Experiential Opportunities in Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratories

A Collaboration Between:

American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD)

and Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine, Center for Public & Corporate Veterinary Medicine (CPCVM)

Overview and Purpose:

The American Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (AAVLD) together with the Center for Public and Corporate Veterinary Medicine (CPCVM) are offering an experiential opportunity for veterinarians in which they will learn about activities and career opportunities in the veterinary diagnostic field. This experiential opportunity will take place over a period of 1 to 4 weeks, and veterinarians will have the opportunity to meet with multiple diagnosticians and staff at their respective veterinary diagnostic laboratories to better understand the roles of laboratory diagnostic veterinarians and explore the various career paths available.

These experiential opportunities will benefit participating AAVLD diagnostic laboratories by providing an opportunity to have veterinarians support ongoing activities and projects in various concentrations including pathology, bacteriology, virology, immunology, parasitology, and more. In addition, these experiences allow AAVLD to network with, shape, and assess potential future employees.

Locations and facilities: Experiential opportunities will be located at participating AAVLD diagnostic veterinary laboratories. A list of participating laboratories will be identified and maintained by AAVLD, with annual updates.

Eligibility:

- A veterinary degree is required – an active license is NOT required
- Individual diagnostic laboratories may have their own requirements, such as whether they can support an international visiting scholar, or specific requirements for vaccination

Application requirements:

Applicants should prepare and submit the following documents to CareerT@vt.edu:

- CV or resume
- Letter of Interest briefly describing why you would like to participate in this opportunity, and what you hope to learn
    - Include your preferred dates/timeframe for the experience

    - Include a minimum of 1 laboratory (from the list of participating laboratories) that you would like to visit
- Professional letter of recommendation – this can be a short letter from someone you know professionally who can verify your interest and intent
- Your US state license number (if licensed) or an unofficial transcript from your veterinary degree granting program.

Structure:

An AAVLD veterinarian will serve as the experienced preceptor and assist veterinarians in identifying activities and/or projects that will allow for completion of their learning objectives over the course of their time at their assigned AAVLD laboratory. These activities/projects will provide familiarization with the overall duties and career opportunities in veterinary diagnostic services while also supporting AAVLD's corporate contributions to promote the veterinary profession. The actual activities and interactions can be adjusted to accommodate the veterinarian's specific interests and any unique or special activities occurring at the diagnostic laboratory during any particular time. AAVLD preceptors will be asked to provide guidance, answer questions, and provide oversight throughout the veterinarian's opportunistic stay to ensure the veterinarian makes progress toward meeting the learning objectives and make adjustments as needed. Preceptors will also provide helpful information and assess the best route for the veterinarian to pursue a future career in veterinary diagnostic services, if they so wish to.

Examples of potential activities:

The following are examples of the kinds of activities that may be available to participating veterinarians. Veterinary diagnostic laboratories differ in the services they provide and the opportunities for hands-on participation. Specific activities will be discussed between the participant and specific laboratory point of contact.

- Interact with, observe, and assist diagnosticians as permitted in a variety of settings including sample receiving/accessioning, bacteriology, virology, serology, parasitology, toxicology, molecular diagnostics, cytology, histopathology and necropsy
- Observe how veterinary diagnostic laboratories operate daily and how testing is conducted
- Observe case coordination and how test results are evaluated
- Observe how diagnosticians interact with field veterinarians
- Assess biosecurity protocols and laboratory safety practices

- Participate in meetings with State, Federal, or University authorities to learn about outbreak response tactics
- Participate in weekly calls with NAHLN and monthly calls with FDA Vet-LIRN
- Participate in case rounds
- Attend seminars and other regular teaching activities
- Learn about quality control and quality assurance

Upon completion of the experiential opportunity, participating veterinarians should be able to:

- Describe the role of veterinary diagnostic laboratories in the development of animal health initiatives, policies and dissemination of surveillance information
- Describe opportunities in veterinary diagnostic medicine for veterinarians and the skills, experience and/or training required for those positions.

Feedback Survey: Each veterinarian will be able to assess their experience at their assigned AAVLD facility. Each AAVLD preceptor will be able to assess their experience with their assigned veterinarian. These feedback surveys will allow AAVLD and the CPCVM to assess and improve their program as appropriate.

Specific Responsibilities:

CPCVM will:

1. Develop recruitment materials for the program and share through various platforms (website, social media, listservs).
2. Serve as the first contact point for interested veterinarians, ensure they meet eligibility criteria and collect all application materials.
3. Communicate with the laboratory point of contact (POC) to share participant details.
4. Deliver a post-experience questionnaire to participating veterinarians and share annual summary of results with AAVLD Exec Board.

AAVLD will:

1. Promote the program with laboratory directors and identify opportunities at specific locations for interested veterinarians. Update this list annually (at a minimum)
2. Develop materials to support laboratory directors when they host veterinarians (e.g., SOP for serving as a host site and preceptor)
3. Follow-up with laboratory directors through survey or other means to document the value of the program and identify opportunities for improvement – share this with CPCVM annually.

AAVLD Point of contact:

Dr. Dave Zeman, Executive Director of AAVLD: dzeman@aavld.org

VMCVM-CPCVM Points of Contact:

- Dr. Cassidy Rist, Director, CPCVM: crist6@vt.edu
- Megan Perry, Administrative Assistant, CPCVM: meganbp@vt.edu