

2017 AVAP Post-Conference Survey Results

Overall, how would you rate the 2017 AVAP conference?

Excellent, Exceeded Expectations	Fair, Met Expectations	Neutral	Poor, Expectations Unfulfilled	Very Disappointing
22	29	3	1	0

Are you likely to recommend an AVAP conference to a colleague in the future?

Yes	54
No	1

How much value for the money was the 2017 conference?

A great value	A good amount of value	Moderate/Neutral on value	Not as much value as hoped for	Almost no value
16	30	9	0	0

How would you rate the overall duration of the conference?

About right	Too short	Too long
47	1	7

Were the sessions of interest to you?

Very interesting	Somewhat interesting	Uncertain	Not particularly interesting
25	28	1	0

Do you have a suggestion for formatting the conference differently?

- Thought this year was well done. We had enough time in-between each session.
- Again, much more time to share best practices among various constituent groups. Invite other donors to participate and share viewpoints.
- I liked the 2017 format a lot.
- Give a better description of sessions maybe have a suggestion of this would be good for development, alumni, PR

- I really liked the breakout sessions on the 2nd day RE: grateful clients. Neither of them "spoke at the group," but rather used a conversational method to bounce ideas off each other. I think that many people were able to get a lot from this type of session, and I suggest following that type of method for all breakout sessions.
- I would prefer not having two half days. That made travel very awkward.
- Every year we have to elect the new slate of officers and each year it seems like we struggle to find volunteers to come forward during the business meeting. I recommend sending out something on the ListServ, perhaps a month in advance, that lists the various vacancies with a short description of the expectations/roles along with an estimated time commitment. Encourage people to reach out prior to the conference if they want more information or are interested in serving. For example, I may consider serving in the secretary position, but I need to confirm that my school will pay for me to attend the conference next year and would be willing to host the ListServ, which was impossible to do in the moment.
- I do suggest a different program line-up. Perhaps start with welcome and general session, a plenary session and then breakout groups to talk about the parts of the plenary session.
- Allow for more open discussion amongst each other.
- It would be really interesting if it was hosted at other schools, so we can learn more about each other and different campuses - see facilities, etc.
- There wasn't a ton of stuff for Communications. I know there wasn't a ton of us, but it would be nice to even have breakout sessions for Communicators where we can just get together and talk to one another. We don't necessarily even need a speaker.
- Having 2 full days and finishing up with 1/2 day on Friday.... Furthermore, involving the deans on the Friday to be a session for dean/staff--perhaps things we want the deans to hear but presented in a way that is applicable to both advancement and the dean...ALSO, building in MORE networking/OPEN roundtable discussions based on your career (Fundraiser, Alumni Coordinator, Event Coordinator, Program/Office Assistants, Donor Relations Coordinators, etc. There is just never enough time to meet our colleagues and talk in-depth about programs, etc)
- I loved the networking lunch at the end! Please continue doing this. Actually, it may be good to move it to the beginning of the conference or incorporate in the social outing so we can identify folks that work in the same area as us early on.
- More interactive, videotape sessions for online access, fewer outside presenters and much more interaction time.
- We've gotten completely away from having "guided" conversations about what we're all doing at our own colleges. What I like best about this conference (or liked in the past) is hearing what others are doing. Once I knew what they were doing, I could pick their brains about what's worked and what hasn't worked. Some of the programs we've implemented at our college came directly from this conference ... and I didn't have any of those conversations this year.
- Round tables with moderators and set topics would be welcomed back.
- Keep the track sessions.
- Prefer the conference following AVMA.

How would you rate the following guest speakers invited to present at the conference?

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Did not attend
David Lasater, Opening Keynote, 7/19	5	11	12	16	7	3
Leslie Carmona, Track Session 1	2	8	6	4	0	27
Liz Elkas and Joshua Lee, Track Session 1	2	3	5	3	0	33
Tina Rice and Erin Palumbo, Track Session 1	6	6	5	1	0	27
Elise Betz, Track Session 2	10	9	5	1	0	22
Tammy Barr, Joan Campf, and Kelley Marchbanks, Track Session 2	6	6	14	3	0	20
Indianapolis Zoo Speakers	10	16	15	8	2	3
Lynne Wester, Plenary and Track Sessions 3 and 4	46	8	0	0	0	1
Melissa Heardrick and Kristin Loving, Track Session 3	5	4	2	1	0	33
Maureen Manier, Track Session 3	1	1	2	4	2	33
Pat Bowdish and Danielle Johnson, Track Session 4	4	3	8	1	0	30
Courtney Downey, Track Session 4	1	3	5	1	2	31
Timothy Seiler, Plenary 7/21	1	10	10	8	18	6
Bill Stanczykiewicz, Plenary 7/21	11	13	10	5	4	10
Jeffrey Douglas, AAVMC	1	11	11	8	4	8

Additional comments about this year's presenters at the conference or suggestions for future speakers:

- More examples/take-a-ways of things we can actually use/incorporate. Some of the guest speakers had completed their fundraising programs long ago and, understandably, didn't have many samples to share. Lynne Wester did the best job of providing actual tools that we can incorporate into our programs.

