Veterinary Dental Organization Integration: the ‘Foundation Plan’

Executive Summary for the Academy, College, F4VD and Society Memberships

August 2015

Introduction

As a result of continuation of discussions that started in November 2014 in Atlanta, the Boards of the Academy of Veterinary Dentistry, American Veterinary Dental College, American Veterinary Dental Society and Veterinary Dental Forum organized a professionally-facilitated Strategic Planning Workshop (SPW) that was held February 28-March 1, 2015 in Orlando, FL. The Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians and Foundation for Veterinary Dentistry were invited and sent their Presidents as representatives.

Several options were considered in detail, including forming a new organization as the ‘parent’, or using the Academy, Forum or Society as the ‘parent’. The Foundation Plan described here is easier, simpler, costs less, can be implemented more rapidly with less disruption and will be more effective than the alternatives considered by the SPW participants – there are no legal or regulatory fees required to for a new corporation or delay while the application for a new corporation is assembled and processed, fewer corporations need to be merged or dissolved, and it builds in the advantage of having a tightly-integrated charitable arm as a central part of the mix.

The SPW participants agreed that there were four major principles that needed to be built in:

1. Ensuring that the proposed reorganization did not result in the possibility of non-certified veterinarians (i.e. veterinarians who are not Academy Fellows or College Diplomates) being associated with the certification organizations (Academy and College), such that a member of the public or a veterinarian in general practice might assume the individual had certified veterinary dental expertise.
2. Ensuring that non-certified veterinarians and non-veterinarians continue to have the opportunity to become involved in organized veterinary dentistry.
3. Ensuring that outreach activities to veterinary students and that outreach to and educational opportunities for veterinarians in general practice would continue.
4. Ensuring that information and educational activities made available by the organizations following implementation of the integration plan will be peer-reviewed by College diplomats.

The mission adopted at the Strategic Planning Workshop is:

Mission:

Promote excellence in veterinary dentistry and oral surgery through education, research and service to the public.
The result is a Plan to integrate organized non-certification veterinary dental activities in North America under one ‘parent’ organization, the existing Foundation for Veterinary Dentistry (F4VD). The Academy and College will continue as separate entities, responsible only for their certification programs. The Society and Forum will be merged into the Foundation.

**Summary of the Foundation Plan**

1. **Purpose**: Advancement of veterinary dentistry, resulting in improved service to the public and to our colleagues in the veterinary profession, by making informed use of integrated resources.

2. The **Foundation for Veterinary Dentistry** becomes the parent under which all national-level veterinary dental non-certification activities (education, Journal, public relations and outreach) currently conducted by the Academy-College Alliance, Forum and Society in North America are run.

3. The **Foundation** will be run by a Board and will have consolidated financial management. The Academy and College will remain separate entities for reasons resulting from legal review of non-profit, tax-exempt status.

4. The **Foundation Board** will be made up of appointed individuals, a majority of whom will be diplomates of the College. There will also be representatives of the Academy appointed by the Academy Board, and Board members appointed initially by the current F4VD and Society Boards to ensure continuity of non-certification activities; there will be continued presence of non-veterinarian and non-certified veterinarian representatives as voting members of the Board. The Board make-up is designed to provide consistent leadership by diplomates of the College to ensure board-certification-level peer-review of all programs and materials put out by the Foundation, and to provide a consistent message on controversial issues such as AFD, while ensuring representation of the broad group (non-veterinarians and non-certified veterinarians) interested in participation in organized veterinary dentistry. This will enhance the effectiveness of the current Society’s efforts in outreach, such as the Student Chapters of AVDS, by two means: One is that financial resources for these activities will likely be greater. The other is that these efforts would carry the endorsement of the College, the board-certification entity in our discipline. The Student Chapters of AVDS (SCAVDS) will become the Student Chapters of the Foundation for Veterinary Dentistry (SCFVD), with no loss of continuity of leadership for these activities.

5. Provide opportunity for an annual meeting for all Foundation ‘members’ at the Forum, with representatives of the Foundation leadership in attendance. This will provide a welcome for new ‘members’ and an opportunity for informal net-working, as well as for a brief presentation on the Foundation’s activities and a call for volunteers.

6. The **Forum** corporation will be merged into and its financial assets will be transferred to the Foundation. Initially, its responsibilities will be managed by the Forum Board members who will form the Forum Committee of the Foundation. There will be effectively no change in Forum governance and administration. Forum finances will be managed through the Forum committee and Forum funds will be deposited in the Foundation account. Net proceeds from the Forum can be made available for support of non-certification activities approved by the Foundation Board. The Academy and College will no longer each receive the traditional one third of the Forum net proceeds; Academy and College dues and fees will cover the Academy and College certification and central
administration costs, and, for the College, the net proceeds from the operations of the Veterinary Oral Health Council will be available as a back-up source of funding for the certification programs.

7. The **Journal of Veterinary Dentistry** will continue to be produced without interruption, and will be owned and managed by the Foundation. For Volume 33, 2016, the 2015 members of the Society will be invoiced for Foundation membership, which will include the Journal and other current Society benefits – only the name of the organization on the invoice will change.

8. The **Society** corporation will be merged into the Foundation, and its non-Journal activities (support of education and out-reach activities) will be conducted by Foundation committees that will include non-veterinarians and non-certified veterinarians. The Society financial assets will be transferred to the Foundation account. Activities currently conducted by the **Society** will continue as Foundation activities, and will be strengthened by additional resources available as a result of integration of financial assets.

9. The **Academy of Veterinary Dental Technicians** will be invited to participate as members of relevant Foundation committees, such as the Forum, Education and Outreach Committees.

10. The **Academy** and **College** corporations will continue as separate corporations with separate financial management, for legal reasons, and will be responsible only for their certification activities. The certification functions of the College (Diploma training programs, credentials and examination processes) and the Academy (Fellows by examination) will be conducted by the College and Academy Boards, respectively. Academy Fellows and Diplomates will continue to elect the Academy Board members, and College Diplomates will continue to elect the College Board members. The costs of the certification process will be met from Academy or College income.

11. The Foundation Plan avoids the potential risk to ABVS recognition that folding the College into a parent organization engenders (ABVS requires that its specialty Colleges are independent non-profit corporations).

12. The Foundation Plan integrates sponsorship and fund-raising across all of the non-certification activities (Forum, Journal, education, outreach, corporate sponsorship, charitable gifting and grants), and ensures that gifts are tax-deductible for individual donors.

13. The timing is designed to permit all required final agreements to be in place by mid-October, 2015, with full implementation by mid-December, 2015, to ensure a smooth transition for Journal distribution in 2016.

14. The Plan will provide opportunities for tighter collaboration with veterinary dental organizations outside North America, because the Foundation can speak with one voice on all of the non-certification possibilities.

15. The Plan will provide tightly-integrated professional administration. For example: The Forum registration and Journal lists will be maintained in the same data-base, ensuring accuracy in applying the reduced Forum registration fee, and allowing cross-marketing opportunities. Because the Academy and College will remain as separate corporations, but will use the same professional administration company, there will be negotiation among the Foundation, Academy, College leadership about use of and payment for the VetDent Document Management System programs.
The Plan will be implemented under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding that has been approved by the Academy, College, Forum, F4VD and Society Boards and signed by the Presidents of those organizations. The MoU includes contingencies that will allow the members of the Academy and College to review and comment on the proposal, and the Plan will require formal approval of the current members of the Society and F4VD.