



## ***Student Education & Outreach Committee Report***

<b>Committee Name:</b>	Student Education & Outreach Committee	<b>Quarter/Year:</b>	2025
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Scott Toppin DVM Rhonda Rathgeber PhD DVM	<b>Date Submitted:</b>	11/19/25

Chair – Dr. Scott Toppin, Dr. Rhonda Rathgeber

Board Liaison – Dr. Ty Corbiell

Staff Liaison – Shelby Mosley

### **Committee Charge:**

To recruit and support veterinary students in their journey toward their future careers by overseeing all aspects of student programming and providing an accurate and encouraging picture of equine practice. To facilitate the success of AAEP student chapters by maximizing communication between chapters and the national organization.

In 2025, the SEOC has been active in a variety of roles. We have transitioned into the status of a standing committee within the AAEP. We have led two large Zoom calls with all SCAAEV student presidents and faculty advisors- in January and again in September, to explain our goals for the year and to give and receive feedback. In addition, committee members have joined the in-person meetings at the Annual Convention for student chapter presidents and faculty advisors to help with messaging and communication. Feedback from these efforts has been very positive. The committee also planned student focused Webinars throughout 2025:

- March 19: Case-based diagnostic imaging with Lindsay Deacon and Cole Sandow
- June 18: Safety in equine practice with Stephanie Whalen
- October 1: Pharyngeal/laryngeal abnormalities in the equine athlete with Rolf Embertson and Renaud Leguillette
- November 12: Colic: a case-based review with Nimet Browne and Vivian Quam

Within the SEOC, we created several sub-committees, including Convention Planning, Toolkit Creation, and Administration Outreach.

The Convention Planning group has taken on the Extended Student Program at the Annual Convention. This is the first time that we have led this effort, and it has consumed a lot of time and energy. We have expanded the student participation from 100 students to 144, with the help of a travel reimbursement program for students to Convention with funding of two \$500 travel stipends per school, funded by the Foundation for the Horse and Altano. All stipends have been utilized this year. We have changed the official designation from stipend to 'travel reimbursement' to avoid the issue of having that money count against the student's financial aid package. The Saturday Extended Student Program wet lab, featuring sections on Wound Suturing, Reproduction, Ultrasound and Dentistry has sold out with 144 participants and has another 25 students on the waitlist.

One of our largest achievements of the year has been the creation of the 'Toolkit for Successful SCAAEPS Chapters.' Led by Callie Fogel with contributions from several committee members, this group has created an incredibly useful resource for SCAAEPS that shares examples from successful chapters on everything from governance to fundraising to wet lab and meeting opportunities. This is a living document that should be utilized and updated regularly. All SCAAEPs now have a link and a hard copy, and the early feedback has been grateful and positive. Strong work by this crew!!

Rhonda Rathgeber led the charge on administrative outreach, having productive conversations with Eleanor Green and Rusty Moore, who was president of the American Association of Veterinary Medical Colleges about the challenges facing equine practice and the effort of the AAEP to address the low numbers of students entering our profession. In the coming year, past AAEP president Emma Read will be leading the AAVMC, so we look forward to more productive discussions. Rhonda also met with the Association of Deans of Student affairs and VetCAN, the Veterinary Career Advisory Network.

This year we also expanded our efforts to include a student grass roots program. Each SCAAEP expanded their leadership team to include a student liaison. This person's role is to help break down barriers at the school level, and to communicate regularly with liaisons from other schools and a member of our committee. We divided the schools up into 4 regions, based on time zones, and have met by Zoom every other month and more frequently by email and GroupMe. This effort has been helpful, but it has been challenging to maintain engagement of the students.

We hosted a student competition for Tik-tok style social media content, highlighting equine practice. It was a short time frame to get it done by Convention, but the students had 13 submissions. We selected a winner to be shared at the opening session of the Convention and should be able to use them in AAEP social media.

We have the goal of having an AAEP member give our committee's presentation of "Why I Love Equine Practice" to each SCAAEP early in the school year, trying to target pre-vet, first and second year students. This presentation combines elements from the Sustainability Commission (updated starting salary data, ER coverage strategies, etc) with a personal story of that practitioner's journey to equine practice and what their professional life entails. Our first year was very successful in terms of schools reached. The past two years have been more of a struggle. Challenges include getting practitioners to commit and schedule the talks. This may be due to the elapsed time between the training for the presentation and delivery. It may also be due to the perception that since the Commission has wrapped up, the need is lower. We are working on an updated recorded training webinar to help with this, and trying to leverage the regional student groups to get them scheduled.

In 2026, we will welcome several new members to our committee- Drs. Alfredo Sanchez, Eric Martin, Caroline Wollman, Nigel Miller, Jamie Ashbrook and Christine Montgomery. Drs. Eleanor Green and Alan Goldahn are sunsetting off our committee- we are so grateful for their service. We hope to start a new sub-committee to help expand the AAEP website to include more resources directed toward students- a home for the 'Toolkit,' a section to help find veterinarians open to shadowing and mentorship, including links to liability waivers for the DVMs, some recorded versions of 'Why I Love Equine Practice,' etc. We would also like to expand our outreach efforts to more pre-veterinary programs and youth horse groups.

We have been told that student membership numbers are the highest that they have ever been- about 2500 this year. The last time that number was over 2000 was back in 2005. We are grateful for the opportunity, proud of the progress that we have made, and look forward to the work ahead!

Scott Toppin, DVM

Rhonda Rathgeber, PhD DVM