- The track sessions were generally good, but the speakers outside of veterinary medicine, the topics are little too generic and lacked real relevance to some of the challenges we face.
- Plan to have AV not work.
- Leave time for structured break-out sessions. Use our own experts as facilitators to get the conversations started with best practices in an area and then open the floor for discussion, input and questions of all participants (for example: metrics - use Ohio State to start the session summarizing their very high metrics and then open it up for input from fellow major gift officers.) These could be 30 minute sessions that would be tracked for each profession.
- I attended the breakout session on Stewardship and would like to have had more specific examples of stewarding.
- Dr. Seiler's presentation seemed to have a lot of problems in regards to his statistics and the conclusions he drew from unrelated data.
- I appreciate speakers who come from outside veterinary education who have done their research on veterinary college fund raising who then share what is applicable from his/her own institution. Gives all of us a fresh perspective and perhaps new outlooks on how to do things.
- I was excited for the keynote this year, expecting it would be very different for AVAP. However, it was the most disappointing session of all. The speaker was not motivating, had cheesy examples of staff appreciation, and had NO discernible examples of thinking differently or creatively. It seemed like a Stuart Smalley skit on SNL. I appreciate incorporating non-vet college speakers for a different perspective, but some had ideas that couldn't be made relevant to our work. I'd be very surprised if Vet alumni affairs & development offices could get in front of students the way she is able to or have as many student volunteers as she does, just given the nature of their studies/work.
- Zoo was not as relevant.
- Give some of the new folks the chance to dip their toe in and speak. alumni engagement – materials, student ambassador, hospital tours, working with volunteers, alumni board/advisory board engagement, when alumni ask, “How can I hire students,” “How do I teach my Dean to fundraise”...invite DEANS
- Lynne Wester was wonderful! Would love to hear from her again.
- Lynne Wester was fabulous! Bill was a great one to close with.
- Lynne Wester was amazing!
- Great job on selecting speakers who presented topics that were relatable.
- I'm not sure how I feel about having a donor attend the entire conference. It could be fine if it's a savvy donor, but in the case of the donor that was present at this conference, I felt that she was surprised at what she was learning about the back of the house operations and it made me mildly uncomfortable. Just a thought. I thought Lynne Wester brought a lot of humor and great ideas to the conference. I understand that she was likely having one of the worst days of her life, and her tenacity and grit should be applauded. I feel however, that by the end of the last break out session her professional filter had broken down and some of her comments were inappropriate.
- Excellent choices!
- Really enjoyed Lynne Wester, thought she was a breath of fresh air. Would like to see speakers working in higher education. That would be my only criticism of the Zoo staff was that it was hard to apply it to higher education concepts.

- Lynne Wester was a fantastic keynote. One of the best keynote lunches at a conference that I've attended in a while.
- Lynne Wester was excellent. Timothy Seiler's session may have been the worst session I have ever attended in my 35+ years in higher education advancement (and that's saying something).
- Lynne Wester was fantastic. Unfortunately, I felt she was the only speaker that really taught me anything. Several of the others were lacking in experience and really didn't offer anything new that hadn't been done by our team for years.
- I think limiting one speaker per day for general knowledge items and get down to nitty gritty in our positions. More breakouts, more networking, more open discussions, etc...
- I really liked that you all brought in some outside speakers! Please keep that up.
- While I think it was nice to hear from the Zoo and on the last day Tim and Bill I felt that it wasn't as applicable to us compared to a presentation from one of our members. I didn't really get anything from the Zoo presentation and Tim's talked seemed a little basic but I understand we have a lot of new members.
- Research future speakers to ensure they are excellent presenters. Choose speakers focused on current practices.
- When the messages presenters give us conflict...i.e. Lynne Wester vs. Bill Stanczykiewicz....provide an opportunity to discuss their differences. Maybe small group discussions that could present their results to the large group.
- Tangible usable info is always better than something at 30000 feet
- Timothy should have been a speaker for first timers! Lynne knocked it out the park

Do you have any comments or suggestions about the social this year?

