent the public on the council, and I currently serve as the chair of the Academic Affairs committee.

Ronald Gill: I'm Ronald Gill. I'm a member of the Council on Education, representing private mixed clinical practice. I'm a practitioner, a little bit shy of 40 years, now, and I'm in my fifth year representing mixed practice on the council. Currently serving as vice chair.

Jane Berkow: OK, great. These folks are here to listen, and in some cases where we might need to get some facts clarified, and so forth, they will be able to provide some information so that we all are understanding the issues accurately. Dr. Derksen, after a few minutes, is going to make a little presentation. That's their purpose of being here, but definitely to hear you and your concerns.

Our little agenda for our session, today, is that, before we go much further, I'm going to review the themes of the comments and opinions that were expressed at the January 18th meeting and listening session. Then, as I said, Dr. Derksen's going to make a brief presentation about the Council on Education, so that we can all have the same level playing field and understanding about how the COE works, and so forth. Then, we're going to open up the floor for comments and input from you, and then we're going to wrap and close and talk about next steps.

I want to review the comments that were made at the January 18th meeting, as I said, and there are three groupings of comments. This first grouping was around the relationship of the COE with the AVMA, and with the AVMA membership, and the COE's alignment with the Department of Education. There was a number of concerns expressed that there were conflicts of interest arising from the COE being a standing council of the AVMA. Those that spoke expressed some concerns about the relationship between the COE and the AVMA, which creates conflicting dual roles for the AVMA, as an accreditor, and as an association representing the profession, that appears to impair the AVMA's ability to represent and advocate for the profession. There also were some, related to that, concerns about the firewall between the AVMA and the COE were insufficient and that the AVMA unduly influenced the COE decisions.

Third point that was made were the concerns about differences about how the outcomes of the NACIQI, which is the National Advisory Committee for Institutional Quality and Integrity. There was a meeting and an ensuing report, that there were differences in the way outcomes were communicated by the AVMA and other sources. At least this was

the concern that some individuals raised. Then, the fourth point that was made, was the possibility that the COE procedures are not in line with the US Department of Education laws and regulations.

The second set of themes, comments, seemed to evolve around the COE's policies and accreditation standards. There were concerns around the perceived inconsistent application of standards, particularly around distributive model schools and foreign schools, and that they're not looking out for the best interests of the members, and thereby, reducing the overall quality of veterinary graduates.

Another concern was about the distributive model of veterinary education. The feeling is that it wasn't sufficient for educating quality veterinarians. Then, third point was around the application of the standards, particularly regarding research facilities that leads to redundancy where all veterinary schools need to duplicate their capital investment in order to meet the standards. The suggestion was made that we might start looking at the development of centers of excellence. Then, the fourth point, concern, that was raised, was the feeling that there was deterioration in the quality of education to prepare new graduates for veterinary practice.

Then, the third set of concerns evolved around the impacts of the COE's accreditation practices on, or for, students and the practicing veterinary community, and specifically the concerns were that the foreign veterinary schools have different admission processes, taking students after completion of high school, for example. They speak different languages and teach different laws and regulations, and due to the international differences, and that are not comparable to US schools, and yet, accreditation provides them with a de facto veterinary license in the United States. At least this was some people's impression, that that was the case.

Then, the second point was that the accreditation of non-profit schools for profit, allowed access to students through federal loan programs, thereby producing more students with high student debt loads. Then, finally, there were concerns about the oversupply of veterinarians.

With that, those were the themes that emerged out of the January conference. We may explore some of these further today, and hopefully hear some new concerns or issues that you might want to bring to the table today. I'm going to turn it, right now, over to Dr. Derksen, who's going to make a presentation we thought might be useful for all of us to hear and understand.

FDerksen:

Thanks to everybody for being here. I appreciate your interest in accreditation and the Council of Education. This is truly a very brief presentation. Very broad overview to make sure that everybody has, at least, this level of understanding about accreditation. Accreditation is voluntary. No schools have to do this, although the benefits to the schools are such that certainly those in North America all want to be accredited.

It's a comprehensive external peer-review process. As opposed to Europe, let's say, where the government does the accreditation, in the US, the system is by peer review. We are the peers. The Council of Education are the peers that review the colleges.

Its goal is to ensure that the educational program meets acceptable levels of quality and promotes continuous quality improvement. This is really important. Why are we doing this? Well, everybody wants to make sure that there is at least a minimum level of quality of education, and then over time, this quality improves. We've been accrediting schools for a hundred years, and we don't want the schools to stay where they were a hundred years ago. We want to continuously improve the schools.

Specific for the DVM, or equivalent, program, everything begins with standards that schools have to meet. Those standards are developed with the input of stakeholders, and again, they evolve over time. When the COE started, in the 50's, there were a certain set of standards, and they have evolved as veterinary schools, veterinary education, and the veterinary professions evolved.

The way we do this, is that we review standards on a regular basis. We ask input from all the stakeholders, and then based on that, evolve the standards. Here they are. There are 11 standards, and they address all the aspects of a veterinary school from organization, finances, physical facilities, going all the way down, you can read this. Research and outcome assessments, 10 and 11, are standards that have been controversial. These standards are reviewed on a regular basis. People are allowed to give input. The Council looks at it, and these standards then evolve.

How is accreditation done? Well, it all starts with a self-study. Each school that wants to be accredited has to do a self-study. It's a very comprehensive process. A big document is generated. The colleges do this with the help of their own stakeholders. They come up with, this is what we think we're doing. Then, site visitors go to the schools. Onsite review by trained site visitors. The site visit, on average, is three and a

half days in length. Currently, we have 35 trained site visitors that are US people, and then 13 Canadian ones. Those site visitors get intensive training. These folks are all from all walks of life. In veterinary medicine, they're educators, they're practitioners. There are public members. They have their own background in education. They don't start from scratch.

In addition to that, they get two and a half days of training, and then annualized retraining. They evaluate the college by use of a rubric that is very much standardized. They read the self-study, they go there, and then they evaluate the college on each standard, using this standardized rubric.

One of the issues has been how do we evaluate the infrastructure, the facilities and so we inspect facilities used in instruction that are on campus, so every facility that's used for teaching on campus is visited. It's a whole day that is used to do that and we also inspect the facilities used off campus. These off campus facilities must have written description of educational objectives, and each one of those is visited by at least two members of the site visit team. We have, sort of, this set of rules as to what facilities need to be visited.

They are any site that all students are required to be at. Those are core sites. Any site that all students in this specific track are required to be at. If it's a food animal track, then sites that all food animal track people need to go to, all those sites are visited. Then any external site used for required clinical training that is visited by at least 20% students over two years, should be visited.

Those are all the sites that we visited. If there's 50 of them, in a distributive model school, we go visit all 50 of them. We do look at all of those sites. How do we do this off campus clinical sites inspection of a distributive model of education? Again, this is an issue that people have talked about and worried about, so each of these sites I just mentioned are visited by at least two members of the site visit team. The personnel who supervise students must be there to answer questions, and we evaluate those sites by completing a standardized checklist, in a similar manner to veterinary teaching hospitals.

Those sites are evaluated using the same standards, or the same level of inspection, as you would do for an on campus veterinary teaching hospital. Then, there are lots and lots of interviews. For those of you that have gone through these site visits, it's very exhausting. We talk to everybody in the school. Faculty, students, alumni, admissions committee, other committees that are listed there, administration,

graduate students, interns, technical staff, you name it, everybody involved in veterinary education at these schools is interviewed through an interview process.

We then have an exit discussion with the dean, and the chief executive officer of the institution, sometimes the president or the provost, and then the site team reports their findings in a reportive evaluation to the Council on Education. They come up with this report of evaluation, that goes to the Council and they use a standardized rubric.

Now, what happens with that when it comes to the Council meetings? Well, the COE reviews the self-study and the reportive evaluation. They deliberate, and this is done taking lots of time. This is not a rubber stamp thing. For each reportive evaluation, any time we evaluate a school, we spend hours talking about it, looking at the rubric. Many discussions which, imagine with 20 people on the Council, that each have their own strong opinion, all come from different parts of veterinary medicine, there's going to be lots of discussion about what this means and so on.

At the end of that, we make a decision, and these decisions are either the school is accredited; the school is accredited with minor deficiencies, probationary accreditation, or terminal. Currently, we have schools in all of those categories, except terminal accreditation.

That's not the end of it. Each school needs to be evaluated at least every seven years, but at the same time, they also have to submit an annual report. These are called interim reports. Colleges are required to submit a report, at minimum, on an annual basis, whether you are accredited, whether you have minor deficiencies, or whatever status you're in. All schools will have to do that. They also have to report substantive changes before they implement them. If they want to have many more students, or change hospital or whatever it is that they might want to do, colleges are required to inform the Council and receive approval prior to implementation of substantive changes.

Why do schools want to go through all of this? Well, there are great benefits to students, when a school is accredited. Their students are eligible to sit for the NAVLE, and they're also eligible for student loans, through the US Department of Health and Human Services. If you're not accredited, that's a problem.

How about the Council? Can you just be a body and say, "I'm going to be your accreditor," or it has to be there's some standard for that? Well, of course there are. In fact, the US Department of Education accredits the

Council. We accredit schools. The USDE accredits the Council. Again, it's a voluntary process, to be recognized as a national accreditor. Accrediting agencies must be eligible. That's going into the weeds a little bit.

Importantly, the agencies, meaning the COE, now, must comply with USDE recognized criteria to be recognized. The COE gets evaluated, just like we evaluate schools, on a regular basis, and then makes sure that we adhere to their standards. The AVMA COE has been recognized by an accreditor since 1952. Before that, the predecessor of the Council has been involved in the accreditation business for many additional decades.

There's one more voluntary accreditation of the Council, and that is through CHEA, or the Council for Higher Education Accreditation. This is a non-governmental higher education organization. Again, recognition is a voluntary process, but if you're recognized by CHEA, that means that the Council, that your accrediting agency, adheres to their standards, as well. Of course, they accredit many other accrediting agencies, dental, the medical, and all of that stuff. The COE is accredited through CHEA, as well, is recognized by CHEA, as well.

That's my presentation. Are there any questions that I might be able to answer? Thank you.

Jane Berkow:

I noticed a number of you taking pictures of what was on the slides, and most of this information, I believe, is on the AVMA website. At least I found most of it there. Is that correct? If you want to read the details, it's certainly there and available for you to study further.

