

**Council on Education Listening Session  
North American Veterinary Conference  
January 18, 2015**

**John Pascoe:** Good afternoon. I am John Pascoe, and I am the sitting member of the Council on Education, and I would like to welcome all of you here this afternoon to the first of what we hope will be several listening sessions to give members of the profession a chance to share any issues and concerns that they have about veterinary medical education and the process of accreditation of US schools and colleges of veterinary medicine with the Council.

I am just going to briefly introduce the three folks sitting on my left who are the sitting members of the Council Dr. Pat Farrell, Dr. Nicole Roberts and Dr. Ron Gill. I will give them an opportunity in a few minutes to introduce themselves and tell you a little bit about their role in the Council. I would also like you to know that this session is being taped, and that's the reason that there was a flurry of technical activity upfront here because as usual there were technical difficulties.

The Council has also engaged a highly experienced facilitator Mr. Daniel Stone who will introduce himself here in a few moments. He has had experience with wide range of groups, government, corporate, non-corporate, academic as well as a number of veterinary organizations as well. In his prior career, he was engaged in clinical research at Duke University Medical Center and all at Mass General Hospital.

As I said, the purpose of this is to give the profession an opportunity to give feedback to the Council on Education. We have a variety of forms and forums to do that, but it has become apparent that they are not perhaps being used as effectively or as frequently as we would like. As I said, this is the first of we hope of several listening sessions that we will be conducting. We are hoping to do this one as the largest continuing veterinary medical education meeting in the country and hopefully at Western and again at the AVMA Convention and perhaps at some others as well.

We sent out invitations broadly to the profession so to give as many people the opportunity as possible to attend, and as I said we are taping this session for the purpose of having audio record of it but also a chance for the rest of the Council to hear the comments that were made so that we can discuss those at our regularly scheduled meetings. Also, it is our intent to provide a summary and a transcript of that in the future, so that everybody can have access to it.

Because it is taped, I would ask Daniel to reinforce this that when you come to the microphone that you introduce yourself so it is apparent who is making the comments.

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With that, I would like say I am currently serving as the executive associate dean of the school of veterinary medicine at University of California, Davis.

This is my fifth year on the Council on Education and I represent postgraduate education on the Council. With that, I am going to turn it over to Dr. Farrell.

**Pat Farrell:** Hi, welcome everybody. I am Pat Farrell. I am a veterinarian from northwestern Pennsylvania. I have a dairy practice there. I am a current member of the Council on Education, and I represent private food and animal practice on the Council and I am glad to be here today and anxious to hear what everybody has to say.

**Nicole Roberts:** Hi, I am Nicole Roberts. I represent the public on the Council. I am assistant dean for faculty development and medical education at the Sophie Davis School for Biomedical Education at City College of New York. I have been serving on the Council for six years now. My last meeting will be in March.

**Ronald Gill:** My name is Ronald Gill. I am a member of the Council on Education representing private mixed clinical practice. I am in my fifth year on the Council. Four months from today I will celebrate 40 years in private clinical practice, all of it in the state of Illinois, all of it in small rural communities.

John: I will now turn it over to Daniel Stone.

**Daniel Stone:** All right, welcome everybody. Good afternoon. Good to see you all are here. We weren't quite sure how many folks would show up so we laid the table for a whole lot of folks but we have got a good showing here and hopefully we will have a really rich, a rich afternoon together hearing your views about the Council.

The way this is going to work is in just a moment I am going to open the floor up. It is really an open forum for you folks that if you want to raise issues or concerns or perspectives for the Council to consider, I am going to invite you to do that one at a time. There is a microphone there, and I am going to ask you if you would just please come to the microphone and as John said please introduce yourself first with your name and where you are from, and then share with us your concerns and all your points of view that you would like us to consider and we will do so.

Then, if you want to line up behind then feel free to line up behind the speaker there and we will just take you in turn.

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There are some ground rules that I am going to ask that you follow just to make this as useful, productive and fair playing field as possible is first of all please wait for me to recognize you before speaking.

Secondly, I am going to ask you to please be clear and concise. I am going to actually follow a two-minute rule here, so I will start, I have got my clock here with me and I am going to start the two minutes. When we are getting near the two minutes you may see me go like this (waving of hands). That means start to shorten it and get to the end of your, at least the end of your paragraph if not your sentence and then offer the floor up.

Again, there is no need for a lot of redundancy in other words, if somebody has already made your point I think we should assume that the point has been made. It has all clearly been captured for the record. As John said the COE will be taking all these points, deliberating on them and then providing some feedback for you about their response to them. I think that that does it.

With that, oh the other thing I want to say, for me as facilitator, I am going to be up here recording what you come up with. I am doing this really not for the record. The record really is what goes in the microphone because there is going to be transcript for that but I want you to see what's being captured so you can see whether or not it is a fair representation of your point. It won't be word for word but I will try to get the essence.

If it is not right, just let me know that, and I will make the corrections. I know some people are very particular about it has to be this and that, and I am pretty fast but I not, it is not magic, so please do that. With that, I am just going to take a moment and set up a different slide here so I can start tracking this and then we will get going, and I think I am ready.

The floor is open and so I know sometimes it is a little hard to break the ice, but the real question in hand is are there any concerns or perspectives that you would like to present to the COE for their consideration, their deliberation and eventually a response. It could be a question that you have to them that is not clear. It could be a point of view. It could be challenge, any of those are fine.

I should say, I have asked the COE not to respond, not to get into a dialogue here because that's not the purpose here. The purpose really is to take it in. The only time that they are going to respond here is if there are some facts that are really relevant and they are really facts. It is not, 'well you could see this way or this way,' but there is a fact that would really be helpful here.

