I

Future needs and recommendations for leadership in veterinary medicine

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In November 2001, the AVMA Executive Board approved funds to support activities of the National Commission on Veterinary Economic Issues (NCVEI) Working Group on Skills, Knowledge, Aptitude, and Attitude. As part of that initiative, a project was undertaken with the overarching goal of conducting a needs assessment to provide the necessary background for development and implementation of programs to enhance the leadership skills of veterinarians and veterinary students. Specific objectives included identifying leadership needs and viable methods for enhancing the base of leadership skills within the veterinary profession.

Background

Building on earlier works, Bennis and Nanus provided a model for understanding the requisite skills for successful leadership. In 1997, their work draws a sharp distinction between leadership and management. Recognizing that both characteristics are necessary for organizational success in today’s dynamic, complex business environment, the authors posit that management skills have more or less been successfully developed and implemented on a broad scale, but leadership skills are generally lacking. In effect, Bennis and Nanus make the case that to consistently achieve success in leading others, leaders must first become successful in managing themselves as individuals. Key features in this regard can be developed over time and include the capabilities to 1) develop a clear vision of the future, 2) communicate that vision in a meaningful way, 3) establish trust, and 4) effectively deploy oneself in a disciplined manner through persistence, self-knowledge, and continuous learning.

In contrast to the broad-based, general viewpoint of Bennis and Nanus, Kotter adapted a much more focused approach in his assessment of the role of leadership in organizational change. Following Kotter, who also clearly separates leadership from management, one of the key functions of leadership is to effect organizational change. To achieve success in this regard, Kotter suggests that leaders follow his carefully defined 8-stage process. In addition, he emphasizes that effective leaders are proficient with teamwork, creating and communicating vision, empowerment, delegation, and lifelong learning. Many of these attributes resonate with the work of other authors.

Maxwell subsequently used a detailed scheme to discuss both the principles of leadership and the qualities of leaders through his publications in the late 1990s. From a very applied standpoint, Maxwell provides his perspective on the development of leadership skills and leaders. Based on Maxwell’s position (similar to Bennis and Nanus) that leadership skills can be effectively developed in individuals, the principles (laws) of leadership are offered as vital knowledge for understanding the process of successful leadership and the qualities are provided to enhance implementation of the principles. In a sense, the leader qualities detailed by Maxwell support the self-management tactic offered by Bennis and Nanus. Each of Maxwell’s books approaches its respective topic with a practical but thorough treatise.

Several additional works contributed to the leadership discussion during 2002. Badaracco emphasized the importance of certain leadership skills regardless of an individual’s position within an organization. He takes the position that the most effective leaders are rarely public heroes but are generally inconspicuous, modest, and restrained in their pursuit of the day-to-day small achievements that characterize the quiet leadership that takes place at all levels of successful organizations. When considered and taken together, it is these small achievements that collectively lead to sustained organizational success. As with previously cited authors, Badaracco firmly believes that leadership skills can be effectively developed in individuals over time and successful deployment of these skills amounts to competent self-management.

Self-management provides a primary theme in the emotional intelligence (EI) work of Goleman et al, published in 2002. According to these authors, EI is a critical factor in the formula of leadership success; the more complex the job is with respect to interpersonal and technical tasks, the more EI matters. It has been reported that IQ (cognitive intelligence) accounts for only approximately 25% of the success people experience in their careers. In highly technical fields, such as...
More recently, McCauley and Van Velsor\textsuperscript{12} have summarized individual capabilities of effective leaders as viewed collectively by the staff at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). In this framework, the CCL view tends to encompass most of the key features of other authors and provides 3 broad categories: 1) self-management capabilities (including self-awareness, ability to balance conflicting demands, ability to learn, and leadership values), 2) social capabilities (including ability to build and maintain relationships, ability to build effective work groups, communication skills, and ability to develop others), and 3) work facilitation capabilities (including ability to think and act strategically, ability to think creatively, and ability to initiate and implement change). Various authors from CCL also contribute perspectives on appropriate methods for the development of leaders and leadership.

