

AAVMC and AVAP Collaboration

History

The origins of what we now know as the Association of Veterinary Advancement Professionals (AVAP) can be traced to an organization of veterinary college fundraisers who began meeting in the mid-1980's known as the Association of Veterinary Development Professionals. In the mid-1990's, Jeffrey S. Douglas, communications director at the Virginia-Maryland Regional College of Veterinary Medicine, began examining the role of communications and public relations as it was being practiced in the nation's colleges of veterinary medicine. He recognized the importance of communication in institutional advancement and approached AVDP about collaborating. The result was the expansion of the existing organization that would include communications and alumni relations professionals as well. The group voted to amend the by-laws to create the broader organization that is known today as the Association of Veterinary Advancement Professionals.

Since then the organizations have collaborated in a variety of ways including conferences, presentations, and communications, including the AAVMC Excellence in Communications Award.

Over five years ago, discussion began about the advantages of AVAP becoming a 501 c 3 and a small task force was formed to explore the options and process. Since then, the group spearheaded by Kevin and Mari Doerr has diligently worked on the logistics. For numerous reasons the process had not come to fruition and a conversation with Jeff Douglas, Communications Director AAVMC started discussing the possible collaboration between the organizations, with AVAP aligning itself under the auspices (and benefits) of AAVMC's 501 c 3 status. The Executive Committee subsequently put the idea of establishing a 501 c 3 on hiatus in 2017 to explore a MOU between AAVMC and AVAP.

The advantages of being a 501c-3

Tax exemption/deduction: Organizations that qualify as public charities under [Internal Revenue Code 501\(c\)\(3\)](#) are eligible for federal exemption from payment of corporate income tax. Once exempt from this tax, the nonprofit will usually be exempt from similar state and local taxes.

Eligibility for public and private grants: Nonprofit organizations are allowed to solicit charitable donations from the public. Many foundations and government agencies limit their grants to public charities.

Formal structure: A nonprofit organization exists as a legal entity in its own right and separately from its founder(s). Incorporation puts the nonprofit's mission and structure above the personal interests of individuals associated with it.

Limited liability: Under the law, creditors and courts are limited to the assets of the nonprofit organization. The founders, directors, members, and employees are not personally liable for the nonprofit's debts. There are exceptions. A person cannot use the corporation to shield illegal or irresponsible acts on his/her part. Also, directors have a fiduciary responsibility; if they do not perform their jobs in the nonprofit's best interests, and the nonprofit is harmed, they can be held liable.

The disadvantages of being a 501 c 3

Cost: Creating a nonprofit organization takes time, effort, and money. Because a nonprofit organization is a legal entity under federal, state, and local laws, the use of an attorney, accountant, or other professional may well prove necessary. Aside from legal or other consultant fees, applying for Federal tax exemption can cost \$275-\$850 or more, in addition to state fees for incorporation.

Paperwork: As an exempt corporation, a nonprofit must keep detailed records and submit annual filings to the state and IRS by stated deadlines in order to keep its active and exempt status.

Shared control: Although the people who create nonprofits like to shape and control their creations, personal control is limited. A nonprofit organization is subject to laws and regulations, including its own articles of incorporation and bylaws. In some states, a nonprofit is required to have several directors, who in turn are the only people allowed to elect or appoint the officers who determine policy.

Scrutiny by the public: A nonprofit is dedicated to the public interest; therefore, its finances are open to public inspection. The public may obtain copies of a nonprofit organization's state and Federal filings to learn about salaries and other expenditures.

Proposal

The AVAP Executive Committee discussed and recognized the longer term challenges associated with securing a non-profit status and the benefits of aligning ourselves with AAVMC. For the past 8 months AVAP has worked with AAVMC to develop a Memo of Understanding between AAVMC and AVAP.

Action

The Executive Committee proposes the AVAP membership to approve the MOU and that the AVAP bylaws be updated to reflect the change.