

Dear Fellow ACVO Members:

We are saddened by recent tragic events that continued a long history of senseless violence that too often ends in the devastating loss of innocent lives, especially in our Black communities. In times like these, listening with compassion to experiences that differ from our own is critical to start the important work towards solutions. As stated in our Harassment & Discrimination Policy, the ACVO does not tolerate and condemns any form of harassment or discriminatory conduct of any kind, including but not limited to that based on race, ethnic or national origin, color, gender identity and expression, and religious or political affiliation.

Over the past several days and weeks the ACVO Board of Regents (BOR) has heard from many Members, and we thank you for your advice and suggestions. The best way for us to strengthen and improve our College is to work together. Below you will see a few of our ideas, and we encourage you to participate. Further, we encourage all Members to actively seek out ways in your communities to combat injustice and inequity and expand your understanding of all people, including those of other races and beliefs.

While we believe that the ACVO includes some of the most talented and intelligent members of the veterinary profession, we must reach talented and intelligent people from all walks of life who have never considered a career in veterinary ophthalmology. Therein lies our future as we continue to strive for excellence by exploring strategies to enhance diversity and inclusion within our profession and specialty as well as in our world.

In response to recent Members' requests and suggestions, the BOR is immediately pursuing the following actions, some of which were initiated before the tragic and sad events of the last few of weeks:

- Harassment & Discrimination Policy: We have reviewed our [2018 Policy](#) and placed it more prominently on our web site. We encourage you to review this Policy critically and inform us of any necessary changes. We also continue to encourage our membership to critically review our Bylaws and Policies & Procedures. If discriminatory acts are observed within our College, they should be immediately reported to our Ethics Committee.
- Ad hoc Committee on Diversity and Inclusion: The BOR decided on the formation of this Committee in order to investigate and expand ways by which the ACVO can improve diversity and inclusion within our profession and specialty. This will include the development of tools to recruit and mentor young people of all ethnicities and socioeconomic backgrounds into the veterinary profession with the hope that the best of those will become veterinary ophthalmologists. Please let the ACVO Office know if you are interested in serving on this Committee.
- Membership surveys: The Public Relations Committee (name change currently on the ballot: Membership Promotion and Outreach Committee) has been tasked to survey our Members

about any specific needs that are currently not met by the ACVO or services that should be improved. We encourage you to be responsive and make suggestions; these may include new and better ways to make our College more diverse and inviting, exploring means to facilitate dialogue pertaining to issues of concern that are not directly related to veterinary ophthalmology, and specific actions to facilitate residency training for individuals from populations currently underrepresented in our profession and specialty. It will take all our ideas and concerted efforts to accomplish these important initiatives.

Each ACVO Diplomate may decide what animals for which they wish to provide care. As you have always in the past acted ethically and responsibly in your personal and professional lives while honoring the Veterinarian’s Oath, we know you will continue to do so.

As always, the BOR encourages our Members to reach out directly to us with your questions and concerns. We are here to serve all Members. We encourage you to work together so “that light shall prevail over darkness.”

ACVO BOR & ABVO