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I have asked them, yes, put that out there so we don't perpetuate, misinformation here, but when there are points of view or different opinions, that's not what they are here today to engage about.

They are here really just to listen and take it in. With that, I do open the floor and the microphone is there, so if somebody would like to, I assume you are all here because you are interested or you have something to say, so who wants to get the ball rolling. Who wants to be next? This could be a very short meeting. Here we go, and again if you would please start with your name and who you are and where you are from.

**Carl Darby:** Hi, my name is Carl Darby. I am a small animal general practitioner in upstate New York. I am a 1991 graduate of Cambridge University, and I came to United States in 1992 and practiced here since then. I have a few comments to make. I am very concerned as a dues paying member of AVMA that there is a relationship between AVMA and the Council of Education, because I feel like AVMA really is trying to serve two masters.

I feel it is very difficult for them to really engage and support and advocate to the profession when their hands are somewhat tied by the affiliation with the Council of Education. Several members of AVMA have stated that there is a really a firewall between AVMA and COE. There is really no influence between those two bodies.

However, I think it has been fairly clear over the years that there have been conflicts of interest. We look at the examples of the lawsuits by Western University, if you look at the example of the removal of previous members of the Council of Education, I really feel that there is problem there. I really don't see why AVMA needs to be involved with accreditation anyway.

I don't see the benefit to it and I think those two things should be kept completely separate and independent, because if they are not independent I worry that AVMA will back off from representing and supporting and advocating for the profession because they are concerned that that may affect the credibility of the Council on Education.

**Daniel:** Good, thanks very much. Again, I do ask you if you would please look at what I have typed up here. Please don't pay too careful attention to the spelling errors but the rest is of it all fair game. All right, so we have got concerns about the relationship between AVMA and the Council and whether there is conflict of interest between how close that relationship is. Who is next?

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**Bree Montana:** Hi there I am Dr. Bree Montana, graduated in 1992.

Daniel: Can you give me your first name again please.

Bree: Bree, Montana, spelled like the state.

Daniel: Thank you.

Bree: I am just wanting to say that I think it is a concern for me the way the COE has gone forward in accrediting schools. It seems like we are going little freestyle with the way we are choosing to accredit schools. I am not comfortable of schools not having vet schools affiliated with the teaching institution and I don't know how we can rigorously test the quality of the hospitals in which the students are learning.

I think that if we are going to go forward in that manner we need to set up some sort of really firm and clear structure as to how we are assessing the quality of the hospitals in which the students are studying and learning.

Daniel: Okay, great, thanks so much. Next. Don't know if you are shy or if you are gathering your thoughts. It feels like that show, To Tell the Truth. Anyone remember that where everyone would look at each other like who is up. Who has got something? There we go. I think we have got two up there, go ahead.

**Jeff LaCroix:** I am Jeff LaCroix.

Daniel: Spell in your last name please.

Jeff: Lacroix.

Daniel: Lacroix.

Jeff: I should have been playing JV as a relative after his ear operations but I was never smart enough to do that. In another two years I will have practiced for 50 years, and it would make me the senior member of room I think. I think the elephant in the room is many of us are worried about the gross oversupply of veterinarians just like we have a gross oversupply of lawyers because of the fact that any graduate, anybody in graduate school has easy access to money.

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It may be a loan. It may be grants. They are going to graduate heavily in debt, and I think there is an AVMA study that just showed that basically they are better off getting a bachelor's degree and a good serviceable profession and over their life time they will make certainly more money than a veterinarian will. I think that it's up to someone somewhere to really educate those young people who romanticize this profession and want to be veterinarians and let them to know what they are going to get into, because some of them are graduating with huge amounts of debts.

A lot of them have said what the hell have I done here and they are going to carry that debt for 20-25 years, yes maybe they will be forgiven, maybe they will wind up paying taxes on that amount. Who knows what will happen in 20-25 years from now, but I think that there is some very unrealistic expectations of people entering the profession now. I know part of it is what Bree Montana said once Western University suits successful, and it is acceptable to have a school that is not required to have a teaching hospital, and I don't know how much research. There is money to be made by educating veterinarians because there are a lot of people out there who would like to become veterinarians.

Daniel: Okay, great thanks. This gentleman here.

**Don Woodnan:** Hello. My name is Don Woodman. I am a general practitioner in Safety Harbor, Florida.

Daniel: Don Woodman, okay, thank you.

Don: The US Department of Education's NACIQI panel is the organization or the panel of the Department of Education that recognizes accrediting bodies such as the COE and typically they do so for five years. They just had a meeting with the COE in December which was extraordinary for two reasons. One, they were having a meeting because they previously found deficiencies and so this meeting was after two years rather than typical five years. Then, it is also extraordinary because during the meeting they continued to find deficiencies in the Council of Education meeting the criteria they are supposed to meet.

Daniel: Can you speak just a little slower. I didn't hear all.

Don: During the recent NACIQI meeting, it was extraordinary both because it was occurring due to deficiencies but also because they continued to find deficiencies in how the COE was meeting their required standards.

Daniel: Okay.

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Don: Therefore we are going to have another NACIQI meeting if I understand correctly after six months and again after 12 months. In other words this meeting they are just having in December is extraordinary for two reasons both that it was occurring at all and also what occurred during the meeting. Yet despite that, the AVMA sent out a letter to its membership assuring everybody that it was just a routine meeting when it was anything but that.

In other words the AVMA, lie is such a harsh word, misled their membership about what was going on. Given that why would our membership. Why would the veterinary profession have any faith in the AVMA's good will? When during the meeting one of the Council of Education members, I believe the dean from Virginia Tech told the NACIQI panel that all of the general practitioner letters, all we were concerned about was our own economic well-being which was basically a gross misrepresentation of what was in the majority of the letters from 800 plus practitioners.

