



Our Mission

The Teaching Academy of the Consortium of West Region Colleges of Veterinary Medicine (RTA) works to ensure that the members of the consortium collaborate to develop, implement, and sustain the best practices in veterinary medical and biomedical education in our colleges, and to establish veterinary medical educator/biomedical educator as a valued career track. Through these efforts we hope to meet the needs of society and the profession.

<https://teachingacademy.westregioncvm.org/>

Progress to date:

In 2012, academy founders identified a list of core values and future deliverables. Six years later, the hard-working fellows have collaborated in creating an entry-level training program for veterinary educators (VETS), delivered instruments used for local formative peer observation of instruction, and created a process for external peer review of faculty with large teaching efforts to generate recommendation letters for tenure and promotion committees.

In addition, relationships among RTA fellows have yielded scholarly publications, presentations at national meetings, and a growing culture of improving teaching to benefit students and instructors at every level. The RTA has matured beyond creating to now providing services, offering each member institution enhanced tools coupled with trained experts to further improve the educational experiences for all students.

Faculty Development:

Having developed educational modules for faculty new to instruction, this group has piloted two successful VETS programs. Future plans include holding these VETS sessions at each member institution and opening these sessions to non-RTA members at cost. Several group members presented on our VETS faculty development program at AAVMC Annual Conference in March 2018. A study on the impact of VETS training was IRB-approved by all five institutions and a paper is in preparation for submission.

Local Peer Observation:

Using instruments developed by this RTA working group, colleagues are using peer observation to get critical structured feedback to help enhance their effective instruction and document their progress. Instruments are in use for both didactic and clinical instructional settings. Observer training continues locally while RTA working group members

enhance instruments and promote these interactions. Visiting RTA fellows can provide observer training and/or observe instruction directly.

External Review:

An evidence-based process to provide an external letter of review for education-focused faculty seeking promotion or tenure is now in place. A [web site](#) that describes the process is published and ready for initial use. Faculty and college leaders from member colleges can submit promotion packets via their representative on the committee (or via the committee chair). The RTA review panel will generate 1 external letter of review to be added to the applicant's packet for consideration at the department, college, and university level.



Future *July 2018- July 2020*

In the next two year cycle, the RTA will be focused on the following ongoing activities:

- Organize the **2019 meeting of Fellows** hosted by UC Davis
- Continue the **VETS program**, both at the biennial meeting and local follow-up activities
- Provide **external review of educators** to Consortium member institutions, a critical service not available within a single institution

In addition, the RTA will be exploring and developing new initiatives:

- Formalize a **Visiting Fellows Program** by offering partial travel support for Fellows to make brief visits to Consortium institutions and deliver workshops, conduct peer observation and coaching, etc. For example, a visiting fellow could present a workshop to help participants develop a teaching portfolio that aligned with the external review process.
- **Educational Collaboration and Enduring Materials:** Begin to support Fellow-initiated, content-oriented projects that leverage the resources of the multi-institution Consortium effectively and efficiently, such as
 - **Food Animal Instruction:** Creation of a shared virtual teaching resource, with an initial focus on partnering with large animal specialists to obtain USDA Challenge Grant funding for a collaborative food animal learning center, filling gaps at some RTA institutions with expertise from others.
 - **Consortium-based Instructional Resources:** topic/discipline-based interest groups which might develop teaching cases or build consensus learning objectives or milestones used by all and enhance teaching efficiency.
 - **Competency-Based Veterinary Education (CBVE):** Train Consortium faculty about the recently published CBVE framework and understand how it relates to their current and future curricula, programs and teaching activities.
- **Scholarship and Publications:** For RTA collaborative projects. A small group of Fellows will be tasked with working to engage the larger membership in their output of enduring scholarly materials, and funds may be used to offset publication costs for manuscripts or other works originating from the RTA.



Barriers to Success

While the RTA has many accomplishments, significant challenges remain. In many cases, the early success of the RTA has created challenges associated with a maturing organization that spans multiple institutions. For example, the addition of new fellows increases the need for organizational support and programmatic infrastructure. As a volunteer organization of faculty who have full-time positions at their home institutions, the increasing demands on busy people has both capacity and financial limits in its current configuration. Strategically, the RTA leaders seek support income for these increased programs through extramural funding (e.g. USDA Challenge Grant) and fees for any participants outside the five-member institutions. Further, RTA leaders seek ways to affirm and reward those devoting precious time to these regional activities that benefit a larger community of educators.

Finances and Activities

For more information about the support and expenditures from the RTA since 2013, see the attached tables detailing income and expenditures. In bringing groups together and supporting collaborations, program features have fostered professional development and delivered desired outcomes. While the past funding

from the five western veterinary programs has allowed us to accomplish the past efforts, moving forward will require further funding.

We look forward to your continued support as the RTA moves into its next phase of engagement and productive collaboration.