Together, this collection of authors and publications provides a useful context to evaluate the leadership needs of the veterinary profession. The collective perspective provides a structure within which the current status and future path of veterinary medicine can be evaluated critically.

**Methods**

To achieve the objectives for the present study to identify leadership needs and viable methods for enhancing the base of leadership skills in the veterinary profession, it was agreed to sample the thoughts and opinions of a diverse group of current leaders in the veterinary profession. The process involved 3 steps: 1) discuss the leadership needs of the profession across a continuum of career paths, with thought leaders representing a broad array of specialties and careers; 2) synthesize and organize the identified issues and needs into a coherent body; and 3) develop a set of recommendations to meet the identified needs.

Thought leaders from across the veterinary profession were identified by the 3 principles in the study (JWL, LJK, and CAM) and by referral from other participants. Representatives from private practice (companion animal, equine, and food animal), academia, government, and industry were included. Individuals were invited to participate on the basis of their leadership roles within the veterinary profession and a reputation for being thoughtful and insightful.

The goal in selection of participants was to achieve a broad, but not necessarily balanced, representation of the veterinary profession. Thirty-seven leaders were interviewed, of whom 25 were male and 12 were female. Because of the clear implications of leadership development recommendations for academia, this sector was purposely overrepresented in the sample. From within academia, participants included deans, associate deans for academic affairs, department chairpersons, and faculty members. Nonacademic participants came from food animal, equine, and companion animal practice, along with government and industry. In addition to professional diversity, geographic variation was also attained.

Participants were asked to respond to questions from their unique professional perspective. In turn, participants raised issues that were currently critical to their area of expertise, thus broadening the discussion. When applicable, the views of earlier participants were used as probes to enrich the dialogue. All leadership interviews were completed during the spring and summer of 2002.

The interviews were structured around the following 2 lines of questioning.

- Think about the evolution of veterinary medicine over the next 10 years (2002–2012). What does it look like? How is the profession structured? What are the issues that have to be faced and resolved to achieve future success?
- In the context of the ideal future, what does leadership look like? What leadership characteristics are needed to arrive at the best potential future? What specific behaviors do you identify with good leaders? How do leaders learn to be leaders? When should they learn this and from whom?

In exploring possible future scenarios with the interviewees, the intent was not necessarily to definitively identify the single most likely future for veterinary medicine but to consider an array of possibilities, as stated by Schwartz\textsuperscript{13}:

“... the point is not to ‘pick one preferred future,’ and hope for it to come to pass ... nor is the point to find the most probable future and adapt to it or ‘bet the company’ on it. Rather, the point is to make strategic decisions that will be sound for all plausible futures. No matter what future takes place, you are much more likely to be ready for it—and influential in it—if you have thought seriously about scenarios.”
Results of the interviews were collated, and common issues, ideas, and themes were distilled. In this qualitative research method, the opinions and thoughts of current leaders in the veterinary profession provide the substance of the results. By nature of the research design, the results cannot be expected to be unequivocal. However, they can be expected to be challenging and thought-provoking and should be viewed in that context.

Results

The results of the needs analysis are organized into 3 parts. Part 1 considers potential futures for veterinary medicine as anticipated by project participants. Part 2 considers the veterinary profession’s leadership needs from the perspective of those potential futures and identifies critical competencies for individual leaders in that context. Part 3 provides participants’ recommendations for the next steps in meeting those needs.

Potential futures for veterinary medicine—The following section provides participants’ anticipated changes across the veterinary profession and its diverse careers over the next decade. These ideas represent a composite of potential futures. Through the understanding of these potential futures, new visions will likely arise and the need for leadership skills will become apparent.

In the analysis of societal needs, it was found that the expectations of society and stakeholders for the veterinary profession are evolving to include a greater interest in public health and policy, ecosystem health and maintenance, optimization and protection of agroindustry and food safety, and biomedical science and technology advances. These are in addition to traditional roles in animal health care, which are also changing. These ideas should not be construed as definitively right or wrong but rather how interviewees envisioned the future. Yet, only a small percentage of the public currently recognizes that veterinarians are even engaged in these activities, a situation that presents a distinct leadership issue in itself.