When they are misrepresenting to the panel what we are telling them, when they are misrepresenting to the membership what happened at the meeting, why should we have any faith in the AVMA's good will or good intentions.

Daniel: Okay, thank you. Other thoughts, other concerns, perspectives, questions, points of view that you think should be heard here.

**Greg Nutt:** Hello my name is Greg Nutt.

Daniel: I am sorry Greg-

Greg: Greg Nutt.

Daniel: Nupp.

Greg: Nutt.

Daniel: Nutt, great, okay.

Greg: I am a private practitioner from Georgia and a 1996 graduate from Oklahoma State University. My main concerns being newly involved in the issues at hand right now are stemming from what appears to be standards that are not enforced across the boards by the COE, and I remember several years ago talking with a few people on leadership positions from the AVMA and in being told that there are standards in place to maintain the integrity of the veterinary degree.

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Greg: These standards are rigorous standards that are applied across the board and in reading some of the staff reports from the US Department of Education it is glaringly obvious that that is not the case. We have an organization that appears to have, been able to pick and choose which standards are important to whichever perspective school they are dealing with.

I don't know that I could put my faith in an organization that has had the leeway to do the right thing and hasn't shown their ability to do so. On a wider more broad question that I have is as an AVMA member where I put my resources into an organization that I would expect to look out for my interest. I don't see anywhere in any of the charters that said this was a member mandated issue for this COE to even exist amongst the AVMA.

That is my question. As a member, I believe that two are to be separate. I believe that if the AVMA is taking my dues, that I ought to be their number one priority and the fact that they have used resources likely to set up meetings like this tells me those two things can't coexist, thank you.

Daniel: Okay, thank you. All right, who is next? Next up.

**Eric Bregman:** Good afternoon. My name is Eric Bregman. I am a small animal practitioner from New York State.

Daniel: That's Bregman.

Eric: Bregman, B as in boy.

Daniel: Okay.

Eric: Just for some background I am past president of the New York State Veterinary Medical Society. I was the member of the AVMA's task force of foreign veterinary schools of accreditation. I currently head New York State's Committee on Veterinary School Accreditation.

Daniel: Okay.

Eric: I have been involved with the accreditation discussion for about three years and I have a number of concerns. First and foremost relates to the accreditation of foreign veterinary schools. I am concerned that COE resources are being utilized to accredit schools in foreign countries with different languages and different cultures, and that process is difficult if not impossible for members of the Council to accomplish.

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Eric: I am also concerned that many foreign schools take students directly out of high school, and they do not receive an undergraduate education as is required very often in the United States. Finally, my concern I guess, I blew your computer out there.

Daniel: I think we did, can you just give me a moment.

Eric: I am just getting warmed up.

Daniel: Let's see, how do you do that? I think you are the next one, all right, here you are. Okay, I think we are ready.

Eric: My final comment about foreign accreditation relates to licensure in the United States as it currently stands in all 50 states. If you graduate from an accredited school you are by de facto licensed as long as you pass a Juris Prudence exam. There are no more practicals required in the country. Next, I would like to comment on the 11 standards of accreditation. I feel that for many instances they are not being equally applied.

Standards that concern me include institutions being part of a institution of higher learning, having a research hospital, having rigorous programs of research and interns and residents, and the biggest concern to me is that foreign veterinary schools students are not required to take the NAVLE exam which requires in domestic schools an 80% pass rate for those schools to maintain their accreditation.

Daniel: Okay.

Eric: I would like to comment briefly on the current trend of distributive model veterinary schools. They concern me and that my question the education that those students receive, receive and particularly when they are sent out to private practices, private practices that operate for profit. I know in my practices, if we are busy, if the case load is high I would envision the teaching will fall short for those students and I think that would be doing them a great disservice.

Many of those schools have hundreds of sites where students can receive credit. Many of them are for profit. Students are graduating with enormous amount of debt and the seat ratio, the last I heard I am happy to be corrected but I believe it was 1.4 applicants for every seat. That has been on the downward trend over the last 10 years.

Daniel: Okay.

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Eric: I did attend the NACIQI meeting in December. I did comment to the committee. Overall the committee was extremely concerned about the number and the intensity of the 900 comments that they received from veterinarians across the country. Their comments were that this was an unprecedented number of stake holders participating in the process. Furthermore, they became aware that two members of the Council were summarily dismissed from the Council on Education, veterinarians who had served the profession for decades and who had been duly elected.

One of them was dismissed after commenting at an AVMA House of Delegates meetings on foreign accreditation simply stating that she was concerned about the available resources for that accreditation process. I want to thank you for the time that you have given me, and I certainly appreciate the Council being open to comments and hearing from veterinarians and stake holders across the country, thank you.

Eric: Great, thank you. I appreciate that.

**William Kay:** How are you doing?

Daniel: Good, how are you doing?

William: I am doing fine.

Daniel: And your name is.

William: William Kay.

Daniel: I am sorry.

William: William Kay.

Daniel: William Kay, okay.

William: I have been a veterinarian for 51 and a-half years and still above the grass. My son is also a veterinarian who says stay above the grass. I was one of the two veterinarians kicked off the Council. My comments and concerns in 2007 and before were not dissimilar to many other comments made in front of the Department of education and NACIQI.

I had written twice and commented twice, first in 2012 and second in 2014. Hopefully, I will participate again whether it is 2015 or later.

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William Kay: The conflicts of interest I believe are so widespread that the Council can only be, I allege, my lawyer keeps saying, don't say you know, say you allege that the Council is riddled with conflicts of interest.