- Thought it was excellent! Convenient, great food and gave us lots of time to interact and follow up with colleagues.
- I liked the tour of the equine facility, but the horse racing track wasn't necessarily the best venue. It didn't seem like we had a good plan for interacting with each other during the meal time. I probably wouldn't have gone had the tour of the equine facility not been offered.
- I really liked Wednesday night's short reception. But the casino/track was too much.
- This was so much fun and had a little something for everyone with both the fun element and educational element by visiting one of the vet med sites. It was great!
- The social offered a nice variety of activities- tour of the new equine facility, dinner, horse racing and the casino so people could follow their interests.
- I truly enjoyed myself!
- Interesting venue.
- It was too long and people were too scattered. It did not feel like a good way to connect with other colleges and if you weren't interested in gambling, there wasn't much to do.
- I thought the reception was great - having some down time after the sessions had been going for a day was great.
- enjoyed the tour and the social
- The social was fine.
- Too long
- Great Social and well organized. Thank you.

- Was fun and well-planned. Liked that it was pretty low-key, nice wind-down from a busy day.
- Definitely needed more chairs and a bigger bar. The line to get drinks was so long and since there was nowhere to sit, I just left.
- The social was too much driving and not a whole lot of activity. Most people seemed to get on to the 7 pm bus back to our hotels.
- Very nice - organized - well-thought out. Fun venue and the menu was fantastic. I appreciated the laid-back approach after a structured day. The Purdue staff is exceptional and welcoming and inclusive.
- It was very well organized. I appreciated that they kept the buffet open a little late so we could eat after the tour.
- Was very nice and adequate time to mingle with colleagues
- I would like to see a social that is more intimate, just like the reception held this year.
- It would be nice in future years to have the evening social event on the first day and then on the second day maybe have one more keynote at the end rather than ending at 3pm. Also, the space was a little too large. It made it hard to connect with people.
- The concept was good but I'm not sure how many people were into gambling.
- Fun and a new experience.
- Felt trapped at the casino. Many of us were tired after a long day.
- It was fun, I enjoyed.
- Is a social necessary?

What ideas/changes might you suggest to conference planners in the future?

- Please continue to provide at least 1-2 plenary speakers from Lilly School of Philanthropy/CASE/Advancement Resources or other organization that can share overall trends/demographics in philanthropy. Most of us have a general feel for the trends through our work. However, having data to confirm personal insight validates what we "believe/feel" is occurring and provides us with the information needed to "encourage" our administrators (Deans, Faculty, etc.) to trust our lead.
- I think we might be to a point where we can more seriously consider uncoupling our conference from the AVMA convention. the AVMA plans its conventions a few years in advance, so we might need to think about a long-term plan for our own conferences and start preselecting host sites and dates three, four or five years out.
- Keep the tracks
- It is hard to find people who are more experts at what we do than ourselves. Use our own expertise within the organization. Provide structure and encourage engaging presentations (no one likes to be lectured at) that involve participants. Try structuring speakers with a follow up discussion session following. For example with the grateful client session. Get a snapshot of that school's program and then end the session and go into a 20 minute discussion time for the speakers and participants on that subject matter. It is more intentional than leaving time at the end for questions. Let the speakers have some discussion questions that everyone can provide input on. They can also serve as moderators to ensure discussion from everyone (even the more quiet participants.) Use keynotes for some really high-energy

and engaging sessions. These might cost a little more but I think people would enjoy that level of presentation that can be both entertaining and enlightening.