We've got some goals that we'd like to achieve in today's session, and one is, to solicit any new concerns that were not raised in January, at the NAVC session, identify any COE practices that might be good, that you'd like to see continued and so we have a sense of balance. That there's concerns, yes, and there is some things that...keep doing. We'd also like to obtain a deeper understanding of the concerns that have been raised so far, even the ones that were raised in January.

To do that, we've got a few guidelines that we'd like to put forward to help us achieve these goals. One is keep the remarks clear and concise, so we really get to the point and understand the concern that you're raising, or the point that you're raising that's positive. Avoid any redundant commentary, especially if it's an explanation of the concern, because one of the things we want to do is try to get beyond the identification of the concern, to better understanding where that concern's coming from, and why it's important to you.

With that, we'd also like you to share any new thoughts, including anything positive. Share all relevant information, and so, if you can please be specific and give examples, that would be very helpful. For example, one of the concerns raised in January was that, there was a feeling there was a conflict of interest between the AVMA and the COE. If you could help us better understand, specifically, what seems to be a conflict there, that would be very helpful, for the COE to understand the issue that you're raising.

The other is to explain reasons behind one's statements, and focus on interest. What I mean by that is ... I'd like to tell a little story, I think, that kind of illustrates what I mean by interest. There are two kids, and they're fighting over an orange, and a teacher comes along, and she intervenes, and decides, "Well, I'll settle this. I'll just cut the orange in half, and each child will get half an orange." Well, low and behold, when the child got half their orange, on went off and took the peel and threw the orange on the ground, and went off with his peel.

The other kid threw the peel on the ground and went off to eat the orange. Had she explored their interest, or need, or why they wanted that orange, she could have discovered that one child wanted just the skin, to make zest for a cake, and the other child wanted to eat the orange. Had she explored those interests, she could have come up with a better solution that really would have satisfied each child's interest to the max. I think that's what's at play here, because you have some concerns, but if we can get behind that a little bit, in terms of why that's important to you, why you think it's an issue that the COE should address, then it gives them some wiggle room around trying to find solutions that satisfy your interest, or your needs.

Then, identify anything that the COE can do better or differently. In other words, make some suggestions. We will probing more deeply for some ideas that you'd like the COE to consider, as they deliberate and review all the concerns that are raised today, and some of the concerns that were raised in January. With that, are there any questions? Okay.

All right. What I'd like to ... Yes? I'd like to keep it to two minutes, if possible, because we want you to be concise and to the point, so we don't have people spending half an hour, 15, 20 minutes talking about a point, which could be made, maybe more simply. We'd like to try to keep it to that. I think that would be most useful. Right. No more than five. Let's put it that way. Sure. Yeah?

RRichardson: I'm Ralph Richardson. I'm the Dean of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Kansas State University. I get a lot of alumni [inaudible 00:27:41], and the common question that I receive from our alumni, is they do not understand the distributive model, despite the description of the percentage of sites studied. I think that they want to know, how many sites are there? Are they all equivalent? They just do not understand, because that model has not been around long for many alumni to have experienced graduates from that type of a setting. I think greater clarity than 20% of two years of the student experiences would be helpful to clarify, really, what is the experience being gained in the distributive models.

Jane Berkow: Okay. Let me just check with the guy in the back, because we are recording this session for transcription, and I want to make sure he's picking it up, because if not, I'm going to ask you to please stand up to the mics, so ... If you could use the mic, that would be most helpful. That is another point I wanted to make, is that this is being transcribed, will be posted for your viewing later, and so, we want to make sure we have everyone's accurate information.

One of the things, you jumped ahead a little bit. I wanted to, sort of, prime the pump a little bit before we jump into your comments, and for you to, maybe, turn to your neighbors and just for a few minutes introduce yourselves, if you don't already know each other, and just chat a little bit, about, among yourselves, what points you really would like to see raised and discussed today. The other thing that I'm going to do is occasionally, I'm going to turn to the panel and have them, perhaps, provide some more information that would be useful for everyone to understand.

If you have specific questions, then maybe we could really have them respond to you today. It's still the emphasis is on listening. We want to hear from you, but where appropriate, we're going to really open it up a little more of a two way conversation. All right? Let's do that little prime the pump. Chat with your neighbors real briefly, and just talk about what you would like to see come out of today's session.

OK. Let's wrap that up, because you will get a chance to stand up and speak. I'd like to go back to the gentleman who stood up first. Folks, can I have your attention? As you'll see, one of the things that I'm going to be doing today, is I'm going to be recording some of the comments that you're making. For two reasons, one is that it helps you all see and track what we've covered, and it's also going to allow me to kind of go back and review, and then we can keep moving forward like that.

This is not the official record, because as I said, this is being recorded and a transcription verbatim will be provided, but as this is just simply for our purposes today, in terms of seeing what territory we cover. I want to make sure I get who's who, and what the point you made. Is the name Dr. Ralph Richardson? I got that? You are the dean of Kansas State? I heard you say that the alums would like to know more what's involved in the distributive model, like a better description than what's been provided today. Is that correct? Is there anything specific about the distributive model that they want to hear more about?

RRichardson: I think they want to know what quality is in all of the sites, and if that is monitored by COE.

Jane Berkow: Are these sites monitored by the COE? Okay. Great, thank you. Next. I heard a lot of discussion, so somebody wants to say something over here.

MBLeininger: Jane, I'm Dr. Mary Beth Leininger, and I'd just like to know a little about you, and your background, and how you got to be our moderator.

Jane Berkow: OK. Right. Mary Beth ...

MBLeininger: L-E-I-N-I-N-G-E-R.

Jane Berkow: L-E-I-N-I-N-G-E-R. All right. Forgive me the typos, but as long as I've got it spelled right, we're good. Sure. I worked for the US Department of Agriculture with the Animal Plant Health Inspection Service for 20 years. I worked mostly with the plant side of the house, but I certainly worked an awful lot with veterinary services, whose mission it is to protect animal, the national herd, from any foreign diseases. I was keenly aware of a lot of the issues that they did there.

I did strategic planning for USDA, and worked collaboratively with the veterinary services strategic planner, so I was keenly aware of a lot of the issues and things that they raised. I also worked with our wildlife services, which manages the interface between wildlife and human activity, which certainly impacts your world, as you probably know, especially Cattleman Association, with coyotes and things like that.

My background is in organization development, and my colleague, Daniel Stone, facilitated the session in January, and he, unfortunately, had a conflict and was not able to attend here. It looks like I see Ron DeHaven? Hi, Ron. Another colleague from APHIS.

MBLeininger: Is he your boss?

Jane Berkow: Well, he was at one time, when he was the administrator of APHIS. I would say he was my big boss. When Dan couldn't make it, he called me to see if I was available.

MBLeininger: Thank you.

Jane Berkow: Sure. Again, the floor is open for any comments. Did you want to make a comment? Is it Leininger?

MBLeininger: Just say Mary Beth. That will work.

Jane Berkow: Mary Beth, did you have a comment?

MBLeininger: Actually, I had a couple of questions, and I don't mean to be, you know, hogging the microphone, but I will ask them. Again, there's been numerous reflections that accreditation is voluntary, and I do understand the Committee on Higher Education accreditation is a totally voluntary organization. However, I'd like to have some clarification on how we could possibly consider USDE recognition as an accrediting agency to be a voluntary action, when in fact, if a school is not accredited, can they graduate students? Can these students get jobs? Can they get licensed? I just struggle with the word voluntary. I don't think we're voluntary at all. I think it's required.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

FDerksen: I agree, voluntary is, sort of, forced voluntary. Nobody has to be accredited by anybody, so it's voluntary in that sense, but it's clearly in people's best interest to be accredited. Nobody tells a veterinary school to close down if you're not accredited. No. I don't think there would be very many veterinary students would want to go there. Sure, you could get licensed to practice if you took the ECFVG, and got through that process. Practically speaking, I don't think they'd be a very successful school.

Jane Berkow: Okay. I'm going to say let's not focus on my typos. Then we'll just deal with the content, so I want to make sure I capture everything correctly. Okay? Any other points?

William Kay: Thank you. William Kay. Medal of Honor winner, in the sense that I was one of two Council members dismissed, or kicked off, pushed out, whatever you want, in 2007, without the opportunity to learn why I was kicked off. My effort, myself, with my attorney, tried for several months, and we were unable to find out any specific cause of action that I did. I

licked my wounds and continued to push for some of the things that I'd like to discuss today. The Secretary of Education, one of the assistant secretaries, will make a decision soon as was done in 2013, after the 2012 US Department of Education and NACIQI meeting in Washington, 11 and 12, December 2012.

At that meeting, the government and NACIQI issued 14 non-compliant issues. There were actually 15 non-compliant issues. The 15th issue, which may be the most important one of all, was the scope of recognition, and for many years the Council on Education issued letters of reasonable assurance as the first step in accreditation. There is no longer a category of reasonable assurance. That was eliminated by the Department of Education and NACIQI in 2012, and yet, the Council continues to issue letters of reasonable assurance.

They've done so with Lincoln Memorial University in Harragote, Tennessee, Midwestern University in Lindale, Arizona, and I understand, at the University of Arizona, in Tucson, Arizona, is also seeking a letter for a category that no longer exists. Now, why doesn't the Council just get rid of reasonable assurance? That's one point.

Staff recommendations, there were about a thousand letters submitted to the government. The academic side of the equation had many positive letters, but not all. Many academics are not in favor of the Department of Education's five year re-recognition. I and hundreds of others oppose it.

Jane Berkow: I'm sorry sir, it's not in favor the five year ... ?

William Kay: Yes. Normally, the Department of Education recognizes or re-recognizes accrediting agencies for five years, but for the Department of Education, they have not done so with the Council on Education. That's the first time, beginning in 2012, and again in 2014, when there was only a short stay, if you will, or a short extension. One year, right now there are two phases. Six months for one aspect of non-compliant issues, and one year if the Council is able to prove to the Department of Education that there's wide acceptance among academics and practitioners, which there was not among practitioners in 2012 and, specifically, in 2014.

The issue of pre-accreditation is particularly problematic, because it must be limited, which is pre-accreditation before you're actually accredited, to no more than five years, but Western University was granted at least nine years of pre-accreditation before they were accredited for only three years, as opposed to the normal seven year cycle of accreditation. Now, they're back on probationary accreditation again. Clear violation,

and that, I think, drives to what Dean Richardson said about the hundreds of sites all around the world and all around the United States which cannot be, and have never been evaluated.