Why, because the basis of accreditation is not the policy and procedures manual which is really the core document used by the Council of Education. It is United States' law and regulations, but most Council members, certainly in my era and many people on the Council that I have talked to before and since have never seen the regulations. Certainly if accreditation is a legally based issue which it is how can we as veterinarians who are not trained in the regulations possibly comply.

There are profound differences between the policy manual issues which is the core document used by the Council of Education and the United States Department of Education regulations. The difference is, and the government has said there must be a connection between the regulations and the policy. The Council must follow both. If there is no connection, is there actually a violation of the United States Department of Education regulations. There is.

I am prepared to prove it in detail if necessary and we will continue to submit to the USDE and NACIQI or any other group that is sufficiently designated to listen to some of this really sad and sorted story.

Daniel: Can you do one thing for me, and I know I am going over the two minute rule but I just and maybe it is evident to them and everybody else in the room, but I would like one very simple example of where you think that there is a gap between the, I heard you said there is a gap between the DOE regulations and the COE application of its own policies. I don't want to open the floor way wide. Really, just-

William: You are asking if the gap between the policy book which is used as the core document by the Council of Education has been used in the various iterations for many years and the government regulations which are the basis of the accrediting.

Daniel: That is the core issue I am hearing you speak to and I guess I would like to just a very, very brief example of what you are talking about.

William: The Council doesn't follow United States Department of Education regulations. Those regulations part of the secretary's recognition of accrediting agencies and the criteria for recognition it is called 602.10-602.28.

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William Kay: It is a big old thick book just like the policy book. That book is absent and has been absent from accreditation during the last at least 11 or 12 years.

Daniel: Okay, thank you very much. All right, who is next? There is a silence. Let me sit back and just very quickly summarize. I think and I have not been tracking all of these so I am going to go back a little bit and make sure that I can do a fairly decent job here summarizing where I think the issues are so far.

What I have got is that there is a conflict of interest with the AVMA being the body that within which COE resides that AVMA is serving two masters. They are trying to perform a dual role that is inherently in conflict and that there is not an effective firewall between those two elements.

I think that there are concerns about the application standards where schools are getting certified or getting accredited where they don't have some things in place like teaching hospitals or sufficient research capability but that has been, but it may be done inconsistently that the standards are being applied differentially according to different schools.

Also, concerns about whether so many schools are being accredited because it is an issue where schools are trying to make money off the education process but they are in fact turning out veterinarians with very heavy debt loads and too many veterinarians are in the market place that creates more competition in the profession.

I am also hearing concerns that the distributive model is maybe, not maybe, the concern is that distributive model is not a good substitute for teaching hospital as a teaching vehicle. That's another concern here that putting people in private practice settings and so many of them from a different school that the quality of the teaching wouldn't be the same or comparable to that which is provided within a hospital setting.

There are concerns that the AVMA has misled its members about what the extent of the concerns are that have been conveyed to it from the Department of Education and so it creates some questions of basic trust with AVMA. Let's see, a general concern that AVMA is not looking out for the interest of its members in a way in which it is going about accrediting schools. I think that means creating more competition.

I have concerns about the accreditation of foreign veterinary schools.

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Daniel: That the requirement for student's entering those schools is lower than the US that they are de facto licensed when they come to the US even though they may not have comparable education backgrounds and experiences. That is another concern.

Then also that the way the COE is operating is not consistent with policies and with the laws and regulations on the books by DOE and so that there are in fact profound differences between those policies and regulations and also some concerns that you had members of the COE who have been dismissed from the Council not necessarily on the basis of merit but on the basis of their own expressed views that may be contrary to those of the rest of the Council.

I think that that's a fairly full summary about the issues I have heard raised here today. Are there other issues or other important points of view within any of those issues that any of you would like to share with us? This is really your opportunity. There is the microphone I invite you up.

**Larry Giebel:** My name is Larry Giebel.

Daniel: Can you spell your last name for me?

Larry: Giebel.

Daniel: Giebel. Thank you.

Larry: I have only been practicing for 42 years, Ohio State, 1974. I have three daughters who are veterinarians. I wasn't going to speak today. I told them I would behave but I thought maybe this was the time to talk to the COE. I am a teaching hospital for bunch of different schools, Virginia Tech, VMR, Ohio State, and a couple of other ones over the years.

It has been a very enjoyable experience, but what I am seeing over the last 10 years is that the kids, the students coming out are nothing or near as educated as they were before. I think we have a great system here with the way it is with all the 28 schools or 29 that we have and they are doing the best they can.

Now we are accrediting more schools, accrediting the schools from across the pond and everything, and I am just not quite sure the COE, what they are doing. What all the schools are doing, the colleges of veterinary medicine, to get the students ready to graduate and later practice when they come out because right now they are not ready. They need help.

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**Larry Giebel:** I encouraged all my daughters to do internships even though they worked for me for 8 or 10 years before they graduated. They were respected in their class. They knew what they were doing. Any of my colleagues who got them to practice with them were very happy because they say, "Wow these girls really know what they doing." When we get other kids, they don't know what's going on. What's happening?

My question is to COE I guess is what can we do, what can the deans of all the veterinary schools do to make sure that we are graduating students after their four years there to practice veterinary medicine and not to depend on us to teach them everything. I mean, we teach them how to think, how to think through a case. It is just amazing what we are seeing.

I know one daughter wants to talk but she is disappointed a little bit and some of her friends who graduated and they are staying pretty much doing what they were doing when they graduated that they haven't moved on whereas she and a lot of other students depending on where they do their first job or first two or three jobs, where they learned, thank you.

Daniel: Great, thanks so much. I wonder if your daughter wants to say anything. You want to share your perspective with us?

**Lauren Giebel:** I am Lauren. I am youngest of the three daughters.

Daniel: You are Lauren.

Lauren: Lauren, yeah.

