Email Newsletter - January 2019

Dear Veterinary Medical Alumni Association at ISU Members and Potential Members,

Welcome everyone, to the “hustle and bustle” of 2019! Hustle and bustle is a phrase that is not used much anymore and is probably indicative of my age. However, it is a very accurate description of the pace that we work in every day. I hope you take a few minutes out of your busy schedules to catch up with the Vet. Med. Alumni Association.

First, I would like to make some “Thank you” comments. Thanks to those of you who sent emails sharing appreciation for our first newsletter. It is always nice to know that someone is actually reading the newsletter! Thank you to the veterinary students who have signed up to be members of the Student Alumni Connection (SAC). We look forward to continued participation and growth with this student support program. And lastly, thank you to Dr. Grooms for meeting with a representative group of the VMAA board to share ideas and brainstorm about ways the ISU CVM and VMAA can develop a synergistic relationship as we move forward.

I would like to welcome Dr. Tom Johnson as the newest member to the VMAA board. Dr. Johnson has dedicated so much to the veterinary profession. We are excited to have him on the board. Also, I would like to congratulate Marta Burkgren as our new VMAA Association Director. Marta is the heart and soul of this organization and is very deserving of her new “official title”. Thank you, Marta!

Veterinarians are trained to be detail oriented and often rely upon data to help make daily decisions. As part of the “DID YOU KNOW” theme, the VMAA board has compiled some membership statistics. One word can summarize our findings….POTENTIAL! The VMAA currently has 1039 members, including the new graduates who receive a first year complimentary membership. Based on information compiled from all graduating classes, the potential membership of the VMAA is 5597. We have only 18.5% of our potential membership as active members. All of the money generated by annual dues is used to support programs for the students, faculty and alumni at the ISU CVM. Just think…..POTENTIAL!!!

As I mentioned, we had a meeting with Dr. Grooms. I think it is important that the VMAA membership knows that during this meeting we discussed ways that the VMAA can be more “visible” to the students. A great question that Dr. Grooms asked is “What do you look for to stay relevant?” My interpretation of this question is “What do we need to do to connect with students, faculty and alumni, alike, to bring value to being a lifelong member of the VMAA at all stages of one’s career?” We talked about activities and programs that could support student wellness to help alleviate the stresses associated with veterinary school. We talked about the successes of the existing alumni programs, such as the ISU Homecoming celebration and class reunion assistance. How can we build on this? We struggle to identify ways to provide additional support to the faculty and administration because they are such a diverse group. So I challenge each group, students, faculty and alumni to help us come up with ideas that will make the VMAA stronger and become a “valued professional organization” for all members. Send us feedback about what you would like to see from YOUR VMAA at ISU. Remember, the VMAA at ISU is supported only by your membership dues. Please help us grow by committing to be lifelong VMAA members.

Go to https://vetmed.iastate.edu/alumni-giving/alumni/association (remember, you saved it as a favorite after the last newsletter☺) and see what the VMAA at ISU has to offer. If you are not already a member, download a membership application and send us some mail!

Have a great 2019 and keep cheering for the Cyclones!

Mark Brinkman, DVM

President, VMAA at Iowa State University