- This was a very good model- we had tons of excellent food to enjoy!
- I really enjoyed the reception on Wednesday. It would be nice to have more spaces where we could have open conversations on different topics instead of being talked at so much by speakers. Maybe have a speaker and then follow it up with time for discussion?
- I was not very pleased with the Sheraton as a hotel - the guest rooms were okay but their conference services were lacking.
- Smaller conversation sessions allow for brainstorming.
- Perhaps do a "big / little" program. Pair first-time folks with more seasoned attendees. This conference is EXTREMELY clicky. I found that most folks stick to their own group. It is a shame that unless you are around for 8+ years folks don't talk to you. Maybe do a mixer for newer folks hosted by some folks that have been coming for a few years
- Actually care that people who pay just as much as everyone else have food issues and allergies.
- I thought this was the best conference yet. Kudos to Purdue!
- If communications/marketing is going to be something featured at AVAP, please include more if it. I didn't feel there was enough variety for communication professionals. There was only one communication/marketing session available per session, which did not give us any opportunity for variety.
- As this was my first conference to attend, I think Purdue set the bar high for next year.
- Perhaps including a list of local restaurant recommendations and/or area attractions.
- Keep the three areas: fundraising/alumni/communications. Drill down in groups like fundraising, annual fund, stewardship, capital campaigns. Then alumni, communicating with alumni, events, alumni boards, etc. communications, several topics. Have more round tables on those topics above.
- Liked having different tracks, it's more beneficial to the specific areas. Got more out of the sessions that related directly to my job.
- More time to meet people from other schools, or create round tables discussions around topics (alumni / events / stewardship) that help you find counterparts at different schools.
- More networking and open discussion opportunities. Keep in major areas. It is easier for teams to travel from airports instead of having at a college campus. Perhaps just arrange travel (busses) on a day where we have the opportunity to travel to the campus...Maybe hosting the social at the campus instead of in the major area.
- Please see the above suggestion/comment about the communication breakout sessions. Also, it would be nice if you could color code the name badges based on our roles to help us more easily find people that we may want to network with. Or at least add our title to the name badges.
- I think moving forward our "full day" should consist of sessions for a particular track - Alumni, Communications and Fundraising. Some of the sessions I suggested above could be discussed in each track. I would recommend a keynote the first day and then maybe group discussions on a topic - even roundtables and then presenting out. Topic could be about campaigns or something else we are all a part of and could discuss. The last day maybe only have one additional outside speaker and then give us a chance to discuss another topic or two as a group. I am glad we extended it and many said that they appreciated the tracks. I think we can continue to improve the amount offered to those who aren't fundraisers.

- Again, much more interactive. More time for questions.

Is there anything further you would like to share generally/organizationally about the Association of Veterinary Advancement Professionals?

- Really appreciate all the hard work the AVAP Board puts into the organization. You care and it shows. Thank you for helping us continually refine our skills and set high standards for Advancement in Veterinary Medicine. Really appreciated all of the food options at this conference. They were nutritious (lots of fruit and quality food) along with fun (gummy bears, yum!).
- Purdue did a remarkable job hosting the event. The sessions were a good length, and relevant. The last speaker was inspirational and a great way to end the conference. I know all the deans were asked to attend a round-table discussion. This would be the only part I would like to see in the future.
- Let us find ways to connect outside of AVMA.
- This is a great organization and conference. Although this was not my favorite conference, it is invaluable when it comes to getting together with those who best understand the successes, trials and tribulations of vet med. Thank you to all those who planned this conference and know that your work is appreciated and constrictive feedback does not compromise the undisputable success of this conference. Each year, we build on the last for conferences that will get better and better each year.
- Wonderful group of colleagues who are willing to exchange ideas. Encourage ways to connect with our members who live outside the US
- I appreciated the different tracks and how the sessions spoke to more than just major gift fundraising.
- I hope the AVAP considers allowing different institutions to host. I think this would be a great way for more schools to highlight their institutions and draw on the talent of their university as a whole for speakers, which would be cost effective. I understand everyone's need to want to combine it with the AVMA, but separating it out would be my preference.
- We're a pretty stale group, despite having the most adorable subject matter in the world (ANIMALS!). We all do the same things, say the same things, even use the exact same language. We need a kick in the bum as a profession. And more deans like the U of Florida who understand the connection people have with their pets is first and foremost an emotional one, not based on scientific achievement or advances. Yet most deans don't allow their staff to effectively utilize this emotional connection, preferring instead to largely convey the technical/clinical/scientific rather than the emotional....
- I enjoy this conference, but there needs to be more of an effort of folks to make others feel welcome. The length of the conference was good. I would like the list of participants again.
- Loved the meetings. Well done! By the way.....the snacks and the variety were Awesome!
- Just gets better and better every year. Value for the \$\$ is incredible.
- I really loved that we got tickets to the zoo! Also, there needs to be a younger professional presence on the board. There were a lot of young communication and development professionals and I didn't feel that our style of communication and outreach was represented very well in the sessions.

- I thought it was a great conference- Great work.
- Delighted to meet peers across the country who are friendly and encouraging. Great job!
- Excellent organization and I have been proud to be a member since 2009!
- Keep up the good work.
- Plenty of food, snacks, and breaks. Thanks.
- I would like to see mini-conferences at NAVC, Western, etc.
- Broadened the scope and mission to include a resource section on web, best practices and collect data specific to our profession.