

Meeting our challenges in 2018 and beyond – a message from the 2018 President



2018 promises to be a big year for WAVMA and its members. Since our humble beginnings more than 13 years ago, WAVMA has grown to become the global leader in aquatic veterinary medicine, with members and linkage to others in more than 74 countries. In 2017 more than 280 individuals became members for the first time – these are truly impressive statistics and clearly demonstrates the value of membership and WAVMA programs.

All of this is due to dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers who have devoted their time, energy, and many times their own funds, to help grow programs that help advance members, and help others interested or involved in this unique veterinary discipline.

But there is still a lot to accomplish, and I always ask, “What do we need to improve and where do we find the expertise, time and funds?” For 2018, building on what the Executive Board and our committees have previously developed, it is now time to develop a new strategic plan for the next 5 years. For 2018 my hopes as the President are for the Board and Committees to focus on important, high-level strategies that strengthen existing programs, and develop new initiatives that help advance aquatic veterinary medicine even further. As in previous years we will call on members to provide input on what they feel **they** need. So, anticipate providing your input through surveys we will develop throughout the year.

Strategic planning to ensure WAVMA functions efficiently and effectively is no simple challenge. Since WAVMA began, we have relied on the generosity of very busy volunteers to lend their skills, expertise and knowledge to develop and run our programs. While WAVMA has numerous committees to help manage a number of programs, and to make membership more meaningful for members and to get their innovative ideas on how to improve WAVMA programs we will start a campaign to encourage members to become committee members. While financial resources are always a limitation, the Board will be examining options for rewarding volunteers for the work they perform, and may consider hiring an administrative assistant to help with routine operations, such as website management, run educational webinars, bookkeeping, etc.

To help ensure funds are available for hiring staff, and to help support existing and new member programs we will beginning to examine the best approaches for generating non-dues income, such as attracting sponsors and increasing advertising on the website and in *The Aquatic Veterinarian*.

Few realize that there are currently 13 or 14 organizations around the world that cater to aquatic veterinary medicine. Not surprisingly, all have similar objectives – promoting and supporting aquatic veterinary medicine. Many of them have small publications, programs and conferences to support their members, and the Board will be looking into the best options to develop collaborative programs for organizations to share resources and boost membership in all organizations.

Students tend to be the future of any professional organizations. Not surprising WAVMA has a large number of student members. To help them, WAVMA will be putting a lot of effort into supporting current student chapters and developing new chapters at veterinary schools around the world. Of particular importance to their future in aquatic veterinary medicine, we will be encouraging a number of veterinary schools to adequately cover aquatic veterinary issues in their curricula. In particular, the CertAqV Program and our web-based educational programs have been very useful in identifying the knowledge, skills and experience (KSEs) needed to practice aquatic veterinary medicine and are, to some degree, serving as a great example for what needs to be in a veterinary curriculum.

Equally important, the CertAqV Program has helped guide a large number of practicing veterinarians in attaining the KSEs that are needed to serve clients – and be recognized for their competence. With this program becoming a WAVMA center-point, WAVMA will be putting a strong effort to refine the program in 2018.

So, to all our current members, and to any others considering getting involved in aquatic veterinary medicine, welcome to WAVMA. If there is anything you would like your Board to consider, please contact any of us.

Most sincerely,

David Scarfe *PhD, DVM, MRSSAf, CertAqV*