



ASLAP, the AVMA and why we need each other

The American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) was founded in 1863 as a membership organization exclusively for veterinarians and currently has more than 86,500 members. AVMA supports veterinarians worldwide who are engaged in a wide variety of professional activities and are dedicated to the art and science of veterinary medicine. Over the past 18 months, AVMA has gone through an extensive strategic management and rebranding process with one goal in mind: to be the leading organization that **protects, promotes and advances** the entire veterinary profession through the strength and diverse perspectives and participation of its **members**.

How ASLAP participates in AVMA

The two types of veterinary organizations participating in the AVMA's governance include state veterinary medical associations and allied organizations. Allied organizations are those veterinary groups with a focus on a specific interest or phase within veterinary medicine that meet criteria to have a place within the AVMA's House of Delegates (HOD). The American Society for Laboratory Animal Practitioners (ASLAP) is an allied organization within the AVMA.

This means that ASLAP is *the* allied organization representing the concerns of laboratory animal veterinarians and animal-based research within the AVMA. Other allied organizations and state veterinary medical associations also include veterinarians who engage in research, but not with the emphasis of ASLAP. As an allied organization, ASLAP participates in the HOD with a delegate and alternate delegate. This gives ASLAP an important say, through voting, on AVMA policy, election of AVMA leaders (AVMA President and Vice-President) and council members, membership dues amounts and other AVMA activities. Since current AVMA policy is in support of humane animal-based research for the benefit of both humans and animals, this gives ASLAP unique standing in the veterinary community.

Councils and committees serve an important role within AVMA governance. These entities develop AVMA policies on a wide variety of topics of interest to the veterinary profession, identify areas for strategic planning for the organization and create programs to help further the AVMA's mission. Individual AVMA members are elected to council positions by the HOD and appointed to committee positions by the AVMA Executive Board.

ASLAP has an important role in AVMA

There are two committee positions "reserved" for representatives of ASLAP. The AVMA Animal Welfare Committee and Legislative Advisory Committee (LAC) both have slots for an ASLAP representative. These committees are considered key within AVMA strategy with a focus on developing animal-welfare related policies and advocating for the veterinary profession, respectively. It is extremely important that ASLAP maintain its representation on these committees in order to continue AVMA support for the inclusion of research needs in animal welfare policy and the AVMA's legislative agenda. The AVMA LAC is also a noteworthy committee, as its members visit lawmakers up to twice a year to directly lobby for legislation and



appropriations that impact the veterinary profession. ASLAP can also nominate its members to serve on any other AVMA councils and committees including the Committee on Veterinary Technician Education Activities, which accredits veterinary technician programs and maintains a slot for a laboratory animal veterinarian.

Changing volunteer opportunities

As the AVMA seeks to be nimble and proactive in its governance and activities, there has been a shift toward using shorter-term task forces and commissions to accomplish strategic goals. Unlike councils and committees, with membership terms of up to six years with two in-person meetings a year, task force or commission members generally serve only one or two years and use highly directed in-person meetings or conferences to work on the job at hand. Selection of task force or commission members by the AVMA Executive Board is based on individual merit, although letters of support generally increase chances for selection. As an allied organization, ASLAP has been very successful at placing individuals on task forces that generate reports and opinions that will help determine the course of AVMA policy. When task forces and commissions are announced, ASLAP leadership ascertains whether supporting an ASLAP member(s) for participation is within ASLAP's best interest. If it is, ASLAP will work hard to nominate the right individual(s) for appointment.

Developing future leaders

Recent graduates – those who have graduated veterinary school within the past 15 years – have a unique place in the AVMA since they are seen as the organization's and profession's future. To this end, the AVMA has created two programs to help develop leadership skills in this group, as well as promote the importance of maintaining membership in professional veterinary organizations. The first program, called Emerging Leaders, involves each state veterinary medical association and allied organization, including ASLAP, designating one recent graduate to attend the annual AVMA Veterinary Leadership Conference (VLC) each January. Special VLC workshops, networking events and leadership focus groups give attendees a peak into AVMA governance and programs. The second program, called Future Leaders, is a yearlong activity for up to 10 recent graduates. The process to become a Future Leader is competitive, but being nominated by a state veterinary medical association and/or an allied organization substantially helps a nominee's chances for selection. ASLAP has historically been very successful in nominating individuals for participation in the Future Leaders program.

Importance of staying involved with AVMA

Participation in any AVMA entity or program by an ASLAP member requires that the member also be a member of the AVMA. ASLAP's ability to maintain its allied organization status also depends on having a high number of AVMA members. Therefore, it is important that all ASLAP members remain AVMA members in good standing. Since ASLAP is the only organization that directly represents laboratory animal veterinarians within the veterinary profession as embodied by the AVMA, it is imperative that this link not be severed and that ASLAP participation in AVMA activities remains high.