

APVMA SUMMER NEWSLETTER

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A Letter from the APVMA President

Hello APVMA Members!

I hope you all are having an exciting summer and are enjoying the nice weather. Here in D.C., it has been beautiful! As for those of you who are applying this cycle, I want you all to know that my thoughts and prayers are with you during this very stressful time and to remind you again that you each have something special to bring forth, and the primary goal of this application is not only to obtain admission to an institution that will give you the "DVM" or "VMD" title on your signatures but to show the admissions' committees all of those unique talents that you each possess and why all of you would make phenomenal veterinarians.

On to the business corner: in the past few months, I have attended several conferences including the national American Veterinary Medical Association Convention that brought together over 7,000 people from several branches of the profession as well as technicians and students. Along with your treasurer and webmaster, we attended a plethora of continuing education sessions, networked in the exhibit hall, and most importantly, strengthened bonds with SAVMA and the AVMA overall and are looking forward to working with them further to benefit all of you not only in communication but resources and hopefully, in the long run, potential scholarships. Finally, I am happy to say that by this autumn, you will see two new programs emerge that I mentioned in my speech at NC State: The Liaison and Ambassador Programs which will cultivate not only outreach but growing this veterinary family even further.

Next, some updates from the rest of my executive board and how they are working to make this organization stronger for the rest of you; I have collected statements from each one of them: Kalyn Bryan,

Vice President- "I have impacted the organization thus far by networking to more individuals, clubs, and potential sponsors across the nation what it is the APVMA does and what we stand for. I work every day to try to grow our APVMA family and help other pre-veterinary students, like myself, obtain our life long goals of becoming veterinarians as well as finding easier methods to do so in the long run." Ilissa Chasnick, Treasurer- "I am working to improve the role of treasurer by ensuring that membership registration runs smoothly, and through collaborating with Liz, I am also looking to make more opportunities and items available to members of APVMA. The board is still working on ideas and finalizing, but we have had some preliminary discussion over cords and stoles, scrubs, and other types of wear that members can buy, an online store, and more!" Liz Price, Secretary- "I have helped to maintain communication between the executive board and advisors, made the newsletters, and helped to keep accountability through meeting minutes. My biggest project I am working on is reorganizing all documents of the APVMA from 2011 forward and converting the paper versions of meeting minutes and other documents to electronic USB and putting them on the Google drive to ensure accountability and organization." Callie Morris, Webmaster- "As the APVMA Webmaster, I have overhauled the APVMA website to make it more user friendly and up to date. In addition, a PayPal button has been added for any interested donors on the site! Besides upkeep on the site, I'm working to spread word of the APVMA to new students especially now, targeting more Plain States by staying active in the group and keeping students up to date on our social media platforms through the creation of flyers and eventually, information pamphlets. We are also working on the possibility of a web store on the site, so stay tuned!

As you all can see, we have big plans for the APVMA and are working very hard to meet everyone's needs in the process and will be formally sitting down to discuss these topics at our in-person summer meeting held in Michigan in the next few weeks as well as finalizing our yearly goals to fulfill by the time we see you all again at the Symposium at Auburn University in March. When I ran for this position five months ago, I stressed the importance that we are all part of the backbone holding this organization together and without all of your aspirations and continued participation, we would not be able to accomplish half of the things that we do. Therefore, I will leave you with this thought by Mother Teresa:

"The future is not in our hands. We have no power over it. We can only act today. We have a sentence in our Constitution that says: 'We will allow the good God to make plans for the future- for yesterday has gone, tomorrow has not yet come, and we have only today to make Him known, loved, and served.' So, we do not worry about it."

