Gender and Generational Diversity in VMA Leaders

Why it’s important and what you can do about
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Why it’s important and what you can do about it

2015 AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference
AM Session: Drs. Bradley, Pritt, and Teller
PM Session: Drs. Aspros, Carlson, and Evans
Where are we going?

The story of WVLDI
Leadership Gap in Veterinary Medicine
Differences in Leadership and Volunteerism
Barriers in Our Profession
Developing Up and Coming Leaders
Association Examples
Facilitated Discussion

Disclaimers – we are talking about:
- general differences between men and women.
- societal differences for the United States.
Brief History

Started July 2013 on social media platforms
Logo and website created: womenveterinarians.org
Fall 2013 - Secured support/funding from AVMA
Winter 2014 - Formed an advisory board—>BOD
Spring 2014 - NFP status obtained
Fall 2014 - Tax-exempt status (501c3)
Who We Are
Leadership Gap

Too few women in leadership positions for the group population
Women lack practical access to roles currently held by male leaders
Women, and members of younger generations, who seek leadership positions face barriers
  - May give up when dealing with overwhelming or obvious barriers
Women often serve in non-traditional leadership roles and can be less visible to members
What is Leadership?

Leadership is the ability to influence and direct the behavior of others.

Leadership is conferred formally or informally.

Leadership consists of motivating, inspiring, persuading, and exercising authority.

Leaders enable groups of people to achieve shared goals.
Traditional Views on Leadership

**Authoritative**
- Assertive
- Autonomous
- Self-Promoting
- Dominant
- Tough

**Communal**
- Connecting
- Cooperative
- Sensitive
- Empathetic
- Nurturing
Differences in Leadership

Men are given more behavioral latitude in leadership positions
  Allowed to self-promote
Women must demonstrate competence
Women under more scrutiny
Women may be disliked for demonstrating authoritative behaviors – a classic “Double Bind”
Volunteerism

No differences between men and women in motives, interest, time, frequency or level of commitment

Men will take on more “risk” when volunteering

Men tend to volunteer in organizations where they find positions of authority

Women tend to volunteer in “people-centered” organizations where they can make a difference

Women tend to stay involved longer when they have a sense of belonging

Young people are tending to volunteer less (females more than males)
Why is it important to get involved?

- Leadership is “influence” (vs. power)
- Gaining access to the “circle of influence”
- Enabling your voice and perspective to be heard
- Greater ability to initiate and implement change
- “Planting the seeds” for vision and action
- Personal growth and confidence
- Earning recognition and respect
- Improving your organization and outcomes

"The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority.
- Kenneth Blanchard"
How to Get Involved

- Always introduce yourself
- Express your opinion respectfully about the issue
- Accept every chance to speak publicly
- Have business cards available at all times
- Peruse Association websites for Volunteer Opportunities
- Identify role models & talk to them
- Say “Yes!” when asked to volunteer
How to stand out – who’s the competition?

- It’s all about **relationships**
- It is all about **who you know**
- Gain **experience** where you can
- Get to know **people with influence**
- Don’t worry about the others
Invest in your skill set!

**Leadership skills**
- Positive attitude
- Working with teams
- Understanding different personality types
- Self-awareness
- Build a support team
- Public speaking
- Build trust – do what you promise.

**Human relations skills**
- Make people feel valued and important
- Know what is important to them
- Use people’s names
- Have a firm handshake!
Technical skills

Financial Skills
• Accounting statements
• Fundraising
• Budgeting

Strategic Planning
Marketing
Information Management
Systems Thinking
• Internal interactions
• External relations
• Coalition building

Behavioral skills

Self-Management
• Time
• Energy
• Stress
• Personal responsibility
• Be accountable

Communication
Listening
Understanding organizational culture
Barriers to Diversity in Leadership

Organizations across the profession recognize the issue
However reluctantly...
The discussion is hard to avoid in society today – especially for women
How you define the problem drives your response

Not all accept the need for action
The problem will or is already taking care of itself

There are different impediments to change
Stages of Organizational Diversity

Kubler-Ross model of organizational diversity:

- Denial
- Anger
- Bargaining
- Depression
- Acceptance
Organizational Barriers

The differences between men and women are not fully understood or valued

This results in barriers to participation:
- Motivational
- Cultural
- Structural
Motivational Barriers

Many organizations believe that they face a demographic problem that will solve itself. This is especially true in veterinary medicine.

AVMA membership is now more than 52% female
SAVMA membership is approximately 80% female

So what’s the problem?
Motivational Barriers

Change is hard – and not without cost

Attracting new people – different people – is disruptive to the established order and to both current and future leaders.

Successful people attribute their success to personal qualities – and, while these are critical – they obscure barriers that others face, and that need to be addressed to facilitate diversity.
Cultural Barriers

Every organization has a culture:
- How it conducts business, treats employees, customers, volunteers and the wider community
- The extent to which freedom is allowed in decision making, development of new ideas and personal expression
- The way in which power and information flow through its hierarchy

www.businessdictionary.com
Cultural Barriers

Men’s cultural values aren’t the same as women’s. Classic group dynamics and the development of normative behaviors make it difficult for one person to be positively disruptive. Baby Boomer’s operate differently than Gen-Xers or Millennials. Communication styles and acceptance of technology create barriers. No need for change seen.
Structural Barriers

**Time** – useful investment or historic baggage?

**Money** – for volunteer positions, what will it cost?

**Travel** – how much will you be away from work and family?

**Commitment** – how long does it take to do something useful?

**Advancement** – what are the opportunities?
What can you do to help develop leaders?

- Develop a Women’s Network
- Provide opportunities for mentoring
- Endorse women leaders’ authority
- Send women to leadership development programs
- Balance gender on groups
- Be aware of gender bias

Give Support

- Dedicate resources to diversity and communicate the commitment to diversity
- Provide external coaches for high potential women
- Allow for greater flexibility in roles

Women’s Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative
Benefits to Your VMA

Utilize social media communities (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) to promote your VMA activities and opportunities.

Reach out to veterinarians early in their careers to help them develop their skills, and their personal successes will feed your pipeline of VMA future leaders.
Association Examples

WISCONSIN VMA

Up to 1994 all male Presidents
   No women at the top for networking
When asked, say “Yes”.
Go to the people who vote!

AVMA

The most common question
Politics is human nature. It exists everywhere.
Remember, it is about relationships and who you know. Learn good human relations skills to establish beneficial relationships and networks.
To progress we have to be in the circle of influence.
Association Examples

World Veterinary Association

- Be noticed (participate, respectful comments)
- Be prepared
- Meet expectations (deadlines)
- Develop trust
- Go to the people with voting power
- Have vision and experience
- Understand cultural competence
- Always.... Enthusiasm!

Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm.
~Ralph Waldo Emerson
Association Examples

**ASLAP**

Applied for AVMA Committee position through a posting
Was able to serve when other leaders resigned
No “wait your turn” mentality
Active leadership development through student and committee programs
Open elections for all Board Seats and HOD Positions
Association Examples

*Power of Ten* Leadership Program

Builds a talented pool of young veterinary leaders for VMAs
10 Recent Graduates trained per VMA
This effort will benefit men and women in the end.
We would like to acknowledge the foundational support of

and generous support from

[Logos for AMERICAN VETERINARY MEDICAL ASSOCIATION, CEVA, and Women’s Veterinary Leadership Development Initiative]