Daniel: Thank you Lauren.

Lauren: I think that my dad was trying to say one of my biggest concerns is just quality control. I was fortunate enough to have two internship experiences, and I went to general practice. I had two girls there were brand new graduates, awesome doctors but and they were asking me how to do, how to unblock a cat, how to put on a bandage, I am like oh my gosh. What is happening to our schools, and personally trying to apply to jobs in Arizona and not finding any jobs and things like that and then having this experience.

We are getting more and more graduates and where is the quality control and how we can we get better that already instead of extending our resources and getting more people involved.

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Daniel: Got it. Thank you. We are really getting a wide spectrum here, folks who have 50 plus years in the profession and somebody who is very new in the profession and folks who are in the middle here. How about some other points of view? Any other points of view, I am hearing, we have heard a lot of points, are there other points of view in the room that you would like to share here.

Again, you may have a different point of view. We will share that too. The discussion just have to be one sided thing, whatever you want it to be because again this is all of this input that is going to be taken by the Council and weighed back and forth so let's make sure that we have given them everything we can.

**Dick Goebel:** My name is Dick Goebel from Monticello, Indiana.

Daniel: Okay, I get Dick.

Dick: Goebel.

Daniel: Thank you Dick.

Dick: I am close you to our last speaker.

Daniel: How is that?

Dick: In spelling. My concern is about the redundancy of investment in each of the schools. It seems like every school in the United States anyway pretty much duplicates what everybody else has in terms of capital investment, whether it is educational facilities, research facilities, teaching hospitals, equipping all those things, equipping research labs, and so on.

It seems to me that that redundancy is actually required by the accreditation process; that the standards when they are applied really require a lot of this investment, and that then flies in the face of the cost of the delivery of the education. At one time I was hearing talk about developing centers of excellence so that one school might develop a center of excellence, the area of theriology, for example.

Daniel: In what-

Dick: In therio or in oncology or whatever and then it is no longer incumbent upon every other school in the country to duplicate that same level of excellence in that discipline.

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**Dick Goebel:** It seemed to me that the concept of developing centers of excellence would be a complication for the accreditation process, because it takes away from the required uniformity. I wondered of the Council of Education, what progress is being made in the direction of eliminating unnecessary redundancies that drive up the cost of education.

Daniel: Thank you very much. Very clear. Okay, I think there is a gentleman in the back who is going to join us.

**Frank Walker:** I apologize somewhat that I am going to repeat some of this because I think it is worth repeating but-

Daniel: Okay, and your name please.

Frank: May be bit a perspective.

Daniel: Your name.

Frank: At one point I wasn't going to comment because some of this is already been said.

Daniel: Can you give us your name please?

Frank: Frank Walker, from New Rockford, North Dakota, predominantly mixed animal or large animal practitioner.

Daniel: Okay, thank you.

Frank: I have been involved in organized veterinary medicine for a number of years, I suppose since graduation really, and I am currently the chair elect, I want to disclose this, of the Association of Veterinary State Boards and, excuse me, yeah the American Association of Veterinary State Boards, and a former member of the AVMA Council on Education. That was concluded in 2010. I also served on the Committee of Veterinary Technician Education and Activities in CVTEA.

I want to say that my comments stated here are my own. They do not represent the AAVSB. It is my concerns that come from obviously my service on the Council. I wrote on the top of the page because this is a listening session and one of the things that I learned as an acronym was to listen, learn and lead.

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**Frank Walker:** I have to say this is my first experience where I felt the Council was actually at least saying that they were listening our members. I think part of that is the confrontation, or being confronted, with the fact, the Council being confronted with the fact that the AVMA is their gatekeeper for the profession. Council, even if they were willing to listen, learn and lead, they were compromised.

That is to say that the AVMA is the professional trade organization which serves the needs of the membership in the veterinary profession therefore acting as a gatekeeper of that profession. This relationship of the AVMA and the agency approved as the accrediting body is a conflict. The agency is how we referred to by the NACIQI committee, the COE as the agency.

The result is a culture that promotes undue influence, relationship dynamics and that conflict with a separate and independent concept for the COE from the AVMA. Perhaps this could be said that this is a fact that the appearance rather than may be even the actual fact of conflict in interest exist, I don't really buy that but we use on the COE, we want to give the appearance that we are doing the right thing. I have heard that so many times drilled in.

The question is really does the AVMA influence the COE. The answer in my opinion is yes. The second question is can there be a separation, absolutely. It exists. It is provisioned for them. The agency of the COE should be a separate entity. The agency needs to stand alone, have no undue influence from the AVMA. I believe that the 900 plus third party comments in terms of letters and also there was personal commitment, time offered and treasured on the part of those of us who were there personally before that NACIQI committee demonstrate that this separation is necessary.

Some may couch that the current binding of the AVMA and the agency is a conflict of interest which is a very valid criticism. From my perspective, let us recognize that the accrediting process is a fundamental component of veterinary licensure.

**Daniel:** Thank you. Great. good, anything else, other folks, other points of views, issues that have not so far been raised? Perspectives that you want to make sure get heard, incorporated, responded to. This is your chance. It sounds like it hasn't happened from those last comments, doesn't happen routinely.

Hasn't happened before in this format, so it is a great chance to come forward and say here, maybe I am wrong, maybe I don't have it all right, but here is what it looks like to me, that's what I heard the last gentleman say, maybe, so other points of view. I don't know, all right, thank you.

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**Mary Beth Leininger:** Mary Beth Leininger. Two words Mary Beth, last name spelled Leininger.

Daniel: Thank you.

Mary Beth: I am a 1967 graduate of Purdue University, have done a lot of things in my life that my education prepared me for. I think the education that's provided in the United States veterinary schools is unsurpassed. My concerns are several. I am one of the two people who have been removed from the Council.