The NAVLE scores have been applied inconsistently. Absolutely inconsistently! They are not applied to foreign veterinary schools. Why? Language issues. Many foreign veterinary schools do not offer the NAVLE, or don't make a big deal about it. The Department of Education requires consistency. Consistency! That is part of USDE document 602.16, accreditation and pre-accreditation standards, but does the Council on Education actually use the department's accreditation procedures? No!

College accreditation in the United States is the official document for accreditation. Accompanied by the guidelines, which allow accrediting agencies to be given a cookbook on how to comply. Why is that not done? Thank you.

Jane Berkow: I'm not sure I got it all. You may want to take a look here. Let me make sure I understand. Your sense is, is that the US Department of Education issued a report requesting certain things to be done, and you feel that the COE has not done that, and that there's some categories, like reasonable assurance is no longer recognized by the DOE, but yet the COE continues to use this category.

William Kay: That just happens to be one issue. The biggest issue, by far, the overarching issue is conflicts of interest. That question was raised as a major concern. [inaudible 00:45:22], I believe yourself and Dr. Derksen raised that, in the meeting at the North American Veterinary Conference in January. There was no time, sufficient time, to discuss exactly what those particular conflicts of interest include. I can assure you, that while many of them have been submitted to the government, to the Department of Education, and to NACIQI, they may not have been detailed enough, or the opportunity for NACIQI to study them enough, to make the conclusion that there truly are extensive conflicts of interest. The Council is riddled with conflicts of interests, and I'm prepared to prove it.

Jane Berkow: Can you be specific and give examples?

William Kay: Many specifics. Some of the easy ones, is there is always a Council member, and there has been since the mid 90's, an Executive Board member or a member of the AVMA Board of Directors, is an observer at every COE, Council on Education, meeting. Now, that person, this is not a reflection of any of those fine people, but those people receive all the

documents that are given to Council members. They listen to the entire story. They go on site visits. They also have an additional function. They are members of the AVMA, formerly the Executive Board, now and the Board of Directors. They can report to, and they can discuss whatever they want within the Executive Board, or Board of Directors. That, I believe, is a profound conflict of interest, but only one of many.

Jane Berkow: Wait a minute. I'm not sure I'm getting this right. There's a Council member as an observer at the COE meetings?

William Kay: There's an Executive Board member, a member of the AVMA, for decades it was the Executive Board, it is now the AVMA Board of Directors. There is a member, although the policy and procedures manual of the Council still calls the term Executive Board, but it's interchangeable, I guess, until everybody understands that it is now officially the Board of Directors. That person has wide ranging authority to talk with and to be with the Executive Board, or the Board of Directors. That is one conflict. There are many others.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

William Kay: For example, on the accreditation of foreign veterinary schools, there are at least two committees, if not three, that conduct accrediting activities with other agencies around the world, with other accrediting agencies, including the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons in the United Kingdom, the Australia Veterinary Board in the far east, the South African Veterinary conference board, in South Africa, and the European accrediting agencies. These agencies, with the Council on Education, work together. There's not a single word in the policies and procedures manual that allows or describes this particular group of activities. Several veterinary schools have been accredited with these joint accrediting functions.

Now, the government requires consistency. None of these other agencies work, or function, with the Council on Education in accrediting United States, as far as I know, and not involving itself with accreditation of Canadian veterinary schools. Where the heck does the COE come off and allow this? There's no authority for this, and it's clearly inconsistent. I believe, call this a threat, call it a promise, that what will be submitted to the Department of Education and NACIQI, this time around, will be very much more detailed than it has been. As far as what Dean Richardson said about the Western University sites all around the world, this is a madhouse.

They cannot be evaluated. They have never been evaluated. The teams are supposed to stick together. The accreditation of United States veterinary colleges is handled in one way for almost every other school, except Western. Because there are sites everywhere, and the majority of the last two years of the entire four year curriculum is all over the place. At least 40 or 45 states, and maybe as many as a dozen countries. Many of these sites are picked by the students, almost no oversight. I'm sure I've used up more than my 5 minutes.

Jane Berkow: Yeah, you did, and I'm still not sure I'm capturing all your points accurately, so maybe you ...

William Kay: I'll be happy to slow down.

Jane Berkow: Why don't we move on to someone else? You take a look at what I've got here, and then we can come back, so I make sure we hear from other folks.

William Kay: Of course. I apologize to my colleagues for taking up too much time.

Amber Seals Nix: I came today with my husband. My name is Dr. Amber Seals Nix.

Jane Berkow: I'm sorry. It's Amber ...

Amber Seals Nix: Amber Seals, S-E-A-L-S. The last name is Nix, N-I-X, and I'm a 1998 graduate of North Carolina State University, and I would just like the Council to respectfully know that, when I graduated, I couldn't believe that I was receiving a diploma. I had originally planned to go to veterinary school to become an equine practitioner. Later, during my second year, I opened my scope. I thought I could become a mixed-animal practitioner.

I did volunteer work at the North Carolina Equine Barn, which is on the main campus, not at the vet school, to get more experience handling horses. There were no requirements to have an animal science degree, and I met all my interview requirements. My GPA, test scores, anything needed to get admission, were looked upon very favorably, and on the day of my interview, they said, "You can be most assured you will be accepted."

I was so excited to be accepted to veterinary school, and I felt very proud of my professors, that they were trying their best to give me a good education. I felt that our facility was excellent. It was in very good condition. When I was finishing my degree, I did graduate on time, in four years, we were ranked number four in the country. At the time, I believe,

there were 29 schools, and we were graduating about 3,000 to 3,300 students a year, I believe.

I interviewed 15 practices, as a small animal veterinarian, because I had never seen an equine colic surgery or a medical colic surgery, even though I spent three months in the equine barn as part of my required rotations, which I had been excited about, because I had studied for years, the anatomy, the pathology, the diseases, and I paid for this education.

Over the last 10 years since I've graduated, I've paid back this money, with no help from the government. I interviewed for 15 jobs, and one of them I really liked. They offered me a small animal job, with equine as being on emergency. I had to decline the position, because I felt incompetent at seeing equine in any capacity, and they could not offer to teach me what my college should have taught me.

Now, it is unusual for a student to go through a whole month in the equine barn and never see a surgery. By some miracle of God, one girl on my block is a board certified equine surgeon. I do not know how she got her internship, because she most certainly did not get it on our block. We had one arthroscopy that the other two students were allowed to see, but it was determined that the three of us would be too crowded in the surgery room.

I've done anesthesia with horses, but I never saw the other side of that drape. I've seen slides in lectures, showing me what it would look like if I was a veterinarian, what I would see, and it just dumbfounds me that this was an AVMA accredited school. I was a very qualified candidate for admission. I also worked for the clinical pathology lab. I was one of four students picked, each year, to help run cerebral spinal fluid counts, CVC's on all species. That's one of the reasons I didn't do volunteer work with other species during my summers off, is I worked for the lab.

I became proficient in doing the lab side of it, which did help me with the small animal portion, but not the clinical aspects of large animals. Also, for the food animal portion, I spent a month in the barn, and we rarely saw anything but a Holstein cow. All of our cases went to necropsy. Some days, we only had one or two patients, and students shared cases. The case load was so low with food animal and equine, that I felt those two months would have been better served helping me do small animals, since as a senior I decided I would only be competent in small animal.

Now, I've had licenses in five states. I have three years' experience as a daytime small animal practitioner and seven to eight years' experience as an emergency critical veterinarian without a board certification, but my resume is not acceptable to the areas of Asheville and Portland, Oregon, because we are supersaturated with excellently qualified veterinarians, most of whom have done internships and have graduated since I have, from better programs that have been tweaked, and have been overhauled.

In North Carolina, when I left, some of the employers are telling me, "We don't really hire from your year anymore," almost like we're a bad vintage of wine. I don't think letting more students in ... We had about 72 students a year in our anatomy lab was comfortable. I don't think having a hundred students there, now, serves them well. They can't be seeing more cases than we did. They must be splitting them and sharing them. I don't see how they're getting their clinical experience in large animal.

I was able to do three spays before I graduated, and I had to fight to get the third one in. I had to not do a cruciate surgery on a small animal, soft tissue patient, because I did not want to graduate with less than three spays under my belt. To me, that would just not cut it.

Jane Berkow: Amber, is this accurate, in terms of the bottom line, is that you feel like you were not prepared to do the work you wanted to do?

Amber Seals Nix: I was not prepared to do the work that I originally wanted to do, so I redefined my goal to be a small animal veterinarian. Now I'm being told that my previous experience in the supersaturated markets, is not up to snuff, so called the bar has been raised. "We like our job applicants to have done an internship. Most of our job applicants have already done an internship already. You haven't worked in four years. What's going on with that?"

They don't ask me if I've had kids, but no I have not had kids. I've not been sitting on the sidelines. I've been trying to get job interviews. I've come in as the runner up candidate. "We'll hold your resume for three years, we liked you so much." Being the runner up candidate does not pay your bills. I sold my house in Asheville two years ago, and now, my husband and I would like to purchase a practice in Montana, in a rural county that needs a small animal veterinarian.

We could do that job with excellence, but now we were trying to get the Montana State Board to recognize that not everybody has three years in the last five in active practice. There has been a recession. Some of us live

in areas where there are too many small animal veterinarians, and some of us can't switch over to do mixed-animal, even if our state needs it.

I don't want other students ... And my loans are paid off. I felt my loans were reasonable. I only borrowed \$36,000 to go to school. It probably ended up being \$75,000 with interest over a 10- year period. I felt that was fair, but I don't want other students to go through what I have. I mean, not even counting the depression, anxiety that I wasn't expecting. At one point, I had worked at several emergency hospitals within a two and a half hour radius of Asheville, exhausting all of my possibilities, because employers would get tired and just decide, there are so many of you, we'll just pick someone else that wants less money. They would do this on a routine basis. This isn't uncommon.

Jane Berkow: What would you like to see the COE do differently, so that it wouldn't put students into the position you've described?

Amber Seals Nix: Well, you accredit the education, but we need to also look at the flow of students coming into the schools. We are increasing the number of students sitting for education and the exams, so thus increasing competition to get jobs. Previously, before the recession, I had never had more than a 6 month gap in my resume, and now, I'm going on almost 4 years. It is very hard to get anyone to even look at my resume, so my husband and I were like, "Well, we feel confident that we have enough experience."