The public has an increasing expectation of the veterinarian as protecting the public through use of diagnostic laboratories, epidemiologic studies, and geographic information systems to monitor temporal and spatial disease movement. More and more, veterinarians are expected to plan appropriate prevention and treatment plans. The public also expects veterinarians to help them explore and understand scientific issues such as euthanasia, embryo transfer and manipulation, cloning, stem cell use, genetic manipulation, and proteomic therapy. Often these issues with broad-based societal implications are addressed in animals prior to becoming full-blown debates in the realm of human health. Animal models will continue to be important vehicles for understanding the function and health of human bodily systems. Veterinarians involved in these activities will have critical human health and community responsibilities.

As a consequence of recent global events, veterinarians will be expected to play a central role in cross-functional teams to address ecosystem research and protection, management of urban and wild interfaces, and the public relations and education of eco-health issues. In the face of these changing expectations, the demographics of the veterinary profession will also evolve as substantial generational and gender shifts are endured. The work perspective, goals, and commitments of veterinarians can also be expected to change as a result.

With particular regard to veterinary practice, participants anticipated substantial changes in the way animal health care will be delivered in the future. Emphasis on the care of the family unit will increase. Pets, including many horses, will become even more integrated into the family unit. The focus will be on total wellness and quality of life for both humans and animals. There will likely be an increased acceptance of alternative therapies, and there may well be an increasing involvement of veterinary expertise in human health management, including features such as cancer sniffing dogs, use of pets to help ameliorate aging and mental health issues, and animals serving key roles in assisted-living situations.

In general, participants expected fewer small and solo practices and more corporate and specialty hospitals for companion animal care. Some primary care or family practitioner clinics may actually evolve into gatekeepers for larger specialty practices with which they become aligned. Their strength will be the ability to build and manage relationships with owners, specialists, and ancillary health care workers. Corporate or specialty practices will be full-service hospitals and may include nontraditional services, such as homeopathy, physical therapy, acupunctures, and chiropractics. Most of the tertiary care will be handled by rotating specialists from practice networks.

Web-based medical records will change the concept of a local veterinarian for a highly mobile population, resulting in electronic access to “local” client files from virtually anywhere. In addition, capabilities for digital data transfers will facilitate increased access to information for veterinarians, enhancing locally available specialist expertise as a result. In rural areas, mixed animal veterinarians will become the community health specialists with regard to how disease and health issues impact the community, including issues involving wildlife.

Increasing use of pet health insurance will prevail. In addition, the prevalence of medical and legal issues will increase in connection with the evolution of the human-animal bond, increased use of pet health insurance, and heightening animal welfare issues. Clinical practice will see an increased demand for managers, executives, and business professionals.

Equine practices are expected to consolidate via development of partnerships to form larger practices. There will be a substantial number of referral centers equipped with an increasing amount of high-tech diagnostic, surgical, and medical capabilities. It is anticipated, however, that horse owners will perform most of their own herd health work.

Participants felt that food animal veterinary medicine needs to reinvent itself or much of its service base will be lost to practicing animal scientists. Increasingly,
paraprofessionals are providing traditional veterinary services for individual animal care and preventative herd health. There will continue to be a redefinition of preventative medicine based on herd, product, or business value-added rather than on individual animals. Veterinarians will need to become experts in integrating regional opportunities and issues with global food and fiber needs and will become integral members of livestock business management teams with bankers, accountants, nutritionists, animal scientists, and agricultural engineers. In this regard, veterinarians will act more as consultants in management; training; and supervision of employees, paraprofessionals (including licensed veterinary technicians), and subcontractors.

Veterinary medical training will be seen as the glue in the interdisciplinary education of professionals working globally on many health care issues. However, education and training programs will be challenged if the need for global accreditation arises (as it may). Veterinary classes may be built with attention to diversity and class composition to meet the requirements of the community. Clinical services provided by colleges of veterinary medicine will actually shift toward quaternary rather than primary health care. A need may develop to partner with specialty practices to gain access to certain specialists that are underrepresented in the profession. Clinical curricula will be performed in both community institutions and veterinary teaching hospitals. Clinical blocks will become longer to provide repeated interactions with clients and patients over time. Tracking will look more like apprenticeships and streaming specialization. Graduate veterinarians may have to repeatedly return to school to achieve and maintain full licensure. The emphasis will be on becoming health care professionals and clinical scientists rather than being good technicians.

