



**CONTACT:**

Jeff Douglas

AAVMC Communications

Phone: 540/998-1800

Email: [jdouglas@aavmc.org](mailto:jdouglas@aavmc.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**UC-Davis SVM Wins 2015 AAVMC Excellence in Communications Award**

**WASHINGTON, D.C., June 1, 2015** – The communication program at the University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine (UCD-SVM), led by Communications and Marketing Director Linda Ybarra, has been recognized with the 2015 AAVMC Communications Excellence Award.

The five-member judging team was impressed with the productivity, breadth and quality of a broad-based, results-driven program that has helped set records in philanthropic support and boosted hospital caseload. They noted the exceptional work the UC-Davis SVM is doing with both legacy and new media in telling the story of modern academic veterinary medicine.

“We congratulate our colleagues at the University of California-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine for earning this distinguished recognition,” said Dr. Andrew T. Maccabe, executive director of the AAVMC. “The standard of communications excellence they have set is helping the UC-Davis School of Veterinary Medicine become more successful, setting an example for others and moving our entire enterprise forward.”

The school responded to almost 500 media inquiries during the year and focused on cultivating key media relationships on their way to earning placements in an assortment of national media, including the New York Times, NPR, numerous television networks and other major media. The team also focused on veterinary trade media and operated a series of communication “mini-campaigns,” designed to advance specific institutional priorities such as building strong relationships with the organized veterinary medical community and related professional societies.

Their strategy of leveraging communication content across multiple platforms reaped dividends. Posting 228 stories and comments on their social network channels, they witnessed their Facebook and Twitter following grow to almost 21,000 and 9,000, respectively. Their website averaged 112,000 total visitors and 458,753 page views each month.

One measure of the productivity of the UCD-SVM communications department is the number of stories that were harvested by the AAVMC’s new RSS-based content aggregator located on the News & Media Resources page of the AAVMC website. Of the 397 stories that were auto-populated by participating institutions on the site, 216, or 54% involved content created by the communications team at the UCD-CVM.

“They consider the current events and topics already in the news and create opportunities to promote the faculty’s efforts on related issues,” said Dr. Michael Lairmore, Dean of the UCD-SVM. “They also tie back to the school’s strategic plan to ensure that communication efforts are in line with the school’s overall goals and strategies. I strongly support this innovative and dedicated team.”

School officials believe their quality communication program played a major role in two key achievements at the UCD-SVM: fundraising reached an all-time high of \$27,177,052 during the 2014 year and clinical caseload in their Veterinary Teaching Hospital increased 6.2% to 47,800.

A total of eight institutions competed for the honor this year. AAVMC Senior Communications Consultant Jeff Douglas, who provides staff support for the program, said he was pleased to see increased participation and program growth.

“The margin of success in this year’s competition was mediated by decimal points, not integers,” said Douglas, who has worked in academic veterinary medicine for more than 30 years and helped form the Association for Veterinary Advancement Professionals (AVAP) in the late 1990’s. “I think the level of competition this year clearly demonstrates that more and more of our members understand the profound connection between excellent communications programming and institutional advancement – and are ramping up programs to leverage the opportunity.”

The five-member team of judges included three communication professionals representing member organizations of the Federation of Associations of Schools of the Health Professions (FASHP) in Washington, D.C. Judges scored nominations using an empirical process that assessed criteria such as quality and scope of the program, leadership and innovation in program development, engagement with AAVMC programs and other factors.

The award includes a \$1,000 honorarium, a plaque and public recognition. It will be presented during the annual meeting of the Association of Veterinary Advancement Professionals (AVAP) on Tuesday, July 14, 2014 in Boston, Massachusetts. Honorees are invited to make a presentation on the winning communications program during the annual AVAP conference.

The AAVMC Board of Directors established the Communications Excellence Award in 2013 to recognize the important role of communications in advancing academic veterinary medicine and the profession, inspire higher level of performance and foster collaboration among member institutions.

The **Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC)** is a nonprofit membership organization working to protect and improve the health and welfare of animals, people and the environment by advancing academic veterinary medicine. Its members include 35 veterinary medical colleges in the United States and Canada, nine departments of veterinary science, eight departments of comparative medicine, thirteen international colleges of veterinary medicine, and six affiliate colleges of veterinary medicine: [www.aavmc.org](http://www.aavmc.org)