After his father passed away and left us an IRA, that we could probably cash part of that out, and find somewhere that doesn't have too many corporate practices, where someone's retiring, in a stable community, since the US economy is slowly coming back. We found a hospital, and now we're trying to get Montana to recognize that we are capable graduates. That we're not incompetent. We don't need to wait until November to take the NAVLE, on subjects like food animal and equine, that I did not feel competent at when I graduated.

I passed the National Board Exam and the CCT on my first try, with no problems. I've had five licenses in different states, with no disciplinary action. I've seen thousands of emergency patients. I've done GEV's with high success. I've seen dogs from the Trailblazers come in and be happy with my work. Now, I'm just being tossed aside, like, "We'll consider giving you a temporary license, if the retiring owner would like to monitor your work, but we're not sure that that would be safe for the citizens of Montana. Our first job is to protect the citizens of Montana," they say, not to find you jobs.

"We can work on trying to get you a license, but you may have to take that exam in November, this coming November, and your scores will be available next January." Then they would act on my application within 45 days of next year. The practice went up for sale at the end of December, and my husband viewed it at the beginning of January. We're ready to make an offer on it, and jump on it, and do whatever it took to be our own bosses, and to turn this around, to make it a success story.

We're just at our wit's end. We just want to speak ... He also wants to speak, but I want to say there are too many veterinarians in a lot of the metropolitan areas that are highly desirable to live. People have spouses and have to relocate, and they're finding themselves, sometimes looking at states where they're not even qualified for a license anymore. They say that my previous experience is irrelevant, if I haven't practiced at least three years in the last five years.

Jane Berkow: OK. I'm hearing two things. One is, you'd like COE maybe to look more closely at when they accredit a college, to look at the opportunities for practical experience.

Amber Seals Nix: Right.

Jane Berkow: So you feel more qualified when you graduate. Secondly, to then also consider the number of students that are applying and graduating.

Amber Seals Nix: Right. Some of my friends did externships. They went to other veterinary schools and did two week externships in large animal. We were only allowed to do an externship if we committed to it for a one month period, so very few people in my class were able to line up a one month externship. I had no experience in any intestinal, urogenital surgeries. I'd only done goat surgeries in junior lab. They had cancelled the pony labs, that the year before me had. Our dental lab was cancelled, just because our surgery professor was building a new specialty hospital, and they did not reschedule it.

I passed. I passed equine surgery with a B, and I had never seen an equine colic. I just don't think that's right. I mean, there must be more people like me. At least I changed my mind and decided I wanted to do small animal. I don't know where I would be if I was really dead set on still being an equine vet.

Jane Berkow: Okay, thank you very much. Okay. Next?

Paul Pion: I just have some comments later, but I just wanted to address something for Dr. Nix, and I think the Council would agree.

Jane Berkow: I'm sorry. Could you give me your name?

Paul Pion: Sure. Paul Pion. P-I-O-N.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

Paul Pion: I think, specifically, a comment, NACIQI has made it pretty clear that accreditation should not look at workforce issues. I think, in general, that the Council is the focus here. I think that this actually speaks to the point of why the Council being so closely affiliated to AVMA, beyond being a conflict of interest, keeps the AVMA from serving one of the major functions they should provide for the profession. That is advocacy for them, and pushing forward.

I think it has kept AVMA from trying to deal with the oversupply issue in the ways that somebody who is unrestrained from doing so, because of their fears of looking like their Council on Education, involved in accreditation, would be trying to limit workforce. I don't think it is the Council function at all, but it certainly should be an AVMA function, to be trying to find a rational balance between the supply and demand in this country for veterinary services. The fact that they're on opposite sides to that, limits the ability of AVMA to serve their membership. Thank you.

Jane Berkow: Let me see if I understand this right. You think that, maybe, perhaps, the AVMA should be addressing the workforce issue, and then somehow affecting the COE's [crosstalk 01:05:45]...

Paul Pion: No, not at all. I'd say that's the argument for why there should be a separate, autonomous organization.

Jane Berkow: Okay, right.

Paul Pion: It's keeping AVMA from doing their job for the profession, because they are so closely affiliated to the Council.

Jane Berkow: Right. Okay. Yes?

Amber Seals Nix: [inaudible 01:06:12].

Jane Berkow: Yes. Did I get your ...? I'm still not sure I got your name right.

Amber Seals Nix: Yeah. My name is Amber Seals Nix, with no hyphen. The last name is N-I-X.

Jane Berkow: Oh, okay.

Amber Seals Nix: The three thousand students graduating, I was talking about nationwide. At the point that I was graduating, we were graduating, I believe, about 3,000 students a year, and that's gone up tremendously.

Jane Berkow: Just to get a flavor of the competition. Okay. All right. Any other ... Anybody else?

JBregman: My name is Dr. Jack Bregman. I'm a 1966 graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, and I've been in private practice since graduation, and currently have the pleasure of practicing with my sons, who are both veterinarians. I'm greatly concerned about the accreditation of veterinary schools. When I graduated and began practice in Brooklyn, New York, there were only 8 other animal hospitals. I carried a student loan debt of \$8,500. That's four years at Columbia University, and four years at the University of Pennsylvania.

Today, there are over 80 veterinary hospitals in Brooklyn, and student debt has skyrocketed. I have interviewed a young woman, two years ago, who owed north of \$350,000. My biggest concern is the quality of education students are receiving and how it relates to their ability to practice veterinary medicine. For 20 years, I was a deputy examiner for the State Board of New York. We gave the practical exam, up in Ithaca, twice a year.

I routinely examined test takers, who graduated from veterinary schools, who had absolutely no business practicing veterinary medicine in the United States, or the state of New York. One gentleman, in particular, comes to mind. When asked to show me how he would put a twitch on a horse, he proceeded to put the twitch on the horse's tail.

As it currently stands, if you graduate from an accredited veterinary school, foreign or domestic, you merely have to pass the NAVLE, an exam that tests for minimally competent veterinarians. You can be licensed in any of the 50 states in the union. Not a single state in the United States mandates a practical exam.

New York State was the last state to have it, and that stopped in 1995. I believe this should concern both veterinarians and the public. Graduates from foreign schools who speak a different language, and see different

diseases need merely pass a multiple choice test, and a state jurisprudence exam and they can become licensed to practice as a veterinarian in the United States.

Quality is what has made us the most respected of professions. The COE should make every effort to make accreditation a rigorous and ever improving process. The standards of accreditation should not be massaged to fit the institutions seeking accreditation. We are seeing a flood of foreign, and for profit, and distributive model institutions seeking AVMA accreditation. I believe this is to the detriment of our profession. Thank you.

Jane Berkow: Sir? Can I ... Wait, before you go. Let me make sure I get this right. You said something that the graduates from foreign schools only have to pass a written exam, and then they can practice in the United States.

JBregman: There's no practical exam.

Jane Berkow: There's no practical exam.

JBregman: None.

Jane Berkow: One of your real key points is that...

JBregman: The key point is that ...

Jane Berkow: Now, would that be part of what I understand to be the NAVLE? The N-A-V-L-E.

JBregman: It's a multiple choice exam, yes.

Jane Berkow: Right. Which is not issued by the COE, I understand. Is that correct?

JBregman: I'm not sure who issues it. My point is that, we are allowing in substandard graduates and they don't have to take a rigorous exam, nor a practical exam before they can go and practice.

Jane Berkow: From these foreign schools, is what you're saying?

JBregman: Yes.

Jane Berkow: Is there an example of a situation that you're aware of that was the case?

JBregman: Well, yes. Over 20 years, I've seen hundreds of graduates, if not thousands, and the kids educated in the United States could all pass that exam, but if they weren't educated in the United States, some of them would take the exam 5 and 6 times. We saw the same people coming every year to try and take the exam and pass it, and they couldn't, because their education wasn't on par with the education our students got in the United States.

Jane Berkow: I see.

JBregman: I don't feel it's that good anymore.

Jane Berkow: The foreign students were having to take the exam 5 or 6 times, and still not passing.

JBregman: That's correct.

Jane Berkow: Then, how would they practice?

JBregman: They didn't.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

JBregman: We were the gatekeepers. We prevented people practicing in the state of New York that had no right to practice veterinary medicine, because their education was so poor.

Jane Berkow: I see, so you're saying that the practical exam that you administered was the gatekeeping function?

JBregman: That's correct.

Jane Berkow: Otherwise, if they passed the written exam, they're in.

JBregman: Right, as now, because there are no more practical.

Jane Berkow: I see, so you're advocating for the practical aspects.

JBregman: No, I'm advocating ... They stopped the practical exam because it became too expensive. What I'm advocating is that, I'm not a big fan of foreign graduates just having to take a written exam, and get a license in all the states. I don't think these schools should be accredited.

Jane Berkow: Okay, because they're substandard students, then, who passed the test and then practice in the United States.

JBregman: Yes.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

JBregman: If they just study and read enough books, they'll pass the test.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

JBregman: They certainly don't know how to practice veterinary medicine.

Jane Berkow: Okay. Then the other point you made, that the standards should not be massaged to fit the institution, in order to be accredited. Is there an example of that?

JBregman: I don't have an example of that right now. No.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

JBregman: Do you?

ABregman: Yeah. Standard number 11.

Jane Berkow: Sir? Do you want to stand and add to that. You are?

ABregman: I'm Dr. Allan Bregman. B-R-E-G-M-A-N.

Jane Berkow: Brightman?

ABregman: B-R-E-G-M-A-N.

Jane Berkow: OK.

ABregman: I'm a 2002 graduate of Ross University. I spent my clinical year at North Carolina State. Currently, I am New York City's Veterinary Medical Association president, and the New York state representative to the Executive Board. The COE does not require the foreign graduate schools to pass the NAVLE, and so that is where an example of massaging the 11 standards would come in to fit foreign graduate schools. If their graduates are not taking that exam, then there is no 80% pass rate that they can be judged on. I have some other concerns, but I don't know if you want me to go into that.

Jane Berkow: Sure. This is standard 11 is what you feel is being violated then?

ABregman: Yes, because in the United States, all the schools that are accredited in the United States, or foreign schools, such as the Caribbean schools, have to maintain an 80% pass rate of the NAVLE. Other schools, because of language barriers, do not have to maintain that, so they may have one or two students take that test a year, instead of their entire graduating class.

Some of my other concerns, and I just have to find my notes, I'm sorry, as a private practitioner, I currently, with family, own four veterinary hospitals, three of which are in New York City. One is in Orlando. As a medical director, I interview and hire recent graduates, and train recent graduates for our facilities. In the last 12 years, I have hired close to 12 or 13 veterinarians, and work closely with recent graduates and train them.