Daniel: Okay.

Mary Beth: My appeal for the reversal of my dismissal is still in process and is now being considered by the AVMA Board of Governors. There is a process in place that allows AVMA members if they disagree with an action by an AVMA body to go through in an appeal process and since March I have been moving through that process and continuing to do so.

Daniel: Okay.

Mary Beth: What I am going to say is I hope not going to jeopardize my opportunity to have my appeal reviewed conscientiously. First of all I would like to compliment the Council on taking the stand of actually coming out here and listening, because as Dr. Walker as indicated this has as far as any of us know ever never happened before, very first time.

Why are we here? Why are we having this meeting? Why is the Council making an effort to listen to its constituencies, to the people who care about education, that care about our profession, that care about our students? It is because NACIQI has directed the Council that they must drive towards wide acceptance by the veterinary practitioner community and must demonstrate it by the next time that they are evaluated by the NACIQI committee.

I believe that will be within one year, December 2015. I think it is important for those of us who are not intimately involved be at least somewhat aware of what goes on in veterinary education to recognize what does accreditation confer? What is the impact of a school being accredited by AVMA?

First of all schools that are accredited by AVMA in the United States, their students have access to substantially higher value federal student loans than those schools that are not accredited. There is an opportunity for students to get substantially more money to complete their education.

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**Mary Beth Leininger:**

Also, when a school outside the United States is accredited that provides access to their students to also get US government loans. Not if they are not accredited; however, I am not positive about that.

The final and the kicker and the most important thing for those of us who have been in private practice and treat and care for animals that are owned by individuals is that accreditation of a veterinary school and the graduation there from gives you practically and automatic licensure to practice in the United States.

Every school, every states has a requirement that if a graduate is a graduate of an accredited school there is as Dr. Bregman has indicated a simple process to pass to be able to become licensed in practicing in that state. One of the things I would like to point out in reference to 900 plus or minus letters coming from practitioners, coming from deans, coming from a lot of people.

Of those 900 plus letters that were sent in to the NACIQI committee, one out of 10 were positive, were supportive of a continuation of the process as it now exists. All the rest of them were opposed at some level for some reason to the continuation of the system as it now exists. It wasn't just practitioners. There were six state VMAs that sent a letter where some of whom were very strong. Texas, California, Nebraska, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

That group of people probably represents a third, a quarter to a third of the veterinarians in the United States. Presidents of Cornell, two deans, several of us who are former members of the Council actually decided to speak up and of course there were several members of us who were former presidents of the AVMA, which I am one.

What can be done? Number of things. The Council really needs to start being independent. Independence, important, autonomy. They need to really have their own budget. Council needs to have its own staff. It needs to have its own legal advice. There is an initial attempt to model some of the activity of the licensing committee on medical education which is a combination of AAVMC and AMA.

What the difference is between what the AVMA Council on Education has involved itself is just a small step to start mirroring the licensing committee on medical education. The only thing we have done is changed who chooses the members of the Council on Education currently.

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**Mary Beth Leininger:**

Half will be chosen by the AVMA and not even by the House of Delegates any more. Mostly by people who are very intimate to the executive committee. Talk about conflict in interest.

The issue is for the license committee on medical education they chose their own members. They look for educators. They look for people that know what they are talking about as far as the education. In fact, just having people who are part of AAVMC be part of that decision making process does not guarantee that they are going to make right choice.

I am happy to part of this conversation. I am happy that the Council is, I believe, seriously looking at what's going on in the world around them and trying to perhaps start being a little flexible on how the members of the AVMA and other veterinarians in the world look at our educational process. But from my perspective this is a just the very first tiny step of what has to be a very long range and a very deeper process. Thank you Mr. Dean. Dr. Stone, I appreciate it.

Daniel: Thank you. All right, who is next, don't be shy. ... Sure, let's go ahead, we will allow that.

Carl Darby: Carl Darby again, I think one thing that has become apparent to me in the past hour is that several members of the profession have taken upon themselves to bring to the Council's attention these issues and I really feel that role should have been taken by AVMA. I think it is really a sign of the severity of the problem with AVMA being association with the COE that is taking veterinarians from around the country to really bring this issue to the floor.

I think the reason that AVMA hasn't done that is because of its association with COE. If AVMA is truly going to advocate for the profession, it seems clear to me even clear now that that requires a separation so that they can really be instead of veterinarians from all around the country come and making these statements, that can come directly from AVMA and come from the 90,000 members of AVMA.

I think that's, this to me the fact that we are having this meeting is a sign of a failure of communication, and I think it is a real shame that individuals are having to take this stand where our profession association that we are paying dues to every year, that's really their job. I feel it really needs to return to that.

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Daniel: Okay, thanks. All right, anything else, other points of view, other perspectives? Again, you may have a very different perspective from what has been put out here already. You may really see the world differently. That's fine, let's get that out on the table too because we have really heard a range of points of view. You may have other points of view that are in line with the kinds of things that were said here. You may have a different point of view.

Let's get it all out there so we have a, we know what the field looks like here. Sometimes if you create a vacuum somebody will fill it. All right, I am going to review again the themes with you. I want you to hear them again and ask yourself is this, have we told the picture now. Especially, really this has been a discussion about the concerns about the COE, so let's see have we flushed out the picture of what the concerns are.

In other words if these concerns were to be addressed or responded to would we actually feel like yes we will be satisfied. We feel yes this thing, either we have gotten some information and perspectives that changes our point of view or else some changes that you are going to get made that are actually going to make the whole COE process acceptable.