Continue to work hard and dream big pre-vets, for we do not know what tomorrow brings. Again, shall you have any questions or need to contact any of us, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Best regards,

Legend Thurman

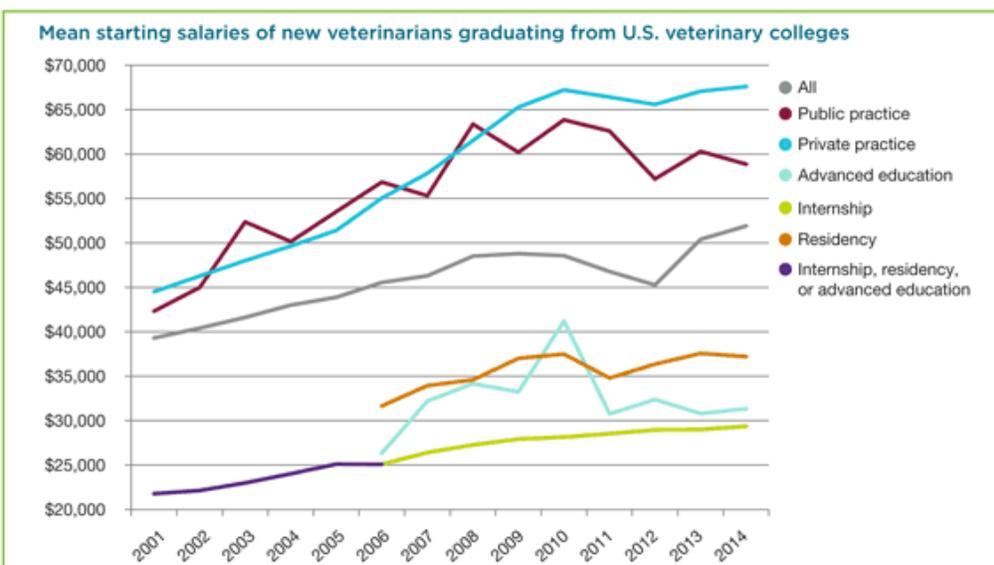
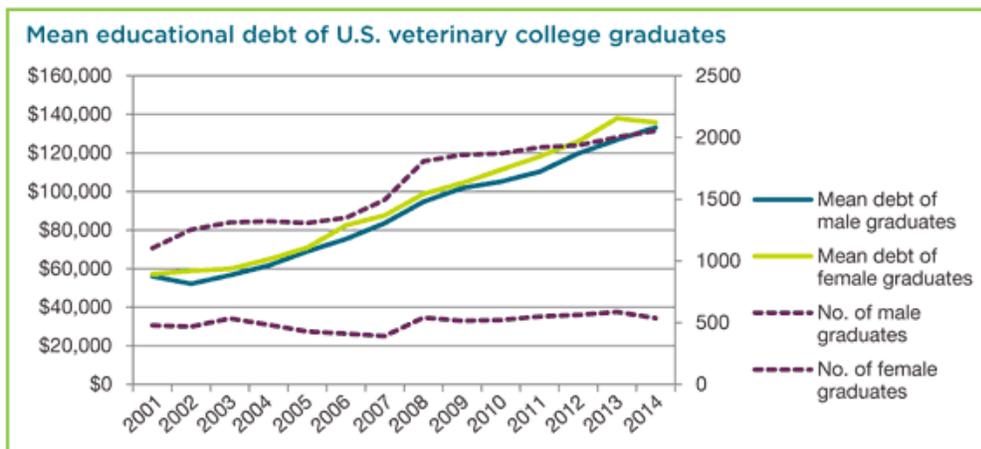
We Need to Have a Talk...and No You're Not Going to like what I have to say.

Summer, it's one of the greatest times of the year. The days get shorter and nights get longer. You may be working at a one-of-a-kind internship or spending your days soaking up all the vitamin D possible. Well, that's great but as

pre-veterinary students we know that is not all that's happening...its application time. To us veterinary students, this is our World Series. We have worked the last three plus years to create an application that is filled with experience, a killer GPA and GRE score, and sparkles with all the qualities vet schools' want to see in their

vet students. The possibility of you attending vet school may become a reality! As exciting as this maybe, it can also be daunting because despite acquiring a DVM you are potentially obtaining a financial burden. Disclaimer. Please do not allow any of the following statistics or information deter you from your dream of veterinary medicine!