Some of the trends that I am seeing, currently, as this medical director, is skyrocketing student debt. When I graduated, it was around \$150,000 for my graduating class. I currently hired a your lady, this year. Her debt load was over \$350,000. Starting salaries, when I graduated, I was offered 12 jobs. I didn't even interview, because I knew I was coming back to a family practice, but I was still offered 12 jobs. The salary, in 2002, is greater than I am paying current graduates in 2015.

At any one point and time, currently, sitting on my desk is 12 to 15 resumes, from recent graduates from schools all throughout the United States and the Caribbean.

JBregman: As you were saying?

ABregman: Lastly, practice skills have diminished. It seems that most recent graduates coming out of veterinary school have been trained to refer and refer.

Jane Berkow: I'm sorry?

ABregman: Have been trained to refer. Any complicated or pretty much any case, they recommend to a secondary or tertiary center. In New York City, since I've graduated, there has been at least five to six referral specialty centers that have opened, and the feeling is that simple surgeries, such as cystectomies, even lumps and bumps, should be referred out to these specialty centers.

I'm concerned that the application to seat ratio has dropped. I don't remember what it was when I graduated college; however, the last numbers I've heard is that there are 1.4 applicants for every seat in the United States. I could be wrong on that number, but that's pretty close to what I heard.

Jane Berkow: The application, I'm sorry, of the what?

ABregman: The number of applicants per seats available in the United States has dropped to 1.4. I'm also, as a Ross graduate, from a non-accredited school at the time, I do not understand what the rush is to accredit every school. I know Ross recently became accredited. Ross went through the process, from the time I was in school in 1998, when I entered, until just recently, they went through the process of being accredited to meet those 11 standards.

Recently, multiple schools that have been open less than, like 3 to 4 years, have been accredited. I don't know if it's because they're looking for US students and US money, because once you're accredited, then you can get federal loans. Again, the standard 11, with the 80% pass rate, I feel is one of the standards that is being massaged to accredit these foreign schools, and domestic schools, if they're not passing at that rate.

Jane Berkow: Exactly what do you mean by massaged?

ABregman: Well, if there's a standard that all graduates must maintain an 80% pass rate, and not all the graduates from the school are taking the national boards. Only one or two students take that exam. That's how it's massaged. If you have a class, my class was 75 people. All 75 people took the national board and we passed at a 93% or somewhere around there.

If you take a foreign school that has 400 graduates, and one person takes the North American exam and passes it, then they have 100% pass rate.

Jane Berkow: I got it.

ABregman: Instead of whatever the percentage of is?

Jane Berkow: Okay, got it.

ABregman: Thank you for your time.

Jane Berkow: Sure. Thank you. I saw a hand up?

Robert Nix: My name is Robert Jay Nix. I'm a 1992 graduate of the University of Georgia.

Jane Berkow: OK, I'm sorry. Could you spell your last name, please?

Robert Nix: N-I-X. N-I-X. N-I-X.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

Robert Nix: Yeah. I do have a great concern about the ... I think the quality of veterinary education has declined over the past few decades. You can go to really almost any issue of the Journal of Veterinary Medical Education in the 1980's and you could see some of the same problems. The issue really is that one of the things that we're facing today, is that, those issues never were solved or addressed.

There's a saying by Peter Drucker, who says, "Plans are only good intentions, until they degenerate into hard work." I don't really see the Council on Education, the AVMA, or the schools doing the hard work anymore. I have seen turnarounds. Now, it's personal experience, my father was a nuclear power systems engineer, and after 3 Mile Island, that industry was faced with its existential life. Were we going to be allowed to do what we wanted to do in the future, and they fixed it, in about 10 years.

It took a lot of discipline, and it also took a lot of humility and self-sacrifice, and self-analysis to kind of come up with the idea that they weren't the smartest people in the world, and that veterinary medicine is not the greatest thing in the world. That it does have its part, and for it to do its part, it has to do it with excellence, and it has to figure out what it can do with excellence, and quit trying to train everybody to do, as I call now, it seems to be you need to be a wildlife ecologist. You can be this. You can be that. All with a four year degree, and maybe a little bit of graduate school, when the true answer is if you're going to train a scientist, train them to be a scientist.

If you're going to train a veterinarian to be a clinician; which is what we're licensed to do, that's our, quote, "protected cartel," that the state grants us, train them to do that well. I think the questions are going to be, too, is that the state licensing for veterinarian and other professions, it's going to come under increased scrutiny from the public, because just like Dr. Bregman mentioned, there doesn't seem to be this quality control that exists in veterinary medicine, anymore. We can't police ourselves.

Even the schools, really, can't police themselves anymore. They kind of lack the discipline anymore to do anything to make any changes.

I just really, kind of as an anecdote, the plant that he started, or that he managed, will be in operation until the year 2035. I was there when they built the thing, and I'm 50. I'm not sure if a lot of our best schools are going to be around by 2020. The issue right now, is that they need to get off their ass, look at what has been suggested in the past. A lot of them like tracking. If every school maybe did focus on a center of excellence, that would save a heck of a lot of money. Do we need every school teaching food animal medicine?

We probably need three or four centers of excellence in the country, where we kind of say, maybe to like even the old days, where we used to have regional agreements between the states that said, "Here, the southeast is going to perform one food animal school. There will be one for the northwest," and so forth like that. That way, you can actually, then, give the students the case load. Give them the in depth knowledge, so that they actually come out and serve animal agriculture.

I really think that our shortcomings will become really evident if we ever get a foreign animal disease in this country, because what are we doing, producing 60 to 70% small animal practitioners? None of them really have no interest in agriculture. I had some interest in agriculture, because I grew up next to a pig farm, but the vet school did not consider that important. I think we had two or three lectures on pigs. A little bit on cows. A lot of it was equine colic, and equine lameness, and esoteric procedures in hemilaminectomies and everything else. Stuff that I was not even going to get trained to do but I was there as the surgical retractor and surgical nurse, instead of learning the hands on things.

Like my wife, I'm very disappointed in the education that I got from the University of Georgia. I would have gotten a better education going to work in my dad's industry, where they, to be licensed as a nuclear power operator, it is a tough test. You are tested on a simulator. You are tested on figuring out the problems, and they will fail you, because they will not let anybody in who does not know what they're doing.

Jane Berkow: Again, sir, if I can just summarize, is that you, like your wife, would like a little more emphasis on the practical.

Robert Nix: I think the standards are outdated, in the first place.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

Robert Nix: I think we really need, at this point, and Peter Eyre, who used to be the dean of Virginia Tech, and some others, have talked about, we just really need to re-engineer education, and he really does use the engineering model, which makes total sense, because the engineering profession really responded to the changes in the environment so much quicker than veterinary medicine has.

We talk about the need for animal care in some of these rural areas, and what I found interesting, is that, there's a 1972 National Research Council study, called the Terry Report, because it was chaired by Luther M. Terry, the surgeon general, who told us to quit smoking. It was called the *New Directions for Veterinary Medicine*. They even talked about having animal health paramedics, or technicians, back then.

Jane Berkow: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Robert Nix: Group practices for food animal practice. The same thing came up again the next national study done recently. Forty years later, what is the problem with getting things done? I think there is a distinct desire, in our schools, to avoid innovation. It's more that, "Hey, this is our own little fiefdom. We're going to keep it alive and do what we want to, rather than putting the student and the public first. That is the job of the institution. It is education, number one. Everything else should come after that. I don't think that we're going to see that anytime future.

Jane Berkow: Okay, thank you. I'm wondering if we might just, sort of, take a pause and turn to the panel to see if you have any information you would like to put forward, based on what you've heard so far that might be helpful in people's understanding of the issues.

FDerksen: Yeah. Let me make a couple points just to start with. I think the points raised to do with starting salaries, cost of education, student loans, I think are really, really important. To me, and I'm just talking personally, those are the biggest issues that face veterinary medicine today. I also want to tell you that there's nothing to do with the COE. This is not our purview.

I really agree with you, that those are really important issues, but by statute. The USDE doesn't allow us to address those things, to start with there. What we do work on, is the quality of education. When it comes to the Council on Education, we're very interested in the quality of education. One of our mandates is to help schools come up with new ways of educating veterinary students. Innovation was just talked about, and I think that's a really important point.

Let me address a couple of the issues that has been raised about student outcomes. The NAVLE has been mentioned a couple of times, and I want to point out that, the NAVLE is only one of many outcomes assessment measures that we look at, when it comes to the quality of education. It's the NAVLE. There are lots of surveys done with alumni, of students, of graduates, of employers, that colleges are mandated to conduct, and then the Council evaluates the outcome of this. The outcomes assessment that we require includes the NAVLE, but isn't just the NAVLE.

A point has been made on not evenly using the NAVLE across all schools, national and international students that we accredit. If that was true, then the USDE would not allow us to have that policy. We have to do that. Let me tell you how we actually do that. The NAVLE is not required of anybody. If you are a veterinary school of North America, there is no requirement that any of your students take the NAVLE. That is a voluntary test.

As it turns out, most students in the US take the NAVLE, because when you do take the NAVLE, then you're on the pathway to a license.

Robert Nix: I think you're wrong.

FDerksen: Let me finish.

Robert Nix: You're wrong, because every state references, one, the AVMA as an accepted educational of the Council of Education, as an accreditor of the schools of the graduates that they will accept for licensure, and almost every state requires the NAVLE for you to get a license.

Now, if the point is just to get a veterinary degree for the hell of it, no, you don't need to take the NAVLE. You just take it and go get a PhD in something, but if the issue is that you're producing a graduate to go out and to practice, almost every state's practice act, requires that.

FDerksen: Yes.

Robert Nix: In some ways, you're saying we don't require it, but these people do. If you're trying to measure what is the outcome, in terms of what we're talking about largely are practitioners, well, they're using this, but you say that we don't really require it. You're kind of like, not being totally honest about that, because every state is requiring these license exams.

FDerksen: Okay. There is a conflation here of what is required by the COE, and what's required by state licensing boards. The COE does not require

anybody to take the NAVLE. There's no requirement of that. That's foreign or domestic schools. As you point out, if you want a license in a state, most students choose to do that, but it's not required. When you go to foreign veterinary schools, the majority of students aren't interested in coming to the US, so the majority of students choose not to take that license.

