



## Impact Statement

**ProjectTitle :** Development and implementation of a strategic plan to increase the number of students from disadvantaged backgrounds at the University of Florida, College of Veterinary Medicine

**Issue:** Of all the health sciences, veterinary medicine is arguably the least diverse with respect to both gender and ethnicity. The AVMA workforce report indicates that there has been a substantive shift to a largely female workforce in DVMs <40 yrs of age. This trend is further illustrated by data from the University of Florida College of Veterinary Medicine (UFCVM), with a  $\geq 78\%$  female applicant pool in every year in the past decade, and a matriculating class ranging from 72-86% female.

In addition to lack of diversity with respect to gender, the primary barrier for diversity in veterinary medicine is the low number of underrepresented minorities (URM) and economically disadvantaged applicants. Underrepresented in veterinary medicine includes Asian/Pacific Islander, Black/African American, American Indian, and Hispanic students. Nationally, and similar to UFCVM only 23% of applicants are URM – and only 2.2% of applicants are Black, with an additional 3.3% listing multiple races/ethnicities. This “leaky pipeline” syndrome is a major contributor to the lack of diversity. Part of the problem is that Few URM College or High School students interested in health careers choose veterinary medicine because careers in other health professions are thought to be better with respect to prestige and potential income. Additionally, URM are less likely to own pets and have experience with veterinarians, and there are few URM role models [JVME 2004 31(4): 414-6; JVME 2004 31(4): 403-5].

**What has been done:** Considering that our college does not have a director of Diversity and Inclusion, the task that I felt I had to accomplish was to work with my Dean and create a working group to plan and implement diversity and inclusion initiatives of the CVM. I should point out that diversity and inclusion is one of Dean Lloyd’s top initiatives in his vision for our college.

The working group (composed of faculty, students and staff) meets monthly. Actions taken by this group so far include 1) diversity and inclusion training for faculty, staff and students, as well as our house offices, and technicians at the UF Veterinary Hospitals. 2) adopted a holistic approach to admissions 3) increased our efforts in Pipeline Development with high schools and HBC colleges and universities 4) participated in the 2017 Summer Health Professions Education Program ([shpep.org/site/university-of-florida](http://shpep.org/site/university-of-florida))

**Impacts/New Partnerships:** The Implications and consequences of this project are that diversity of North American society will continue to expand; likewise, the population of veterinarians should reflect this diversity for the profession to meet evolving societal needs. Also, reaching out to URM stretches the boundaries to tap into a talented group that would have a positive impact on vet medicine. The goal of my project is to increase the # of URM applicants to the UFCVM.

Through this project new partnerships with HBV Colleges and Universities will be created with the goal of increasing the number of URM applicants

**Outcome of Project (societal impact/ measure of increased quality of life):** Outcomes should foster equity and access, an inclusive climate, and a curriculum and co-curricular activities that prepare our graduates to meet a multicultural society's needs. Another outcome would be that an increase in the # of URM student admission that would create a new generation of veterinarians from diverse backgrounds, who will enrich our profession and our world.

**How has your project been aided by your FSLI experience?**

- Application of 8 elements of thought (Foundation for Critical Thinking) 1) Perspective/orientation 2) Goal objective 3) Question or problem 4) Information 5) Conclusions 6) Concepts 7) Assumptions 8) Implications and Consequences
- The Communication Compass: an effective tool for communicating your vision. Starting with Intuition (vision over acting picture); Sensing (practical steps, process); Feeling (effect on people, illustrate our values), Thinking (analysis of pros and cons, logical process) and return to Intuition.
- Adaptive Leadership- Understanding your role page 213. : conveyor of ideas and thought, good listener of ideas, engage all to reach a consensus for top priorities and steps to take action, communication and follow through.

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