In 2016, the average debt of a veterinary student was approximately \$150,000...



**Charts provided by the AVMA

Let's Talk Numbers...

In the previous charts, you can see the average debt of veterinary students and you can see how much the average veterinary student is making when they graduate depending on their track. Those students who decide to go into private practice are on the higher spectrum of earnings, while those who wish to specialize in aquatics, exotics, or zoo medicine tend to be making an average of \$20,000 to \$30,000 during their residency. In the track to specialize, a veterinary graduate will need to gain experience through residencies, internships, or even more advanced veterinary classes. Although continuing your education in veterinary medicine is great, you are left to tackle \$150,000 to \$200,000 of debt with a small salary, while also trying to pay the cost of living. The debt acquired from vet school is scary, scary enough that according to the a study from the AVMA, "52% of recent vet graduates said they would not have attended vet school due to the financial burden they left with..." Scary, right? Stick with me, there is light at the end of the tunnel!

You have Options, Let's Discuss!

The first and most common option students look at is taking out a student loan. Now, let's break down loans with some key terms first. You can choose to take out a **direct subsidized loan** or a **direct unsubsidized loan**. A direct subsidized loan is a loan where the federal government pays the interest for these loans while the student is in school. A direct unsubsidized loan is a loan where interest begins accruing as soon as the loan is taken out. The next is a **federal loan** where the money is lent to you by the government and these tend to be preferred as they act to encourage students to pursue education as compared to a **private loan** from a company or bank who is looking to make money off of your loan. So you have taken out a loan...now what?

Now, you go to school and depending which option you have chosen you are either paying interest or not. In the case of a private loan, there is potential that you would have to start paying off your loan while being in school.

Then, congratulations! You have officially graduated with your DVM. You can now go out in the world and practice ,but wait what happened to those loans? Well now that you have graduated, you get an average 6 month grace period before payments towards your loans begin. This grace period is dependent on where you took your loans from, but generally you have some time to figure out a game plan.

Student Loans Key Term Box

Direct subsidized loan: a loan where the federal government pays the interest for these loans while the student is in school.

Direct unsubsidized loan: is a loan where interest begins accruing as soon as the loan is taken out.

Federal Loan: a loan given to a student by the federal government

Private Loan: a loan provided by a company, bank, or credit union

Interest: the cost of using another person's money. It is calculated as a percentage of the loan. This is to compensate for the risks the lender faces by loaning you money.

Say it's been 6 months and you still haven't gotten a job, but they are requesting payment. You can ask for an extension and some will allow this; however, this can be a trap as some banks will take advantage of this to increase interest and the overall amount you owe them. Okay, now you have a job and are happily employed. You start paying off your loans with an average of 10-20% of your income dedicated to that. If that is too much or you are comfortable with dedicating more of your paycheck, you can always design a plan that works for you and your income. I hope that makes you feel a little better!

Then next option is using your skills as a veterinarian for the military. The best part of this option is the U.S. Army will pay for you to go to school and you get to help those who make the ultimate sacrifice for this country. To be more detailed, the U.S. Army offers a scholarship called The Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP). In this scholarship your tuition and books are paid for, you are also eligible for an average \$2,200 stipend, officer pay during breaks, allowance for housing and food, and an increased salary for promotions as you continue your career. This sounds like the perfect option and some will ask why doesn't everyone do this? Well, there are some factors you have to think about. First, if the U.S. Army is paying for you to go to vet school you must be able to graduate and be a full time student. Also, when you graduate, you may not have all the freedom to practice wherever you want. The army would be the ones directing you for a few years and then you could have the potential to go on your own. Another factor is only a very small number of people receive this scholarship, approximately 40 a year.