Now, the requirement is, that those students who take the NAVLE, 80% have to pass it. That's the same requirement, whether you are from a foreign or a domestic school. Now, if you have, in your class, only two or three students take the NAVLE, then if one fails, you're already below the 80. For that reason, and this is, again, for foreign or domestic schools, in case of small numbers, we calculate confidence interval. That's for any school, not foreign and domestic.

The NAVLE exam requirement of the COE is applied to every school, evenly. There is no difference between how we apply the standards to any of the schools.

Speaker 15: No, it's not. That's basically, what you're calling, is your normalizing deviants, is that you're allowing, you're putting a spec out, and you're saying, "OK, US we're wanting you to do this. Foreign schools, you don't have to adhere to this spec." That's when the accreditation for any procedure starts to fall.

Jane Berkow: Can you come up to ... I'm noticing that we're trying to make sure we have your points. If you could come to the speaker, that would be helpful.

Speaker 16: Jane, there's nothing up there.

Jane Berkow: I know. My computer ...

Robert Nix: What I'm calling you is, I'm calling you on your bullshit. Okay? This ... Huh?

Speaker 17: Anything [inaudible 01:35:11] is not ours.

Robert Nix: No.

Eden Myers: Whether the NAVLE is required, or not, by the COE, you are not treating it to populations that are being exposed to this [inaudible 01:35:25] equally.

Paul Pion:

Yeah. I would say, first of all, moderator, you're doing a good job, and it's a hard job, because I know you know nothing about the background of this. You're getting all of this stuff new, and trying to absorb it and you actually left it that I said COE should be involved in workforce issue, and I don't think. I said that's an AVMA issue.

I think what we're facing now, or example you asked for, of where the COE is dicking and dinking with these standards to fit the situation. Yes, with the help, with Phil Kass on the Council, and I've argued this with Phil, there's no real rational reason and validity to the method you came up with. You just came up with something to validate it, because UNAM and other schools didn't have people taking the NAVLE, so you needed a way to get over that.

You've done the same thing with the research standard. Ross, Western, the new schools, they basically don't have research going on. You found a way. Same thing with the teaching hospital standards. This is what I think is the real concern, is that, we all agree we need evolution, and we need to do experimentation in education, and that's a wonderful thing. It's being done in a way that brings across as if there's a mandate to accredit, as opposed to showing that excellence is driving how we're going to do that.

What I'd really like to hear and understand is what do we hope to come out of all we're doing here today? You know, this is the second round, and in some ways we're repeating what we did at North American, although some really good new points, I think, have come up. In some ways, I wonder if this is just to check off a box for NACIQI, that you listen to a couple of veterinarians at North American, and you listened to a couple here, and we're going to listen to a couple at AVMA, and so you've gone out and tried to get acceptance within the profession.

I think, just like the NAVLE standard, it's not going to work. It really comes down, and I think Dr. Nix very well said, what does this do to demonstrate address what we're doing to advance veterinary education, or address the issues we face as a profession? The professional issues, as you said, are not really the COE's mandate. It brings up what I heard, the biggest advance I heard, after the NAVC session, was, for the first time coming out of AVMA leadership, and coming out of some of AAVMC leadership, and many deans, that they're starting to face that it's time to stop denying the potential conflicts of interest that exist.

We need to stop wasting time and resources, and find ways to find common ground and get on with the issues that the physicians seem to

have addressed, and I just found a white paper from the dentists' accreditation, that they're starting to address. They're facing the same type of appearance of conflicts of interest, and they're looking for solutions.

I really think that we must do this, so we can free up time and resources, so we can get on with the business of improving the state of veterinary education and addressing the problems impacting the colleagues, post-graduation, that we've heard today. These are not COE issues, but I think we need to find a way to stop justifying what we're doing now, and find that common ground, so we can move forward. Thanks.

Jane Berkow: If I could pursue it a little further, in terms of need to find common ground, and I'm sorry, my computer just went [inaudible 01:39:15].

Paul Pion: That happens, often, to all of us.

Jane Berkow: Yeah. My computer had another agenda going, so I kind of, partially, heard everything going on. I apologize for that. Coming back to saying on the conflict of interest, and that we need to do something about that, have you any thoughts or ideas?

Paul Pion: I think that the COE needs to separate and become autonomous from AVMA. I'm starting to hear many within leadership recognize that. I don't think we're going to get past this issue and find common ground and be able to move on until we remove that appearance of conflict of interest. Speaking to the Council, I know it's hard. You're hearing the profession and, in fact, some Council members have said to me after the NAVC session that they never really had heard this stuff before. This was new. They had been insulated from hearing the concerns of the profession.

To me, it's not you guys. I don't think anybody thinks that the volunteers on the COE are anything but doing a wonderful service for the profession. As I said at the NAVC, I think you're fish who've been put in a river, and you follow the river you've been given, and you're doing that job. The point is, is that job truly independent from AVMA's desires to accredit foreign schools? There are different opinions on whether should be or not.

That was an AVMA decision to do so, not a Council decision. You followed that mandate and you've tried to fulfill that mandate from AVMA. Speaking to the Council, don't take it personally. I think everybody out here appreciates that you've put your time and you've tried to follow the rules, as it has been explained to you. There are those who believe they

don't follow the Department of Education, USDE, NACIQI regulations. I think we'd all like to see a group be the Council, who is independent, who is looking at nothing more than trying to find a uniform way to accredit and improve the standards of education for this country.

Jane Berkow: Okay. You'd like to see total independence. Okay. Other comments?

Becky Salinger: Hi. I'm Becky Salinger. I have been in private practice for 17 years now. Oh, I hate stuff like this. I come from a different aspect. I sit on the licensing board for Ohio, and I know that we struggle with finding that ground, that standard ground for everybody. I don't see how COE can monitor all the sites for the distributive models. There's just no way.

I know that when we go in to investigate somewhere where we know something's been done wrong, that we can't find it, because they know we're coming. You know? They can clean it up. Everybody can change their story for a day. They can put gloves on that day, and forget about it the next. The level of veterinary medicine, because we do not have a level standard, a nationwide standard that everybody has to meet, other than the NAVLE, it's too variable.

You can't tell me that this doctor, at this teaching hospital here, or this distributive model here, is doing the same thing that the guy 5 miles down the road is doing. You can't guarantee that to me. At least with the teaching hospital, I have secure knowledge that it's the best of the best, teaching the best that they can. They're doing the research. They're there because they're the experts.

I shouldn't be teaching veterinary students, and I'm a really good doctor, and I really care about what I do, and I really care about this profession. I want AVMA to be there to have my back. I want COE there to make sure that they're producing, that these schools are producing the best that they can. I cannot, in any way, shape or form, imagine how a distributive model can meet that, because you can't be everywhere every day. You just can't.

I see the level in the veterinarians every month, and it's pathetic. Pathetic. We, as licensing boards, are limited as to what we can do. To try to get a license away from a veterinarian who's a bad veterinarian, is nearly impossible. We've all seen Dr. Pol, who's still practicing. I'd like AVMA to go after him. I don't want AVMA looking at the schools. I think AVMA needs to be doing its advocacy for veterinarians, and I think COE needs to do advocacy for the schools. You can't do it together.

ADA has recognized that fact. I'm sure you guys will be scrambling to find that white paper now, but you need to do your job for us, as AVMA. That's what I pay my dues for. You need to charge the schools appropriately, to accredit them so that it can be done with enough force and with enough education, with enough time, with enough depth, to make sure it's a good program. Unless you can tell me that you've personally been to every distributive model school, and you've spent time there, not just been in there and interviewed a few people. It's not enough. It'll never be enough for me.

I've had Ross grads come in and intern with me. "Hey, this T4 is low. What's the next thing you do?" Couldn't even answer it. Couldn't even come up, even when I gave them the letters. T sounds like ... Couldn't do it. We have a graduate who's giving Banamine to dogs. Come on! You know better. You guys should do a better job. It's disappointing. I'm looking at getting out of the field, because it's so disappointing. That's my point.

Jane Berkow: Thank you. I'm sorry? Becky? Oh, sorry. It's hard to hear. Okay. Other comments? Okay.

MBLeininger: It's Mary Beth Leininger again. L-E-I-N-I-N-G-E-R.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

MBLeininger: First of all, I want to thank the members of the Council who are here, because I know it's hard to sit here and listen to all this stuff wash over you. Having been a member of the Council, I know how hard you work. I know the hours that go into preparing for meetings. The struggle with which we look at every single school, but I would challenge you, Fred, that not every school gets 4 -to 6-hours' worth of discussion, because there isn't enough time, at every meeting, to look at every school that's being evaluated in a very detailed way. You know that. You know that.

Having been a member of the Council, I know we try very hard to be consistent, but if our policies and procedures manual are not consistent from one section to another, how can we, you, us as members of the Council, how could we possibly judge consistently, if we have to find which of the sections we're going to follow, and there's another section that says do it differently. Having consistent documentation to follow is critical, and yet, there is no time for thoughtful self-reflection and thinking about how do we go about improving the educational outcomes for the graduates of our students.

This is the AVMA. We're approved by the United States Department of Education to care about education in the United States. Why do we waste the wonderful efforts, and time, and commitment, and sweat and tears of our volunteers giving them to schools that don't need us, in the United Kingdom, at Vienna, in Scotland? They don't need our accreditation. They have it, because as soon as the rules change in July this year, if they're going to have US students that can get student loans, they have to be accredited.

It's not about gold standard. It's about getting student money from US students, and that's the only way they can get the kind of grants from the US government that they need. You and I both know that the reason that we're having listening sessions is because NACIQI wants the Council to have wide acceptance among practitioners. It's going to take more than listening to 40 people at NAVC, 30 people at Western, and maybe 20 people at AVMA, if we don't promote the sessions better.

I don't know about you, but I had to call Western Veterinary Conference to find out when this was going to be, because it was nowhere, until about less than a week before the meeting. Very, very poorly promoted. If you're going to be serious about getting people to attend and understand what the issues are, you've got to promote the dickens out of this thing, so that's that.

What I would really like to know, which is not an easy thing to answer, is what are you going to do with all this stuff? We've had two people who have been to both sessions. You're brand new here. John was here the last time. I forget, Pat Farrell, was here the last time. What I wonder is, how are you going to compile this information that you're being ... The wave is being, kind of, rolled over you. What are you going to do with this, to make a difference so that, in fact, practitioners begin to trust what the Council is doing?