With regard to government, veterinarians are expected to have a broader involvement in formation of domestic and international public policies related to health, safety, and technology and will consequently see increasing roles in agencies and activities such as the FDA, CDC, General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and World Health Organization. Key roles will include monitoring and preventing natural disasters (such as bovine spongiform encephalopathy and foot-and-mouth disease) and agri- and bioterrorism related to animal and biological products.

In addition to being affected by many of the aforementioned changes, participants expected industry to see a shift away from traditional medications and vaccines toward pharmaceuticals that will be used for treatments of chronic diseases and to improve animals’ quality of life. In addition, there will be new distribution channels for most preventative therapeutics.

There is no question that the veterinary profession is shifting and changing substantially and that these changes are based on new technologies, expanding scientific knowledge, and (especially) changing societal expectations. Veterinarians of the future will need to be managers of client expectations and experiences. They will be expected to be leaders in the local community and society. Increasingly, veterinarians in practice will need a strong ability to build and manage relationships with animal owners, specialists, and ancillary health care workers. Successful delivery on these expectations will certainly require well-developed leadership skills for the veterinarians of the future, who must be able to lead and manage change. We will not be able to transform society unless we first transform ourselves; leadership is key to this outcome.

Leadership needs—Participants strongly agreed that to meet societal needs in the future, leadership is needed at every level of the veterinary profession. Nontechnical competencies must be taught and reinforced throughout, from the applicant pool to the leaders of academic institutions and professional organizations. Participants characterized a current crisis in veterinary medicine that is going largely unaddressed because of the lack of effective leadership. Practicing veterinarians (public, private, and corporate), faculty, and students are all dealing with similar issues, often achieving poor life-to-work integration and underachieving professionally because of limited nontechnical competencies.

At the outset, participants felt that the veterinary brand should move away from the image of a veterinarian as a maverick and a loner. In the current era of unprecedented interdependencies, a strong independence bias is genuinely problematic. However, a serious issue that needs to be overcome in the process is the deficit thinking that has placed the profession in an iterative downward spiral. Participants indicated that the profession is hampered by a mentality of scarcity (ie, we cannot charge enough, pay enough, or work reasonable hours) and self-censorship (lack of confidence, passive-aggressive and risk-averse behavior, or a view that euthanasia and ignorance are our biggest competitors).

The profession needs to develop a new perception of itself by focusing on the positive and changing these self-limiting attitudes—in effect, development of self through a strong positive attitude of self-regard. This change can only be accomplished by enhancing nontechnical competencies, and these can only be enhanced effectively if the seeming stigma and secrecy that have traditionally been associated with seeking such improvement are removed. The essence of this shift is the critical change from the life of technical competence to a balanced life of technical, scientific, and noncognitive competencies, honed through continuous learning and improvement in business, interpersonal skills, communication, managing oneself, and leadership.

Specifically, the nontechnical competencies involving leaders’ behaviors that were characterized by participants seemed to fall into several general clusters. Note, however, that considerable overlap existed between these groups; categories were not mutually exclusive. The expressed ideas were organized as follows.

Leaders are expected to have the personal abilities to accomplish the following:

- Be and work in an emotionally grounded state and develop a personal inner strength.
- Use multiple ways of knowing and learning.
- Seek mentoring early and throughout their careers.
- Multitask.
- Stay calm, to have a calming effect on those around them, and to maintain communication during difficulty.
Leaders are expected to possess certain personal characteristics, including the following:

- Be resilient and mentally tough.
- Be self-accountable for deliverables.

Leaders are expected to have well-developed interpersonal skills, including the ability to accomplish the following:

- Engage others in dialogue, showing diversity in thinking and acceptance of new ideas.
- Send clear and convincing messages that are congruent with one's values and beliefs.
- Listen and then change an opinion on the basis of what was heard.
- Care for other people and instill confidence in them.
- Motivate others.

