March 25, 2022

I am sitting in the warm morning sunshine of Mexico, on our long-delayed-by-Covid family vacation that was cancelled on the very eve of the restrictions imposed March 2020. It seems a fitting bookend to a very different last couple of years for me, as the outgoing President of the CVBC Council.

As I return to my seat at the Council table, I have to reflect on the last couple of years of challenge and change as I leave the role of President. It has been an incredible growth experience for me in many ways, and for that I owe huge thanks to my most excellent Council colleagues, and our dedicated and resilient staff. Our collective goal has been to continue to help the College grow and evolve as it navigates the ever-changing landscape of self-governance, and professional responsibility to protect the public and the animals they present to us for our care.

Looking back, I am incredibly proud of our veterinary collective, as we have navigated the difficult challenges of COVID 19, the increased pressure on almost every facet of veterinary medicine, and the ever-present demands exacerbated by the shortage of incoming colleagues to help us with this workload.

When I first ran for Council just over 3 years ago, I had the belief that we could, and should be able to effectively self-regulate our profession, and that we could do that with compassion and empathy for ourselves as veterinarians, and the often difficult job that we have chosen. I also firmly believed that we could do the important work of self-regulation in a spirit of collegiality and cooperation, rather than antagonistic and adversarial. With consistent determination toward our mandate, I believe that our College has taken some significant steps in both these directions.

With the hard work of an extremely dedicated Council committed to shared goals, we have laid the groundwork for change. I believe our most significant achievement of 2021-22 has been the search for, recruitment of, and hiring of Dr. Megan Bergman as our permanent Registrar and CEO. As a veterinarian with an extremely unique skill set in governance and regulation, Megan has embraced this role, and the challenges that it brings, with extraordinary skill and dedication. As the steward of the core functions of the College, we should all feel extremely fortunate to have her in our corner.

Our 2022-2026 Strategic Plan is a fantastic piece of hard, measured work, and will guide future Councils and staff in the direction that has been laid out by ourselves as a profession. Countless engagement and consultation sessions went into the creation of this Plan, and it provides a necessary, as well as a powerful and consistent tool for College direction looking out to 2026.

Our Investigations and Complaints (IC) functions have been identified as a source of much concern, and conflict in our service delivery. Toward this end our Strategic Plan is focused on identifying shortcomings and working toward solutions. As of this writing, the eminent Harry

Cayton is finalizing an extremely fulsome report on the state of our IC functions. With a roadmap toward improvement, I am confident we can effect change in this critical area of our mandate.

One of the four pillars of our Strategic Plan is centered around effective communication. It has been a personal wish and effort of mine to try to create a more collegial and inclusive tone around the communications that arise from the College. As I remind myself, this College is FOR and OF us… Self-governance is a privilege that I believe we all need recognize, steward and contribute to. We may not get it right every time, but I believe very strongly that I would much rather someone who has walked a mile in my shoes adjudicate my competence and ethics, my practice facility, or my continuing education needs and commitments, than an external auditor.

With that in mind, please consider loaning your talents, time, and energy toward the functioning of our College. There is always room for your involvement on Committees, and on Council, and indeed we are all stronger with each other actively participating at our sides.

As I close this chapter, I want to thank Lori, Gian, Chris, Harinder, and Gary; the public members of Council during my time as Chair who have provided that most essential reflection of our profession through the public's eyes and contributed their time and talents to making our veterinary profession better.

To Jane M, Michele, and Doris, who have not only stepped forward out of their busy professional lives, but also stood up to take their place on Council executive. I want to thank you for your wisdom, energy, patience, and guidance as we all navigated our way through some unfamiliar and at times very uncomfortable, territory together…

Jane P, Stacey, and Megan, and all of our talented staff - thanks for your wise, informed counsel; for carrying the incredible load and pace of change that was thrust upon you through staff and Council changes, in the midst of this pandemic.

You are an incredible group, and I thank you all for helping me, as Council President, to not look as lost and incompetent as I sometimes felt.

It has been an immense pleasure and learning journey these last 3 years on Council, and last 2 as President. I look forward to continuing our work together, as we transition to Jane Pritchard - President, Chris Finding – Vice President, and Gian Sihota – Treasurer, leading our College forward as the 2022-23 Council Executive. Thanks to you all for stepping forward.

Thanks to everyone for affording me the opportunity to serve.

Best,

Josh