Just like we're having governance issues at AVMA, trust of the Council's activities, because of the challenge with Western. Let's face it, it's the 700 sites, that nobody understands how the Council can possibly evaluate every single one of those sites. You know, you don't. You evaluate, what you call, core sites. What about all those other sites, that students go to, that you never, we Council members, never see? How do we know that the practitioners that are there, well-meaning though they might be, are doing anything that remotely resembles the kind of educational, clinical education, that would happen in a veterinary teaching hospital? I don't think we know that.

So anyway, thank you for being here. I think there are issues that are far bigger than just, should Western be accredited, or how does AVMA deal with the student debt issue, and the number of graduates. I think they all get kind of mixed up, because they're all important, but the issue for the Council is, how do people learn to trust your decisions, and that you're doing it in the right way possible? I think you want to, but I think there's been no time to give any thought about how to do that, and I hope that changes very soon, including the March meeting.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

Eden Myers: Whenever you're ready. Were you ready?

Jane Berkow: Yeah, I'm ready.

Eden Myers: My name is Eden, E-D-E-N, Myers, M-Y-E-R-S.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

Eden Myers: I'm just a vet. There's no zero.

Jane Berkow: Yeah, sorry.

Eden Myers: I'm just a vet, and I'm just a little perplexed at these sessions. When I look at, as Bob mentioned, how long we've been talking about these same issues, all of the things that have been proposed ... When I look at the people in the room, me, Paul, Bill, when I look at the number of words we've written in public forums, about what we're talking about today, I'm very perplexed that the COE has to have listening sessions to understand how we feel, or what we think. I guess maybe this speaks to Mary Beth's point is, they just don't have time. Right?

They have all this stuff they're supposed to do, and they never get a chance to look outside that environment. Things have changed a lot. In the profession, in the country, and one of the changes that is gonna have to happen, it's changing with the dental profession, the paper Paul mentioned, is a white paper by the CODA task forced. It's published on the ADA website, from August 2014. They've already had to deal with a lot of this, because NACIQI hammered them about a year and a half before they hammered us.

Jane Berkow: I'm sorry. I'd like to get this correct. It's a white paper by ... ?

Eden Myers: It's by the C-O-D-A. That's the Council On Dental Accreditation. It was published in August of 2014.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

Eden Myers: On the ADA website, the American Dental Association website.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

Eden Myers: It's the CODA task force.

Jane Berkow: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Eden Myers: As I said, they had to have a task force on accreditation before we did. They've generated a lot of solutions to these same issues that have been raised by NACIQI, with the COE, down to being cited for violating the same criteria.

Jane Berkow: So, you're suggesting that's there's a lot of potential solutions that could be explored?

Eden Myers: Yep, and the big one is, that the CODA needs to be totally autonomous from the ADA. I made this point at the NACIQI meeting, and I think Paul reinforced it. We need the AVMA. The AVMA does really critical things, very well, for the profession. We need the COE. They do really critical things, very well, but having the COE within the AVMA, leads to the situation we have now where neither body can fulfill their mission, because their missions are inherently in conflict.

The profession is not going to widely accept the COE, until the COE is autonomous from the AVMA. I'm one of the volunteers that was largely responsible for those eight hundred and some odd comments, and I'll tell you right now, that body of volunteers is committed to you all getting three thousand comments the next time you're before NACIQI. Now, those comments can be in support of the COE, or they can be against the COE, dependent on what you all do, but those comments are going to be there.

Jane Berkow: Okay. Thank you. How about on this side of the room. Is there anybody? We haven't heard anybody speak.

Female: We always wanted to be a one sided discussion.

Jane Berkow: Yeah. Exactly. There's another side. Anyone over on this side, would like to make a comment?

MBLeininger: I think what would be helpful, and this is asking you to do something that probably no one on Earth would do, is tell us what's the end point today? What do you think the end point is? [inaudible 01:56:42] the interested, but unbiased observers. What's the end point?

Jane Berkow: Well, my perspective in coming into this, and anything like this, would be to ensure that the COE gets enough information that they could find useful to work with to, one, understand the issues, and that in there, there might be some ideas for solutions that they may consider and deliberate. They clearly are taking all this in. They can't really speak to your issues today, because they'd only be speaking as individuals with their own ideas and opinions.

MBLeininger: We do have the chair and the vice chair.

Jane Berkow: I understand, but they're not the whole COE.

Eden Myers: Well, we're not the whole profession, and we showed up.

Jane Berkow: Exactly, and so, in terms of what comes out of today, I still see this as a little bit still of a slice of the picture. It's hard to say, until you hear, really, from a larger body of people, and they may find some ways to do that, through a survey or what have you.

Female: I think Dr. Gill is going to make a comment.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

Ronald Gill: Just a couple of comments. Ronald Gill, member of the COE. On the issue of having this session and publicizing it, Mary Beth, we are at the mercy of the organization to provide a room, and I know it got down to the last minute. It got down to the last minute at Orlando, but I also got down to the last minute, whether or not I was going to come, or not. We were not avoiding it. We were trying to get it scheduled. It simply was, we were at the mercy of the organization. Okay?

AVMA should be a whole different process. We have a little more authority there, I think, or there should be more of an opportunity to schedule it ahead.

Female: People need more than a week to [crosstalk 01:58:45].

Ronald Gill: I agree. I agree. I made my reservations to come a week ago. Okay? Less than a week ago. I was in the similar boat, because I didn't know if we were going to have it or not. The thing that I would like to ask, and I'm not trying to be argumentative. I'm trying to be supportive, because I want to understand the viewpoint, is, if AVMA separates COE, how do you see the COE functioning? How do you see its income? How do you see its selection of individuals on the COE?

Do you see schools paying for the funds? If the schools pay for the funds, is there going to be a conflict of interest there, because they're paying for funds and they're being accredited by this body?

Eden Myers: If you look at the way the dental school has proposed to do it, [inaudible 01:59:40]. In order for a dental school to be accredited, they charge an initial \$50,000 to accredit that school, and then they have an annual fee. Part of the ADA white paper, was to figure out how they're going to do this, because they are running it very similarly and it's the same problems.

Ronald Gill: Hang on a minute. You said \$150,000 per school?

Female: \$50,000.

Ronald Gill: Fifty, 5-0?

Female: 5-0, for the initial accreditation, so all the paperwork, all the initial getting it going. Then, there's an annual fee. They also accredit the dental technician programs, too. They have it in there. If you look at that paper, it's very similar. It's a recipe. It's a recipe to start. It may not be the whole cake, but it will get you going. You know?

Ronald Gill: I think we became aware of this paper today, as far as that goes.

Eden Myers: Right, but to me it's a little disappointing, because why did we find it? As far as letting people know, I knew because these guys knew, because we heard about it on then. My partner, my friend that came with me to the conference, she didn't know about it. I had to tell her about it. She couldn't come, because she had already made plans for something else. AVMA sent out an email last week about something I was supposed to write to my congressman about. An email. Something to show an effort on AVMA's part.

I sat there listening for a while, prior to the meeting, and the point where Sandy made the point of ...

Female: Sherri.

Eden Meyers: Sherri. Sorry, Sherri Sanderson. I was close. Made the point of, why wasn't there an email sent out. Well, we meant to, but there were some things in the way. Not good enough. Not acceptable.

Kim May: Can I clarify that? What I told her was that we did ask Western our in[inaudible 02:01:40].

Female: That's what I heard.

Kim May: That's why I'm asking exactly where you read it, because what you heard which is what I said, is very different. What I told her is that we did ask Western. We did put in a request. Our intent was to do everything the same way that it did down at NAVC meetings. It was posted on our AVMA wall the exact way. It was posted on our AVMA work blog within an hour of finding out what the room assignment was, and the name. So that went up there. We contacted Western and made request to get an email out like NAVC did. That did not happen. I cannot explain what happened there, but the attempt was made on our part.

Female: You have my email address.

Female: As an AVMA member.

Female: As an AVMA member.

Female: [inaudible 02:02:30] to go to this meeting.

Female: You don't have to. It doesn't cost you to anything to send an email.

Male: You tell us all of that stuff we don't want to hear about all the time. Tell us about this.

Female: They know all about the Tennessee Walkers and their big [crosstalk 02:02:45].

Female: Okay, I'm not sure we're getting a whole lot done here.

Jane Berkow: Let's not go down this rabbit hole. Let's try to stay focused on the topic at hand.

Eden Myers: I would like to address the issue of publicity, and I'm not sure anyone else has looked at this yet. We're facing creating an extremely low trust

situation, where these two sessions have been very poorly promoted, very poorly attended. You guys are going to get your act together before AVMA, pack the house, and then claim that you can turn into NACIQI that 200 people showed up, and 200 people were in favor of it, because you're going to have the faithful at AVMA. Right? You're going to have a thousand chances to tell them to come, and tell them what you want them to say.

I'm not saying that's what you're going to do, but we're already operating in an environment where there's not a whole lot of trust, and so, that's a scenario that a lot of people are going to look at and go, "Well, why did they save all of their effort for AVMA?" That's something you're going to need to address. Did I say that well? Okay.

Jane Berkow: Let me just follow up a little bit more there. You're saying that it would be helpful if there was a little more effort to get input prior to the AVMA meeting, so as to feel like you have a little more robust understanding from those folks, like you, who have concerns.

Eden Myers: [crosstalk 02:04:20] the opportunity is the problem, is that, now you're facing when the AVMA gets the results of these listening sessions back to the NACIQI meeting, show that they actually can provide [inaudible 02:04:33] for all relevant stakeholder groups, to have input ... Yeah, thanks. The problem is that, what we're facing now is, when COE takes the results of these listening sessions back to NACIQI, to show that they're satisfying the criteria that requires them to give all relevant stakeholder groups meaningful opportunity for input, the two sessions that were not controlled by the AVMA, that did not occur in the AVMA's house, so to speak, were very poorly promoted, very poorly attended. The session at AVMA, on their home turf, dominated by their personnel is going to be heavily promoted, heavily attended, and the perception, because we are still operating in an extremely low trust environment, will be that the results COE has to take to NACIQI, are biased.

I'm not real sure what the COE can do about that. We'll do everything we can. We've got some ideas. We try to keep everyone up to date on Facebook.

MBLeininger: Jane, maybe the question should be addressed to our AVMA leaders who are here. We have Dr. Ron DeHaven, chief executive officer, and the president and president elect. I guess maybe the question would be to you gentlemen is, how committed are you to making sure that we get information out to the general membership, everyone who wants to know about it, every AVMA member for whom you have an email, and

why not send a blast email, like we did before the NAVC event? Could that not happen? Ron?