Leaders are expected to possess the ability to lead change, including being able to do the following:

- Handle constant change, even turbulence.
- Analyze risk and the trade-offs that accompany it.
- Build consensus around an idea, maintain cross-functional implementation, and assess outcomes.
- Continuously improve products, services, and client education.
- Discuss, synthesize, and execute innovation.

Leaders are expected to be visionary, to include the following:

- A strong personal vision of future goals and expectations.
- The ability to adapt a long-term viewpoint.
- An aggressiveness in understanding the problems of society (at all levels), becoming part of the solution.
- An ability to translate their vision into a strategy and action plans.

Leaders are expected to possess and provide well-developed management skills, including the ability to accomplish the following:

- Set and manage deadlines and expectations.
- Develop solutions for multifaceted problems based on confidence, knowledge, and experience.
- Use systems thinking to manage interactions within and between organizational parts.
- Effectively delegate responsibility.

Leaders are expected to possess certain personal characteristics, including the following:

- Knowing themselves and having an accurate self-assessment (understanding their leadership style and having the ability to seek out and accept feedback when self-assessment has determined that a particular area is in need of development).
- Being self-confident and having a presence or belief in their innate capability and the ability to contribute to the tasks at hand.
- Having self-discipline as evidenced by the ability to practice deferred gratification, make hard choices, and sacrifice to a higher cause/good.
- Being inquisitive and curious.
- Demonstrating unfettered creativity.
- Being able to work with honesty and integrity.

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As presented, the preceding litany of leadership characteristics was seen as critical for success of veterinarians in the future. To provide a solid foundation for development of these nontechnical competencies, participants also identified desirable leadership characteristics they believed applicants should have upon admission to veterinary school. The nature of these suggests that new ways of assessing applicants may be necessary. The characteristics can also be seen as the foundations of leadership. With these competencies established, the individual is then ready to move to higher-level leadership behaviors.

The desired entry-level leadership characteristics mentioned by participants included the ability to capture, analyze, and express complex ideas, both written and verbal, in various settings (one-on-one, small or large groups). Also included were the ability to use and understand technology and the ability to synthesize new data to constantly update one's thinking. Further, it was suggested that the foundation should include strong interpersonal and group communication skills and the ability to communicate information using multiple formats and styles.

The knowledge characteristics that were deemed important at the entry level included having a broad view of life and broad life-to-work experiences. Prior education should come from areas other than just the life sciences and veterinary medicine prerequisites. Being a self-directed learner is also important, including a specific understanding of one's own learning style and a personal and professional development plan (including support networks).

The desired aptitudes and attitudes of entrants included self-knowledge and self-efficacy. It also included self-respect and valuing one's ability to effectively contribute. A transparency was also desired in
entrants, along with a personal drive to lead for the right reasons. This was specifically described as one's willingness to develop and help others, teach, and contribute toward society and the profession. An entrepreneurial spirit was viewed as important, as was compassion toward other people (staff, colleagues, and stakeholders). Finally, credibility was seen as vital, as was community-mindedness as demonstrated by an interest in seeking the perspective of all stakeholders.

In short, leadership needs were perceived to exist at all levels of the veterinary profession. Critical to meeting these needs will be development of nontechnical competencies. As a foundation, it was recommended that entrants to veterinary schools be sought that possess a specific subset of these characteristics at the time of their entry into the professional program.

Recommendations—Project participants recognized that rebranding the veterinary profession and overcoming the mentality of scarcity en route to developing leaders at every level amounts to changing the culture of the veterinary profession and will certainly not be a trivial task. Such broad-based change can only be expected to be successful if the process of change itself provides a primary focus. In effect, changing the way the veterinary profession approaches leadership will require working from a shared vision generated from a formal change process. Such a process, in turn will require a long-term commitment to ensure continuity and might well benefit from the guidance of change-process specialists from outside the veterinary profession. Attention to the internal dynamics of the profession will be useful for driving change and evolution. It will be important to get the right people involved to define and discuss the issue and develop a subsequent action plan. Consideration for implementation, including management of any necessary adjustments, will be crucial.