I am going to go through the whole litany again, and again give you one more chance because, when we close this thing up, this is, again there are going to be listening sessions at other conferences, you may or may not be there to recognize, to express them. Again, we have got the conflict of interest between AVMA and COE, and AVMA serving two masters. Its members, they are supposed to advocate for the profession but they have got their hands tied by their affiliation of COE and there is not a firewall.

We have Bree's concerns about the hospitals, the quality of the hospitals associated with schools and whether they have been properly assessed and there are quality standards being exercised.

We got from Jeff LaCroix the concerns about the oversupply of the veterinarians and that the COE is contributing to that by allowing more schools to be get certified here, putting more students out there and even schools that don't even come up to standards of par in terms of having a teaching hospital, research, really just primarily concerned with the making of the money off them.

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Don Woodman's point is that AVMA misled the membership about what was going on and has not been upfront about the extent of the concerns and really acknowledged how deep these concerns are and implying that the only fundamental concerns here are the concerns of members for their own economic wellbeing.

A number of issues here from Greg about the COE choosing which standards to apply, how differentially across the different schools and not upholding consistent standards and not being sure that in the end AVMA really is looking out for the interest of its members. Again, a lot of this leads to wanting there to be separation.

We have got a lot of concerns raised by Eric about the accreditation of foreign veterinary schools that the standards for admission are not the same or not comparable and that they are putting out graduates without the same or comparable levels of skills to what the students in the US have and also concerns about the distributive model being not a comparable model to providing education in the teaching hospital setting. Again concerns that what this does is, is it does increase the oversupply of veterinarians and also veterinarians of not the same caliber and same standards.

Let's see, William Kay talking about the gap between what the DOE requirements are, Department of Education requirements and their laws and regulations and how the COE operates that there is not a consistency between then in fact the COE doesn't even seem to understand what those rules and regulations are so how can possibly apply them.

Let's see, we have got concerns about the quality control and then we have got, we have students now coming out of the colleges, veterinary colleges without basics and if that is a deterioration over time and that's used to be better than that and now that's the situation and students are really requiring to do things like internships in order to get the requisite level of skills where that used to be something that they would have walking out of school.

There is a concern here about the redundancy of investments in the schools and having to replicate the same kinds of facilities, capabilities, specialties and so on and that part of it creates more problems in the schools of having to replicate all the investments in all of these different things to get accreditation and doesn't it make more sense to provide to establish centers of excellence and things like that so that schools can focus more on certain areas and other schools to focus on different areas and therefore not have to have the same levels of investments across the board.

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We have got again another concerns about the influence that AVMA has over COE and that it results in accreditations being based on relationship dynamics and other kinds of things that may keep them from being as objective as they really should be, and the fact that it is located within AVMA perpetuates this concern.

We have got concerns from their debt that the accreditation does provide substantial value to institution and in terms of both access to student loans if they are student loans both either within the US and outside the US and automatic licensure when they do practice in the US and that there has not been a real reckoning of the fact that if all the 900 plus letters that came in from practitioners, deans and others that 90 percent of them were negative and not supportive. They didn't just come from practitioners. They also came from the president of Cornell, some deans, former members and the COE and former presidents of AVMA.

The overall message is that there needs to be a separation between AVMA and COE as has taken place in the medical profession. Again, I think the reiteration of the need for the separation that Carl gave us. I think that's it. I think that was the last gentleman to speak.

Okay, that's a summation. If we stop here, you have heard, the COE is going to take that. They are going to conduct a couple of more listening sessions both at Western and at AVMA this summer and then they will be in a position then where they can really deliberate about it, take this on board and deliberate about it and provide a response. Anything else you would like them to know? Yes.

**Paul Pion:** Paul Pion, Cornell, 1983.

Daniel: Can you spell your last name please?

Paul: P as in Peter ion. Let's say Pion, I grew with Pion, [inaudible 01:10:21]. As I sit here and I have been involved in this issue for several years, I keep coming back to how did we get here? Sitting and looking at the Council I mean one thing I would like say to the Council is and I know many personally that it is not personal.

I actually think you have put in your time and your effort and it is probably hard to sit there and hear this. I don't think that it's your intent that we would have ended up here.

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**Paul Pion:** I think that you were handed a job and a set of rules and often that happens. The river is paved and we swim down that river. It is really not personal to the Council here.

We have to look at how we got here and we have done a lot of back and forth between many meetings and discussions online and offline and talking at each other rather than talking to each other. I think it is great that we are finally getting together and listening to each other.

I think the biggest thing that I want to add to this is that we have to find a resolution. As a profession we are wasting too much time on this one issue fighting each other. There has got to be a resolution, and I believe that the Council was selected because of their views so it is not that they are not being true to themselves.

The selection process from AVMA is politicized. Some use the word cronyism but it is actually easier to select those that you think will share the views you want to see go forward. It is time for us to step back and figure out how to start over with an independent Council, an independent process. The most important thing as a profession, we can get on to the important issue and stop fighting over this, thank you.

**Daniel:** Thank you. All right.

**Frank Walker:** Frank Walker, again.

**Daniel:** Okay.

**Frank:** We were invited for additional comment, I guess, I started out with that listen, learn and lead, and I would say this is a conversation that is a very one way conversation and it maintains that perspective. We haven't really moved forward and I second Paul's comments there.

Another thing that was brought to mind and I didn't quite catch it totally at NACIQI was another one of those indications that we are not being served well by the AVMA and reporting to the membership was that there is something said about foreign accreditation is not going to occur under the COE any longer by NACIQI. That's changing.

I didn't see any report of that. That concerns me. Why are we hiding that? Why are we not disclosing the information that is out there and looking forward? I don't think it is plus or minus, one way or another but it should be out there. I

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may be mistaken and I apologize if I am. My observation and I wanted to make this clear is that I really believe the COE does a good job, okay and if it isn't interfered with.

