



# Convocation Answers

## What are the plans to further facilitate communication between the Chapters?

- Dr Megan Lui

Short term plans include:

- Chapter updates at Science Week: Chapter Executive breakfast, Councillors attending Chapter AGMs
- Council maintaining Chapter liaison – each Councillor has 4 to 5 Chapters that they are allocated to liaise with and facilitate information going to and from Council
- Updated College Courier
- Regular email Member updates
- Streamlining Science Week – centralised proceedings
- Generic email addresses for the Chapter Executives

Medium term plans include:

- Improving our information and communications technology infrastructure to improve our website
- Developing a platform that allows better communication between Members and between Chapters
- Improving our Member engagement through different geographical functions
- Developing a NZ branch

**Should we open Oncology in Small Animal for Membership? Oncology is a fast-growing area but lack of enough number of fellowship support. Adding people to Membership level could benefit much more patients' care in this area.**

- Dr Chun Yu Leung

Council (the Directors) can establish new Chapters or branches (Constitution article 32.5.1). Per the Chapter Guidelines, Chapters are groups of people with expertise in a subject, which are as autonomous as possible in the conduct of their affairs. The Oncology Chapter was formed in 2011 and currently contains Fellows and Associate Members (who are at the level of a Fellow, with an appropriately recognised specialist qualification), as well as Members and Fellows in other disciplines with an interest in this area.

The Oncology Chapter does not wish to pursue the addition of a Membership level examination in its Chapter at the current time.

### **Why does the College allow a few Chapters to examine only at Fellowship level without offering Membership level examinations? This can be viewed as protectionism.**

- Dr Andrew Worth

The question is correct in that three Chapters (Veterinary Oncology, Veterinary Dermatology and Veterinary Ophthalmology) examine at Fellowship level without offering Membership examinations.

The ANZCVS has had a tradition of being Chapter-driven and recognising the Chapters and their members as the experts in their field/discipline. These newer and smaller Chapters have been established by Fellows without incorporating a path to Membership in their Charters.

The Ophthalmology Chapter advises that it is open to all Members of the College despite not offering a membership examination in the subject. This means you can access the Chapter, their members and their CE by joining (paying the subscription). Currently the Chapter only examines at Fellowship level. Dermatology takes a similar approach.

### **Is it logistical for FANZCVS specialist qualifications to gain reciprocal acknowledgement by the USA and European counterparts?**

- Dr Tunbi Idowu

This has been an aim for many within the College for years. Some international Colleges have shown some interest, whereas others have been resistant to highly negative. A hinderance to the process is that most specialities in North America and Europe have their own Colleges, whereas we have included all. This means that each speciality would require individual negotiations. Whilst there are overarching bodies (AVMA and EBVS), they would consult with the Colleges so their support would be required.

Currently there are Members or Fellows of the College taking on roles in some of these international colleges with an intent to try and improve the relationships and to at least have some discussions between ANZCVS and their executives.

### **Would there be a scope for a financial structure, other than the AVA award, to reflect the extra qualifications the members obtain?**

- Dr Mihai Cstai

This is an aim of the ANZCVS – to increase awareness of Membership in the profession and in the wider community. In several jurisdictions throughout the world (e.g. NZ, UK) there has been a move to recognising a middle tier of practitioner, i.e. someone who sits above a regular veterinary graduate but has not achieved the skills/assessment level of a specialist. We feel that the Membership qualification fits nicely into this mid-tier – it is only accessible to practitioners who graduated more than 3.5 years ago, and provides an external, independent benchmark of the standard of practice in the field that the Member sits.

Our examination process is rigorous and we have over 40 years' experience in designing and delivering exams, and this process is under continual review and improvement.

We will be working with the AVBC and State boards to advance recognition of this middle tier, which would meet the needs of our Members well.

Further, we will be working on improving recognition of the quality of the Membership in the wider community.

### **Seeking clarification regarding full vs part-time training programs for Fellowship. College guidelines give scope for part-time training programs, however individual Chapters seem to be able to stipulate full time only. Please can this be clarified?**

- Dr Rebecca Weight

The decision on the types of training that are acceptable, within the broader College guidelines, is determined by the subject experts, that is, the relevant Chapter SSC. There is variation within what is acceptable based on the type of training, and this cannot be uniform across all disciplines.