Initially, leadership issues should be addressed in a national forum. From a broad perspective, current leaders should participate in facilitated discussions about the leadership needs identified in this study. The discussion should be positive and as apolitical as possible and should culminate with a specific action plan (who is doing what by when). Individuals or teams would be held responsible for delivery within a specified timeline, or an iterative discussion would take place to resolve unforeseen difficulties. Subsequent forums could also be designed in series, if deemed necessary, using the same structured process for each. Organizational response and evolution should result, with everyone being willing to accept responsibility for active change.

Project participants suggested that leading professional organizations, such as the AVMA, American Animal Hospital Association, or Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (the 3 principle organizations behind the KPMG LLP study and the NCVEI), could contribute to leadership efforts by providing trained change agents and faculty and corporate trainers. The veterinary profession could use individuals or groups that engage in self-directed organizational learning as a model for change within the profession. The emphasis should be on leadership contribution from everyone. Along the way, veterinarians should learn to continually challenge the way things are always done.

As for immediate recommendations to enhance leadership skills in the veterinary profession, participants offered suggestions applicable for academia and nonacademia. It was recommended that the profession should build on its strengths to drive innovation. These strengths include a strong tradition of professional development and improvement (albeit with regard to clinical sciences), a steadfast commitment to meeting societal needs, and a perpetual professional interest in innovation.

First and foremost, participants recognized that leadership characteristics can be trained formally and informally. The informal (or hidden) curriculum, which is defined by the organizational culture and norms, was recognized as the strongest educator. Leadership and change need to become part of the veterinary culture in academic and nonacademic settings, and professionals must be held accountable for good leadership behaviors. This is best accomplished by mentoring because effective leadership training occurs when leadership values are consciously modeled at all levels always. In this regard, development of structured mentoring programs was suggested. These programs would include mentor training, identification of mentoring practices and venues throughout the profession, periodic program evaluation, and perhaps central coordination. Mentoring relationships should be actively developed to involve potential applicants to veterinary school, paraprofessionals, veterinary students, new graduates, and new faculty. As a result, the level of awareness and responsibility for developing and using good leadership behaviors would increase throughout the veterinary profession.

In light of the gender shift, a specific need for leadership training for women was recognized. In that regard, more women are needed in academic and traditional leadership roles as mentors and role models. Women often take nontraditional leadership roles and are less visible. The female leadership style is often different than that of males and must therefore be trained and nurtured differently.

Specific recommendations that would impact academic and nonacademic sectors included the following:

- Emphasizing continuing education as a mechanism for leadership education, using this venue to learn, do, and teach. Town hall and workout sessions at state meetings were suggested as mechanisms to achieve continuous national dialogue and experiential development of new leaders.
- Creating a speakers and facilitators bureau that could provide a nontechnical competency program for state associations and schools. Ideally, this bureau would be externally funded so that all parts of the profession would have access to its resources.
- Establishing blocks of time for working professionals to attend programs and presentations, either in person, on-line, or self-paced.
- Developing leadership courses run by trained professionals (outside experts) with cross-functional experience.
- Using succession planning and professional coaching to develop individuals who show the desire to become leaders.

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For academia, additional suggestions were offered. First, repositioning its brand will strengthen multiple aspects of the profession and improve diversity and experience in the applicant pool through improved recruiting. Selecting candidates from the applicant pool with leadership traits will then elevate the starting point of leadership training. Changing admission practices to emphasize leadership characteristics will change the applicant pool in a positive direction. A broad array of work and life experiences should be encouraged, and applicants should be sought that have self-knowledge, self-esteem, and other leadership skills built on real world successes. Changes in the admissions process would assess the applicants’ EI and communication skills as well as problem-solving, decision-making, and risk-taking skills.

Once admitted, students should be encouraged to develop personal learning agendas and provided assistance to follow them through. Because students are the initial point to teach leadership, exceptional educators are needed. The curriculum should build referent characteristics, thus integrating leadership training into the curriculum.

Internship and residency programs could also require leadership training, which could be defined and supported by the specialty boards. Internships and residencies should include education about societal issues, EI, and educational methodologies.

