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Looking to the Future, AAVMC Board of Directors Approves NAVMEC Report – “Roadmap for Veterinary Medical Education in the 21st Century: Responsive, Collaborative, Flexible”

(Washington, D.C.) July 20, 2011 – On Sunday, July 17, the board of directors of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) approved a report by the North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium (NAVMEC) on the future of veterinary medical education. The report, “Roadmap for Veterinary Medical Education in the 21st Century: Responsive, Collaborative, Flexible,” emphasizes the need for groups involved in veterinary medical education, accreditation, and testing/licensure to work together to equip North American veterinary medical school graduates with the core knowledge, skills, and competencies required to meet society’s evolving needs.

The report’s five main goals are to: 1) graduate career-ready veterinarians who are proficient and have the confidence to use an agreed-upon set of core competencies; 2) ensure that admissions, curricula, accreditation, and testing/licensure are competency-driven; 3) share resources to ensure veterinary medical education is of the highest quality and maximally cost effective; 4) promote an economically viable education system for both colleges of veterinary medicine and veterinary students; and 5) stimulate a profession-wide focus on innovation, flexibility, and action.

Recommendations in the report describe core competencies in three main areas: 1) multispecies knowledge plus clinical competence in one or more species or disciplines; 2) “one health” competency related to the intersection of animal, human and environmental health; and 3) the development of professional competencies. Professional competencies include: communication; collaboration; management; lifelong learning related to scholarship and research; leadership; diversity and multicultural awareness; and the ability to adapt to changing environments.

The report, submitted by a nine-person NAVMEC board of directors, is the culmination of several years of work by NAVMEC, a consortium convened by the AAVMC that consists of a wide spectrum of stakeholders of veterinary medical education, accreditation, testing, and licensure. Participants included veterinary students, employers of veterinarians, clinical practitioners, public practice employers, and leaders in veterinary medical education, global health, public health, public policy, the veterinary industry, animal care and welfare, and change management.

“We recognize that there are many ways to educate students to become veterinarians and that each college is unique and serves a unique constituency,” said Dr. Willie M. Reed, immediate past-president of the AAVMC board of directors and dean of the Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine, “but this effort will go a long way toward ensuring that academic veterinary medicine continues to evolve and adapt in order to remain relevant. With NAVMEC, academic veterinary medicine continues to be one step ahead of change.”

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The Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) is a non-profit membership organization working to protect and improve the health and welfare of animals, people and the environment by generating new knowledge and preparing the high quality veterinary workforce needed to meet continually changing societal demands for veterinary expertise. AAVMC provides leadership for and promotes excellence in academic veterinary medicine to prepare the veterinary workforce with the scientific knowledge and skills required to meet societal needs through the protection of animal health, the relief of animal suffering, the conservation of animal resources, the promotion of public health, and the advancement of medical knowledge. On the Web: <http://www.aavmc.org>