Non-traditional veterinary medical education like that occurs in Calgary I think is an excellent approach to veterinary medicine and this education of students. It is a fine example. I think we opened the door so wide initially that how do we narrow it down and come to that place where Calgary is the light on the hill, in terms of accreditation.

The other thing, wildly thinking here is that, as the COE member it is very confronting doing site visits, I mean just move, move, move, and of course you have a huge responsibility. This is speaking now of the old process but during that time period I just loved students. I loved to see what we were doing and tried to investigate what do they see as their education and what was their experience?

You have heard today that a lot of students are moving on to internships, residencies or whatever. I wonder why. Why is that necessary? What is the point? We ask them. You know what? You will get profound answers; like we are not prepared. We just don't feel comfortable going into practice. Just a little bit of add on I hope, not too conflicting to Mary Beth as a practitioner, I hope, I believe, that the practitioner where we serve this food animal the safety of public will come back to bear as part of this COE in a more significant way.

I don't believe academia is the answer. Yes, they know education. They can advise us. They can put the information on reports, but really the practitioner, from his point of view and years, has the ability to assess that much better. Assess the students, assess the practitioners, get them involved in this. I think we are capable. I learned a lot. I think I was able to contribute immensely.

I often times say and this is probably 'self'..., I am wondering if... I can't think of the word, 'effacing,' that I am just peon. Give me a hammer and I will go, but I had a tremendous education, tremendous opportunity. Then it is about safety, okay. Foreign accreditation again, I don't want to mention the school, but I think that it is important that we consider things like in a foreign country there are different laws.

Sometimes there is no licensure. How does that imply or impact us in bringing somebody here and if we dismiss him, sitting on a veterinary medical examining board they just go back to their schools or their country as a felon and practice. Is that right? Is that ethical? Licensure issues are a problem. Laws are different.

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Daniel: Frank before you go on, I didn't understand that point about the felon, can you just...

Frank: What's that?

Daniel: I didn't understand, you said something about if somebody comes here from a foreign country and we dismiss them can they just go back to their country as a felon.

Frank: Why couldn't they? If there is no licensure and there is no follow-up. What is the basis for controlling that?

Daniel: Okay.

Frank: We just willy-nilly allow this foreign influence that challenges us who we are ethically, and so forth, as a profession. The other thing that troubled me, I used the word chloramphenicol.

Daniel: Foreign-

Frank: Chloramphenicol, it is an antibiotic. It hasn't been legal in the United States for years. Gentacin, it has its place, but not in large animal medicine. When I was on site visits there was a bottle of chloramphenicol at a dairy, a bottle of Gentacin there which was in use. Goats, cattle, they were milking something else, sheep.

Is that right? I mean California can control North Dakota and say, 'you are not going to sell any eggs to California unless you do it in a cage so big by so big with so many flopping wing capacity.' Yet, we as a veterinary profession have no concern of that. And thus food is coming back at us.

Daniel: Okay, thank you.

**William Kay:** I often act like Colombo, just one more question. This is sheet which it summarizes the number of veterinary schools that are accredited between the American Civil War in 1863 which is also the foundation of AVMA and today between 1863 and 1997 there were 41, former veterinarian institutions that closed. The last one in Middlesex in Massachusetts in 1947.

Daniel: That closed.

William: That closed. Kaput.

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Daniel: Okay.

William: Completely. Since then we now have one foreign veterinarian school, Utrecht in the Netherlands and four Canadian schools. Now we have 14 accredited foreign schools, 13 since 1997, as significant my list has another 10 or 12 in the pipeline including languages without translation for accreditation. No interpretation, no interpreters or translators. We are now going to Korea, Poland, Denmark, maybe Austria, does it stop anywhere.

We could have as many as 20 foreign veterinary schools by 2017 and 2018 with languages that we really do not understand. My wife just hired a veterinarian from Korea so I ask this fine young man do the student at University of South Korea really understand English. Some do. Some don't. Some do, some don't. How can we be doing this?

Daniel: Okay, anybody else? I am going to give just another, anybody on the edge of your seat getting ready to get up, somebody on the verge here or are you basically done. Raise your hand if you think you might still be on the verge. I think we are done. I think this is it. All right, folks, thanks very much. You really are terrific contributors of following the ground rules and making this as productive as we could make it.

I think you have certainly raised a lot of points of view and they have all, I mean you have seen it up here but this is not the official record. I just want to remind you, this is just so that you can see things are being captured and also helps me to make sure that I am tracking the ideas that are coming out of here. All of the sessions will in fact be transcribed, and as I said there are going to be two more of these. John, do you want to make any closing comments for us? Yeah.

**John Pascoe:** I would like to just say heartfelt and sincere thanks to all of you for taking the time this afternoon to come out and share your perspectives with those of us that are here representing the Council. As you are aware that Council has 20 members, and the intent as I said at the beginning of this is that the transcript and the audio recording will be shared with the whole Council for discussion and deliberation and eventual response.

I appreciate the candor of those that talked. I am glad that you shared your perspectives and we look forward to further deliberations. I remind you, if you are not familiar with this, that the policy and procedure manual is available. It is a publicly accessible document. You can Google it and get it and see the guidelines that the Council operates by.

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I will also remind you that we are more than open to additional comments after you leave here and you reflect on today's comments if you got additional thoughts. Please take advantage of the fact that there is or you can email the Council at [coe@avma.org](mailto:coe@avma.org) and that will be those any comments that sent in that way or any other means that you prefer will be shared with the Council and discussed.

Again, thank you very, very much for taking the time this afternoon to share your thoughts. We look forward to additional opportunities to hear from the profession at these listening sessions that are coming up, so thank you.