I hope that the last few paragraphs have been only educational and hasn't deterred you from pursuing your dreams of being a veterinarian. Yes it's scary, but pre-veterinarian students need to be aware of this especially as they are applying. Also, you have to hold on to something that is so fundamental...your passion. You have a passion for veterinary medicine, your passion is what is driving you through those GRE prep courses, getting you through the grueling applications process, and passion is what will help you break that wall of fear of the financials of veterinary school.

"The cost of not following your heart, is spending the rest of your life wishing you had." - Anonymous



Here are some tips when you are thinking about the financials of veterinarian school

1. Go to your in-state school to avoid paying out of state tuition (yes, I am aware this isn't always possible)
2. Develop residency in the state where you are attending vet school.
3. Apply for Scholarships!
4. Do as much research as possible regarding your options!
5. Borrow only what is needed! Don't take out a loan that is more than needed
6. Learn financial responsibility; maybe take a class or two!
7. Also consider the vet school you plan to attend; some vet schools offer a financial planner or counselor.

Don't forget to fill out the FAFSA: FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) is not a loan. But it is a federal application that will determine your eligibility for federal and state financial aid programs. After you complete the FAFSA, you may discover that you are eligible for scholarships, grants, work-study, and student loans.

Resources and Citations for the Previous Section including charts:

- <http://atwork.avma.org/2015/10/22/what-you-need-to-know-about-paying-for-veterinary-school/>
- <https://www.goarmy.com/amedd/education/hpsp.html>
- <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/types/loans>

A Few Words of Advice from Our Friends at the Vet Gazette

September 15, 2017, for most, this will be another ordinary day. However for a few just the mere mention of the date will cause temporary cardiac arrest. The VMCAS is certainly a large part of the process of applying for veterinary school and marks one step on the way to pursuing the dream of becoming a veterinarian. But that's just the thing, it's just one part. Applying to veterinary school is a process and one that is unique for every individual. It's easy to get caught up in the flurry of excitement that is applying for vet school, especially if you have chosen to apply during your final years in college. Be careful not to lose your own goals in this supposed rat race. Remember why you wanted to apply in the first place, why you chose to pursue veterinary medicine, and make decisions that are right for you. The time before the September deadline should be used to visit schools and reach out to current students and professors. You will be spending 4 long years in vet school and you need to make sure you find the right fit. Do your research, the road to becoming a veterinarian is not only a considerable time commitment but an incredible financial one as well. Use resources such as the AVMA and AAVMC websites to compare colleges and better understand your financial options and develop strategies for financial success.

If you haven't already, shadow a veterinarian and ask questions. Ask them why they joined the profession, about the current issues affecting the veterinary community, and what their vet school experience was like. If you are hoping to use them as a reference, ask them early and send them a copy of your resume and personal statement so they can have a better understanding of your professional goals and experience. Don't forget those thank you notes too! Try to keep an open mind and gain experience in an area of veterinary medicine that you might not be initially drawn to, even after you hit that submit button on your application. You are not just applying for a job here, you are applying to become part of a profession. Don't do things simply because they're resume boosters, take on new experiences which will help you develop both professionally and as an individual.

At this point in your careers I'm sure you've received more advice from advisors, mentors, professors, friends, and family than you can barely keep straight, but if I might be so bold, I'd like to give one last bit of my own. This journey is your own, there is no right road to veterinary school and everyone's will be unique. Try not to compare yourself so much to the crowd that you lose sense of what makes you so unique. Take time to enjoy the ride. Yes, vet school will be one of the most challenging four years of your life; testing you intellectually, emotionally, and physically. However, it can also be some of the best years too. I truly love waking up every day knowing I get to call myself a veterinary student. So many do not get this opportunity and the difficult days can make us forget this. But I promise you it is worth it. The veterinary community is filled with incredible people and opportunities and someday I look forward to being able to call you my colleague.

**The APVMA would like to Thank Meredith Chamberlain,
Editor of the Vet Gazette, for writing this piece.**



THANK YOU TO ALL OF 2016-2017 SPONSORS, WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU AGAIN IN THE FUTURE!

