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BUSINESS, CONSUMER SERVICES AND HOUSING AGENCY • GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS • VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD
1747 North Market Blvd., Suite 230, Sacramento, CA 95834-2987
P (916) 515-5520 | Toll-Free (866) 229-6849 | www.vmb.ca.gov

MEMORANDUM

DATE	October 4, 2024
TO	Multidisciplinary Advisory Committee (MDC)
FROM	National Examination Subcommittee Kathy Bowler Kristi Pawlowski, RVT
SUBJECT	**Agenda Item 4. Presentation on Association of Veterinary Technician Educators (AVTE) Project Overview: "Understanding the Current State of the VTNE, Including Factors Influencing Pass Rates: A Multi-Year Analysis"**

The National Examination Subcommittee (Subcommittee) was tasked with reviewing and providing recommendations on issues related to the national examinations, including, but not limited to, national pass rates and alternative pathways.

During a September meeting, the Subcommittee discussed concerns related to low VTNE pass rates and the project initiated by the Association of Veterinary Technician Educators (AVTE). As discussed in more detail in the attached document, the AVTE is dedicated to taking a holistic approach in reviewing factors influences the VTNE pass rates. They have invited the administrators of the VTNE, AAVSB, and other stakeholders such as the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) and the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) to be part of the discussions.

The Subcommittee has invited the AVTE Executive Director, Todd Von Deak, to provide an overview of AVTE's project and discuss any opportunities for the Subcommittee to participate in future discussions.

Attachment

1. Research Brief for the AVTE, dated May 22, 2024

Research Brief for the Association of Veterinary Technician Educators (AVTE)
Updated: May 22, 2024

Project Title:

Understanding the Current State of the VTNE, Including Factors Influencing Pass Rates: A Multi-Year Analysis

Background:

The Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE) is a critical credentialing exam for veterinary technicians in the United States and Canada. Administered by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB), the VTNE assesses entry-level veterinary technicians' competency. Passing this exam is a prerequisite for obtaining licensure and ensuring that veterinary technicians meet the professional standards required to provide quality animal care.

Core Research Question:

The primary goal of this research project is to analyze VTNE pass rates over the past 3-5 years and identify factors that may influence these outcomes. Specifically, we aim to determine what variables are associated with exam success, providing valuable insights to individual educational programs and informing broader discussions on credentialing and accreditation efforts.

Objectives:

1. Analyze VTNE Pass Rates:

- Collect and analyze pass rate data from the past 3-5 years.
- Identify trends and patterns in pass rates over time.

2. Identify Influencing Factors associated with VTNE success, such as:

- Admission Criteria
- Educational background and prerequisite coursework
- Types of educational programs (e.g., online vs. in-person)
- Institutional support mechanisms (e.g., tutoring, mentoring)
- Demographic factors (e.g., age, gender, socioeconomic status)
- Geographic location and access to resources
- Testing Factors (e.g. 1st, 2nd or subsequent test attempt)

3. Provide Programmatic Insights:

- Develop insights that can help veterinary technician programs enhance their curricula and support structures to improve student outcomes.

4. Inform Stakeholder Discussions:

- Use findings to engage with accreditation bodies and other key stakeholders to discuss potential enhancements to the credentialing process, ensuring it remains relevant and impactful for future veterinary technicians and the communities they serve.

Potential Research Design:

1. Data Collection:

- Gather VTNE pass rate data from AAVSB for the past 3-5 years.
- Collect additional data through surveys distributed to veterinary technician programs across the U.S. and Canada to gather information on educational practices, student demographics, and support systems.
- To the extent possible, document changes to the exam (content and operations) to identify branch points to hypothesize and potentially assess the impact of those changes.

2. Quantitative Analysis:

- Use statistical methods to analyze trends in VTNE pass rates.
- Employ regression analysis to identify correlations and potential causal relationships between pass rates and study factors.

3. Qualitative Analysis:

- Conduct interviews and focus groups with educators, students, and administrators to gain deeper insights into the quantitative findings and explore contextual factors influencing exam success.

4. Reporting and Dissemination:

- Compile a comprehensive report detailing the research findings.
- Develop actionable recommendations for educational programs and stakeholders.
- Present findings at AVTE conferences and through peer-reviewed publications.

Questions to Explore / Development Mitigation Plans within Designing Research

- Is 3-5 years the correct horizon
- Smooth for effects of COVID-19
- Take into account changes in VTNE exam over the course of the study period
- Incorporate proprietary data with potential restrain of trade implications

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced Understanding: A clearer picture of the factors influencing VTNE success provides a macro-level understanding of current pass rate trends.
- Improved Educational Practices: Evidence-based recommendations for programs to better support their students in preparing for the VTNE.
- Stakeholder Engagement: A platform for meaningful discussions with accreditation bodies and other stakeholders about strengthening the credentialing process.

Potential Collaborators:

- Veterinary Technician Programs: Institutions across North America to participate in surveys and share best practices.
- AAVSB: To provide access to pass rate data and collaborate on research dissemination.
- AVMA: To engage in discussions on improving credentialing processes.
- Professional Associations: Such as the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) to broaden the scope and impact of the research.

Needed Resources:

Research Professional: A third-party resource experienced in this type of exploration would meaningfully strengthen the quality of the findings and their general credibility, impacting their ability to influence the veterinary education community in the most meaningful way possible.

The scope of work for this resource would include:

- Further fleshing out this research brief
- Implementing the research plan
- Preparing Findings
- Presenting Findings to Key Stakeholder Groups

Before asking for proposals from potential researchers, we anticipate this project to cost between $12,500 and $17,500.

Next Steps:

1. Stakeholder Consultation: Engage with potential collaborators to refine the research design and confirm participation.

2. Timeline: Decided on target goals for stages of this effort, to be refined in collaboration with outsourced resources

3. Impact Strategy: Map out the initial plan for the distribution of findings and how to best leverage for desired outcomes

4. Funding and Resources: Secure funding and resources required for data collection and analysis.

5. Project Implementation: Initiate the data collection phase and commence quantitative and qualitative analyses.

6. Dissemination: Share preliminary findings with stakeholders and iteratively refine recommendations based on feedback.