

Minutes of the Meeting of the
New York State Board for Veterinary Medicine
Friday, December 19, 2025
1411 Broadway, New York, NY

Dr. van der Woerdt called the meeting to order at 10:00 am

Welcome and Introductions:

Board Members Present: Dr. Frank Capella; Dr. Julie Fixman; Dr. Howard Gittelman; Alexandria Kanes, LVT; Feliza Lopez, LVT; Public Member Samantha Segal; Dr. Beth Ann Shane-Holser; and Dr. Alexandra van der Woerdt.

Board Members Absent: Dr. Ashley Harris, Dr. Margret Thompson and Dr. Paul Zoyhofski listened to the meeting remotely. These three members did not count towards the quorum and could not vote on board issues. In light of Dr. Thompson's absence, Vice-Chair Dr. Alexandra van der Woerdt led today's meeting.

Staff Members Present: Stephen Boese, Executive Secretary to the Board; Michelle Pawlowski, Education Credential Specialist 2; Carla Gibbons, Education Program Assistant 2; and Lee Fitzgerald, Education Program Assistant 2.

Guests Present: Dr. Jim Weisman, Chief of Academic Affairs, Research & Accreditation for the AVMA; Dr. Marci Kirk, Assistant Director for Recent Graduate Initiatives for the AVMA; Channing Benson, Program Manager for Examinations at the AAVSB; Tim Atkinson and Emily Whalen of NYSVMS.

New Member, Feliza Lopez, LVT VTS (ECC):

Our newest member of the NYS Board for Veterinary Medicine is veterinary technician Feliza Lopez. She has worked for The Schwarzman Animal Medical Center in NYC for the last 15 years and is the Senior Director of Perioperative Services. She holds a board certification through the Academy of Veterinary Emergency & Critical Care Technicians and Nurses (AVECCTN) as a Veterinary Technician Specialist in Emergency & Critical Care (VTS (ECC)).

Review of Minutes:

Motion made, seconded, and passed to approve minutes of October 3, 2025.

Board Leadership Election for 2026:

The Board voted to re-elect Dr. Margret Thompson as the Board Chair and Dr. Alexandra van der Woerdt as the Vice-Chair for 2026.

Chair's Update:

Dr. Thompson shared with the Board that the AAVSB is currently working on creating an AI committee to create new standards and model regulatory language for the use of AI in veterinary medicine. The committee will study the impact of AI technology in veterinary equipment (CT scans, etc.).

The ICVA announced that the NAVLE examination will undergo an external audit after receiving complaints about biased evaluation practices.

Review Public Record of Board of Regents Enforcement Actions in Veterinary Medicine:

There was an observation that some of these actions from 2025 were against practices and professional corporations as well as individual licensees. Actions against practices are a recent development from new regulations which were implemented last year. They are designed to hold businesses accountable for professional misconduct.

Update from NYSED and the Office of the Professions:

Stephen Boese provides an update from the Office of the Professions.

Board Membership: There are currently no vacancies on the Board, and our membership total is one member above the legal minimum. Dr. Zoyhofski will be ending his second term and cycling off the Board in June of 2026. However, because we already have a surplus member, there is no immediate need to find a replacement.

NAVLE Retake Requirements: The ICVA announced that it would be eliminating the appeal process for candidates to request an additional attempt beyond 5 attempts at the NAVLE examination. Beginning on December 1, 2025, all candidates will receive 5 additional attempts regardless of their previous testing history to ensure a fair policy for all candidates.

AVMA COE Standards and Licensure Requirements: To be licensed in New York State, graduates of unaccredited veterinary medicine programs must present prerequisite and professional study leading to the Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree which meets AVMA accreditation standards. As of July 2025, the accreditation policies and procedures of the AVMA Council on Education (COE) require that the curriculum must provide at least 130 weeks of direct instruction. The summative, concluding period of clinical instruction must include a minimum of 40 weeks of hands-on clinical education involving the prevention, diagnosis, treatment, or mitigation of disease related to animal health, or other experiential, workplace-based learning that is supervised through real-time interactions with the instructor(s). **New York licensure applicants beginning their professional educational program after September 1, 2025 will be required to meet this standard of demonstrating at least 130 weeks of direct instruction plus 40 weeks of hands-on clinical instruction.**

Presentation – ECFVG Certification:

Dr. Jim Weisman and Dr. Marci Kirk from the AVMA gave a presentation on the ECFVG Certification process. The AVMA Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) helps veterinarians become licensed in the U.S. by providing an educational equivalency assessment certification program.

The program has 4 steps: Step 1 is the initial application, where candidates must register and provide verification of education credentials. Step 2 is an evaluation of English language proficiency. Step 3 is an assessment of basic and clinical veterinary science knowledge (BCSE). Step 4 is the clinical proficiency examination assessing hands-on clinical veterinary medical skills (CPE). Candidates who have completed the BCSE can be made eligible by the ECFVG to sit for the NAVLE examination.

The AVMA will be providing new updates to the program, including a new online portal for candidates to track their progress with the certification. The AVMA will also be conducting a review of the CPE to determine how to streamline the examination to increase their capacity to test more applicants more frequently without lowering the rigor of the exam. This will involve moving some practical components of the examination online.

The Board expressed concern over the overall cost of the program, which can exceed \$15,000. Specifically, the ECFVG announced a price increase of the CPE from \$7,630 to \$12,804 for the 2026 examination cycle. They explained that this increase was necessary to cover the rising costs of administering the examination.

Presentation- PAVE Certification:

Channing Benson from the AAVSB provided a presentation on their PAVE Certification program. The PAVE Certification is similar to the ECFVG's in that it is an assessment program for international veterinary doctors to meet the educational requirements for licensure in the U.S.

Candidates must apply and provide verification of their education, as well as verification of their English language proficiency. The AAVSB uses the ECFVG's list of accepted schools for admission to the program. If an applicant attended a school on the list, they would only need to verify completion of the program/degree and would not need to submit any transcripts for review.

To complete the PAVE program, candidates must complete the Qualifying Science Examination (QSE) to assess foundational science and pre-clinical knowledge typically covered during the first three years of accredited veterinary school curricula. Candidates who have passed the QSE can be made eligible by the AAVSB to sit for the NAVLE examination. Candidates must then complete the Evaluated Clinical Experience (ECE). They would need to enroll in an AVMA accredited veterinary school to complete the same clinical rotations as regular students at those schools.

The ECE requirement can greatly increase the overall cost of the PAVE program, since candidates are essentially enrolling in a year of college at an AVMA-accredited institution. This could range anywhere from \$50,000 - \$75,000 in tuition fees. Outside of tuition costs, the initial application for PAVE is \$390, and the QSE fee is \$1,550 for each attempt.

Next Meeting Dates:

The following meetings are set for the Fridays of 3/20/26, 6/12/26, 9/18/26, and 12/11/26 at 10:30 AM. All 2026 meeting start times have been changed from 10 AM to 10:30 AM.

Other Issues:

The Board entered executive session to discuss a corporate naming issue regarding a specialty practice.

Meeting adjourned at 12 PM

Draft respectfully submitted,

Lee Fitzgerald
Education Program Assistant 2