### **Why are there time limits on Fellowship examinations?**

- Dr Jason Beck

This is a question of standardisation – all of the candidates must meet the same criteria (time) and therefore there is no variability in this field. The examination process is not to determine all the knowledge of a candidate, even within specific fields, but rather to test a selection across the subject that is representative of the much broader knowledge.

The overseas Colleges all have time limits for their examinations.

There is a question also of logistics in planning and executing the exams (and law of diminishing return).

### **How will we resolve the male ratio at vet schools where 90 are female?**

- Dr Richard Atwell

I think this question raises several points

- It would be good to get more gender balance in the profession from vet school through to all levels (ANZCVS cannot control this)
- Issues of graduate retention are complex and not just related to having a predominantly female work force. Other important issues that feed into this include the salaries and wages of small animal and mixed practitioners, workplace culture (traditionally gearing towards long days), career progression prospects for graduates
- The RACGP (specialist GP college for medical doctors) has enrollments of 50:50 male to female in their specialist training program. Still, for every retiring GP, they anticipate they will need 2.5 new

GP Fellows to replace them. This is not to do with male/female ratios but because new generations of younger GPs don't want to work 70-hour weeks, like the older guard did. (Provide stats).

It would be great to see a plug for better working conditions for all staff – there are many men now electing to work part-time in order to share the joy (and burden) of parenthood; there are many ways also in which the influx of women / part-time employees can be positives: for instance greater number of people available to share afterhours care and increased input into difficult cases. Any quota system induces risk of inverse bias. Once employed, female associates deserve the same consideration as their male peers.

If we want more men in the profession we have to make the profession attractive to high school students, because choices are made before vet school, which is an area the College does not have much influence in.

### **Is there an on hold status for Members not actively involved in any particular area of expertise anymore?**

- Dr Mihai Csatai

There is currently no formal means of dealing with this situation. Members either continue to pay their subscription and remain members of the College, or may resign from the College, with the option to be reinstated to the College at a later date upon application. This is an area that has been highlighted for further review.

### **Establishing new specialties. I understand this is also an issue with the AVBC but is there not more that the College can do to help establish new specialties?**

- Dr Kirsten Jackson

The College does support the development of new specialities, but is bound to comply with the requirements of the Minimum Standards Document of the AVBC. Within the document is section 6 that clearly outlines the requirements for registration as a Founding Member in a new Speciality. This does include an examination, which the College would be able to facilitate, but all the other requirements as outlined that would be required to be included within the Credentials. In addition, there would need to be support from the Chapter to organise review of the credentials and the examination process. The College will not offer Fellowship examinations that do not meet the AVBC requirements. There are opportunities to train internationally through either the AVDC or EVDC to obtain their qualifications.

### **Why aren't exam results made available to participants?**

- Dr Jason Lenord

If you pass, you have reached the benchmark and we feel empirically there is no need to know the raw mark. This is to avoid peer-to-peer benchmarking and meaningless concerns about outcomes. The ANZCVS process is a peer evaluation process, in the same way the publications are reviewed by experts, or a PhD is examined: a marks breakdown detracts from the holistic judgement of the examiners. Indeed, marks, and

the marking rubrics and other QC processes we use, are tools to facilitate this peer assessment, in order to make a professional judgement as transparent, fair, equitable and robust as is possible.

If you fail or receive a supplementary exam, you will be able to apply to get your results, including a breakdown of marks for each question and review your answers (by request). This is to provide unsuccessful candidates with feedback, in order to support them for success in subsequent attempts (bearing in mind that the next exam will have different questions, so they really need to look past the marks to see what they need to learn about the knowledge they presented in the question and/or their exam technique)

### **Is it valid to obtain Membership and Fellowship and never have follow up assessments to ensure standards are maintained?**

- Dr Michael McCluskey

The development of the Maintenance of Credentials that will be implemented in the College addresses this issue. Whilst for most, it is not an assessment process, this is an option.