Faculty need to have training in coaching and mentoring. Mentoring should be encouraged across and within the schools. Development of new faculty could focus on mentoring and leadership training, which would add to their success as educators and improve their impact on students. As mentioned, good mentors with good modeling behavior are needed in academia. This could be encouraged by a reward system for teaching, mentoring, and leadership. Faculty development programs could be a useful mechanism for leadership education. For faculty, effective leadership should include academic planning and identification of new challenges in education, continual curricular content update, and the use of the best practices. Such an approach would entail becoming change agents and moving toward innovation actively rather than by default; that is, faculty would be actively working on as well as in the educational process.

Discussion and Future Directions

Interestingly, the future scenarios for the veterinary profession described by participants in this project are quite similar to those described in the Pew Report. Although much has changed since that report was compiled, it appears that many trends are expected to continue.

Many aspects of leadership within the veterinary profession have been explored in this report, but a number of outstanding issues remain:

- What is the best method for incorporating leadership development into our professional culture?
- Is there a current leadership paradigm that should be implemented, or should a new paradigm be developed that is health care directed?
- What resources should be sought?
- What is the best process for discussing and resolving critical issues facing the veterinary profession?
- What is the best way to harness the energy currently directed toward change, and who will choose, direct, and steer the change process?

As identified, the need for leadership skills presents a challenge for academia and organized veterinary medicine. Central coordination of leadership development programs may be desirable and might originate from the NCVEI, the AAVMC, the AVMA, or all 3. Alternatively, a veterinary leadership institute might be established for that purpose. Outside collaboration with groups such as the CCL might be desirable. Establishing a veterinary leadership institute also has the advantage of ensuring a sustainable process for developing leaders and mentors over time. A single report or seminar is inadequate for imparting leadership skills and helping the profession to lead and manage change.

A potentially useful paradigm (Appendix 1) to consider for developing leaders and leadership skills is provided by Collins. As programs are developed to enhance leadership skills across the veterinary profession, level 5 leaders should be the ultimate goal. However, once leaders reach level 3, further development often becomes self-perpetuating. Consequently, level 3 could be viewed as a viable tipping point and, as such, may represent a reasonable target for leadership development programs. To achieve the spectrum of development opportunities that are needed, a tiered approach is suggested (Appendix 2).

However the programs are developed and whatever their eventual formats and specifics, success will be determined by the degree to which leaders are expected to be educators and educators are expected to be leaders. Leaders need to actively educate by providing good examples of leadership behaviors for others to emulate. Educators need to effectively model leadership behaviors, thereby having a positive impact on future generations of veterinarians and the resulting success of the veterinary profession.

References

Appendix 1

Level 5 Executive

Builds enduring greatness through a paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will
Builds community
Visionary style

Level 4 Effective leader

Catalyzes commitment to and vigorous pursuit of a clear and compelling vision, stimulating higher performance standards
Develops a learning organization
Coaching style

Level 3 Competent manager

Organizes people and resources toward the effective and efficient pursuit of pre-determined objectives
Fosters a high-performance culture
Affiliative style

Level 2 Contributing team member

Contributes individual capabilities to the achievement of group objectives and works effectively with others in a group setting
Mentors and builds trust
Democratic style

Level 1 Highly capable individual

Makes productive contributions through talent, knowledge, skills, and good work habits
Provides a role model
Facesetting/commanding style

Appendix 2

Tiered approach to leadership development opportunities.

Tier 1 Personal growth for leadership excellence
Self-assessment
Personal mastery of “Me, Inc”
Life-to-work balance
Reflective leader
Self-awareness and self-esteem
Leadership principles

Tier 2 Future thinking
Vision and values
Environmental scanning and scenario building
Systems thinking
Change management
Strategic positioning and shared visions

Tier 3 Team building
Leadership—followership dynamic
Facilitating group processes
Creating and integrating systems

Tier 4 Communications, influencing, political skills, and advocacy
Understanding political and policy arenas
Working with stakeholders
Media training and legislative workshops
Learning and simulations in communications

Tier 5 Developing others
Human resource management
Leading through others
Becoming effective coaches and mentors
Executive leadership