TCohn: Why couldn't it happen?

MBLeininger: I don't know. You tell me.

TCohn: Well, I've never been too shy about talking, so I'll open my mouth here. I'll tell you, I don't know why we couldn't do it. I'm on your side. I also think we, and I'm going to put Ron on the spot here, we have an opportunity before AVMA, to do this before another regional meeting. Big national meeting, in fact. AAHA. Let's do something like that. We have other opportunities. I do think, and my partner in crime here, Dr. Kinnarney and I were just saying, you know, we've been saying this for, I can't tell you how many years, it all comes down to communication, communication, communication.

I'll be the first one to tell you, there's a lot to be desired, as far as AVMA, as far as I'm concerned. I am so glad to see you guys show up and talk to us. I was very heartened at NAVC. I'm really, really appreciative of COE folks sitting here and taking your lambasting. I think you all made some excellent points. I personally appreciate it very, very much, and we'll see where this goes. I think it needs to be discussed at the highest levels. There's no doubt about it.

RDeHaven: What has happened at NAVC and Western is what it is, and we're almost, as Eden is describing it now, in a catch 22. If we do promote the session at AVMA, we're going to be chastised. If we don't, we're going to be chastised, so we're in a really difficult position at this point.

MBLeininger: [inaudible 02:08:12] promote it.

RDeHaven: Please, please let me finish. I agree, we do need to promote it, and I think as we had anticipated it, we would have had a number of opportunities to hear some of those concerns and the AVMA convention would provide the Council an opportunity to respond to some of those, particularly after the Council has had a chance to digest what they've heard.

I think that, whether we have a session at AAHA or not, and it's only a month away, so our ability to promote a session there is going to be limited as well. Even if we do, there's still a very limited audience that can attend a session like that. I'm thinking that a better opportunity might be through an electronic means where, virtually, all of the members have an opportunity to provide a comment. That, to me, is more fruitful ground

than three or four more listening sessions at conferences, and that's something that we can certainly, easily, arrange. If nothing else comes out of this session, then providing that opportunity, I think it's time well spent.

MBLeininger: I don't think it's too late to promote something at AAHA. It was a month after the NACIQI meeting that we had the NAVC listening session. We were able to put it together, and actually have a blast email that came to AVMA members. Since there is quite a good relationship between AVMA and AAHA, I would imagine they could find us a room, and I would suggest that that would be a good thing to try to do.

I do think it's better to have a 'look 'em in your eye' kind of session, rather than an electronic one, personally.

William Kay: I think we should ask ourselves what the Department of Education and NACIQI might do, or will do, if they don't see some of the changes that had been promulgated, and the issues of non-compliant issues, which were 14 issues in 2012, and there are a number of major ones remaining. Of course, the conflict of interest one was added to the Department of Education and NACIQI meeting at the end.

The summary report is forthcoming fairly soon. If we go back to USDE and NACIQI again, for the third time or maybe if it's 2016, for the fourth time, then the Department of Education and NACIQI, though it may be hard to imagine that they would do the three things that they're entitled and have the power to do. They can deny accreditation. They can suspend accreditation. They can terminate accreditation of the AVMA [inaudible 02:11:19], despite the fact that it's been recognized since 1952.

Why would it be necessary to play hardball? In an almost existential threat to our wellbeing, to play it out in front of the Department of Education and NACIQI. Are we not capable of handling this? I know we are. It ain't that complicated.

Amber Seals Nix: As a resigning member of the AVMA, I have been a member for 18 years, even during the years I've been unemployed. I feel that the AVMA lobbies for their interests, and they're not most of the interest of the practicing veterinarians that are struggling to keep their jobs. That's one of the reasons that I think the two need to be separate entities. I don't think that those of us that are still working need to be paying taxes to help give loans to veterinarians who are not going to be able to find jobs. We already have veterinarians who are trained.

If some veterinarians want to be retrained, why don't we develop new programs of reentry, where if you are a former graduate, and have passed your board exams and you're in good standing, and you want to switch into mixed-animal practice, that there's some kind of streamlined program where you can catch up, because veterinary medicine, the information doubles about every 5 years.

In an education on equine and food animal medicine 15 years ago, isn't applicable to today. I think we owe it to society to have a large pool of competent veterinarians, not even a more enormous pool of incompetent veterinarians. I don't know what else you want us to do, because we're a very determined group of people, and we want to see this resolved. It's a perfect storm of too many graduates, too many new seats, and I don't want to say that we're selling butt seats or diplomas, but a lot of the schools have increased their admissions by 25 to 30%.

We're just increasing the number of veterinarians, that we don't have jobs for these veterinarians. It's like musical chairs, and some of the chairs are getting yanked out, and we're all fighting over the jobs. That's why some of our colleagues are killing themselves, and that's not being fully disclosed to the incoming classes, that they're going to have a higher depression rate, and that they need to be watchful of these things. If they don't figure out until the third year, they're like, "I have all these loans under my belt. Why would I want to leave now?"

I think there needs to be more disclosure to the applicants, and I think that the AVMA and the COE need to be separate entities. I would like to feel proud of veterinary education, that our education is similar to an MD, that we're animal physicians. That we just don't get taught theory and then turned out loose to figure out and have our bosses help us learn how to practice. I've held on to my AVMA membership for a number of years, but if I could put that money towards something else to help change the education needs, I'm sure these group of people that I've come to learn and meet just recently, will figure out some means of funding some type of change.

This is like a hurricane waiting. We don't need to wait until it hits the shore. Something drastic needs to happen fast. I don't know if we just need to say we're going to stop accreditation now until this is looked at. I don't know what it would take for some of us to talk to lawyers and see if we could talk to the Department of Education. I mean, this is a really big deal stuff, and it's so embarrassing to be a veterinarian and try to explain to your colleagues why there are too many veterinarians. That's not what the general public thinks, and that's not what these new, first year

students think when they're applying. They think they're going to have jobs when they graduate, and they don't have access to all this information.

Our own colleagues don't even have full access to all this information now, because these sessions haven't been advertised as much as we would like. If you'll please advertise it to the AAHA meeting. We want to be a team. If you could help us stop this perfect storm, and help get our education the way it should have been. It should have been fixed before you guys were up before us. This should have been fixed 20 years ago. You guys should not even be up here. When I read the PEW Report, my sophomore year, as an undergraduate, I was like, "Wow, big things are going to happen with education."

Then, I was graduating, and none of it really had happened. Now, I've been out 16 years, and it still hasn't happened. It shouldn't take that long. Are we going to take another 20 years?

Jane Berkow: Okay. I'd like to point out that we've gone over our time. We had planned to be here for two hours and it's been about two hours and 15, 20 minutes. I just want to make sure that we've covered all the bases of everybody wanting to say something. I just recognize that your time is valuable and we committed to two hours.

Paul Pion: Can I make one last request?

Jane Berkow: Yes.

Paul Pion: Okay. I think we're proud. We had a meeting to plan another meeting. I think we need to find a step. I'd love to come out of here with a commitment from all of us, that to try to address what I think really is the base of this issue, and many have said it, it's trust. I'd love to hear two things. One, a commitment to face the issue straight on. After the letter sent out by Dr. Derksen after the last NACIQI meeting, I don't know if you wrote it, Ron wrote it, Kim wrote it, but it didn't reflect what happened there. That did a lot to destroy trust.

That's all in the past. We've been through this for years. I'd love us to draw a line in the sand, and let's plan a get together to figure out how do we rebuild the trust and go forward, just looking at the realities, not the spin, and how do we find a solution? I think Bill said it. We can fix this. I don't think it's that hard. We've just got to start listening to each other and talking to each other, not talking at each other. I hope we could get

together and maybe come up with a plan for that, instead of just another meeting.

Jane Berkow: I think that's a good summary for the end. I believe that the COE is equally interested and committed to that possible outcome, as well. I think, with that, maybe we'll just...

F.Derksen: Could I make a final comment?

Jane Berkow: You certainly may. Although maybe we have one here, and then...

Male: Okay.

Eden Myers: One thing that came out of the NACIQI meeting, that I took away from the NACIQI meeting, and that I have heard again here, is that as practitioners we've been asked to say whether or not the COE is acceptable, and we don't really know that much about accreditation. Dr. Derksen's presentation is helpful, but insufficient. I know a little bit about it. I know a lot about it. Just as a total aside, the comment that was made dismissing practitioners' disapproval, because we just couldn't possibly understand accreditation, lost you all a lot of ground. Don't do that again. I apologize for showing my spleen there. To try and address that, because the COE should be educating us about accreditation, and we're the ones coming to you with, "Hey, this task force about, from the dental association has solutions." That's fine. I don't care. Let's just get it done, like Paul says.

Ryan and I are going to be in the seating area outside the Banyon meeting rooms tomorrow, and I'm happy to provide anybody who wants to ask any question about accreditation everything I know.

Jane Berkow: Okay.

F.Derksen: Yes. Well, I've been delighted with this session. Somebody says that we were lambasted, and you haven't been to contentious faculty meetings if you think that this is bad. This is not bad at all. It's not bad because I think everybody in this room is interested in improving veterinary education. There are many different ... Excuse me. Can I finish my...

Female: Can you use the mic please?

F.Derksen: Oh, okay. I thought it was ... okay. Everybody here is interested in improving veterinary education, and all of us at the COE are also. Somebody asked about next steps. All of these sessions are transcribed.

All of the information that was generated at this meeting and the January meeting will be presented to the COE. It's an agenda item, on the COE agenda, for our March meeting. We'll consider all the issues and discuss what is the appropriate way forward. We will, not only, let you know what we think is the appropriate step forward, but also why.

As you know, there are many stakeholders, not all of them represented here. There are many different points of view. It's kind of like the outgoing director of the Food and Drug Administration said. She was the director of the Food and Drug Administration for 6 years, about the same term I've been on the COE. She said, "When it comes to drug approval, there are only two speeds, too fast or too slow. This is for the same approval."

The Council is in a position where we need to listen to all the stakeholders, take all of the input in mind, and then, with an eye on improving veterinary education as much as we can, make decisions that we, as a Council, think is the most appropriate. Again, I'm really grateful for your input, for your perspectives, and I want to assure you that we are actually listening to this, and that we will discuss these perspectives at the next COE meeting and at subsequent meetings also. Thank you for your input.

Jane Berkow:

Thank you. With that, we'll close the session.