



Dear ACVO Diplomates,

The ACVO Board of Regents (BOR) would like to update both ACVO Members and Diplomates regarding ongoing interactions between the ACVO BOR and the ABVO over the past few months, particularly in reference to the decision by the ABVO to eliminate the Animal Examination Station from the ABVO Certification Examination. Numerous ACVO Members and/or Diplomates have requested that the ACVO BOR respond to this ABVO decision. These Members and/or Diplomates have put forth a number of concerns and possible future recommendations including:

1. Does the ABVO have the authority to make this decision?
2. As significant stakeholders in the ABVO, were Diplomates adequately informed and given time to provide input to the ABVO prior to making this decision?
3. Should the ABVO review this decision and discuss potential suitable replacements for the Animal Examination Station?
4. If the ABVO does not demonstrate a record of input from its stakeholders, could the ACVO BOR modify and/or rescind the ABVO's Charter?
5. Is there appropriate representation of the Diplomates by the ABVO's current members?
6. Should the ABVO's Charter be revised to require that future major credentialing decisions by the ABVO be preceded by a mandated period of public discussion?

The ACVO BOR has spent considerable time reviewing these concerns and questions. We have followed the information coming from the ABVO, from Members and/or Diplomates, and the BOR has discussed this topic as a group. The ACVO BOR recognizes that this situation, and our response to it, represents a critical step as the ACVO and the ABVO continue to navigate our separate roles and responsibilities. Both groups have spent an exhaustive amount of time working diligently to separate membership from credentialing decisions in an effort to protect ACVO Members and maintain public trust. The ACVO BOR currently has an excellent working relationship with the ABVO and we will continue to maintain the quality of that relationship. The ACVO BOR is acutely aware that our response may influence the future of interactions between both organizations. After discussion, the ACVO BOR would like to provide both ACVO Members and/or Diplomates with our thoughts and recommendations.

First, the ACVO BOR affirms that the ABVO has the authority to make all decisions regarding the ABVO Certification Examination. The ABVO Charter states that the ACVO BOR has “*delegated to the ABVO all responsibility for the academic accreditation and professional certification activities of ACVO, with no recourse or appeal to the Board of Regents.*”. Article V of the ABVO Charter also states that “*The ABVO has been granted autonomy by ACVO with respect to all accreditation, credentialing, and certification criteria, decisions, procedures, appeals and other activities related to the purposes outlined in Article III. The ABVO has authority, responsibility, and accountability to develop, establish, approve, and enforce policies and procedures necessary to implement the goals and requirements of this Charter.*”

It has been suggested by some Members and/or Diplomates that the ABVO did not follow its Charter, as it did not appear to “*use appropriate consensus-building communications and procedures within the field of veterinary ophthalmology, and in other fields affected by or related to veterinary*

*ophthalmology, in the discretion of the ABVO*". As indicated in multiple ABVO communications regarding this decision, the ABVO felt that they did gather all necessary information from numerous involved stakeholders including present and past Examination Committee chairpersons, past and present Examination Committee members and the ABVO public board member. The ACVO BOR affirms that the ABVO has met the requirement of consensus building as indicated in the ABVO Charter.

With regard to modification of the ABVO Charter and/or ABVO Policies and Procedures, the ACVO BOR has worked with the ABVO to make modifications to the ABVO Charter so that the ABVO Charter will be better aligned with current credentialing industry recommendations regarding stakeholder input. These modifications will also better align the Charter with current ACVO recommendations regarding stakeholder input. The updated ABVO Charter will state that major credentialing changes under consideration by the ABVO will be made available to the public by display on the ABVO website and to the ACVO Diplomates by direct contact through email and/or through discussion at the ABVO's annual fall meeting. This nonbinding period of public notice and comment will occur for a period prior to enactment of the recommended policy change. The ACVO BOR will survey our Diplomat stakeholders to assist us in determining what period of time is most appropriate.

Additionally, as we have read documents from both boards, we have found a few inadvertent errors that still remain following the reorganization, and need correction. These generally concern clarification of the role of ACVO Members vs. ACVO Diplomates with respect to election and dismissal of ABVO Board Members.

1. Under Applicable ACVO Bylaws Provisions, the ABVO Charter will be modified to: "The American Board of Veterinary Ophthalmology ("ABVO") consists of a Chairman and at least three (3) additional Voting *Diplomates* of ACVO, none of whom is a current Regent or Officer." As this portion of the ABVO Charter is also part of the ACVO Bylaws, this will require a bylaws change. A similar change will be made under 2.01 (a) of the ABVO Policies and Procedures.
2. Under Article IV – Composition, the ABVO Charter will be modified to: "The ABVO is composed of a Chairman, a Public Member, and three (3) additional Board members elected from among the *Diplomates* of ACVO by the ACVO Voting Membership."
3. Under Article IV – Composition, the ABVO Charter will be modified to: "An ABVO Board member may be removed, for cause, by a majority affirmative vote of ABVO Board members at a meeting where a quorum is present *or by a 2/3 majority of all ACVO Diplomates.*" This will align the ABVO Charter with the current ABVO P&Ps under 2.01 (g). This will also align with current ACVO Bylaws and Policies and Procedures.

A finalized update to the ABVO charter will take time, because a portion of the update will also require an ACVO Bylaws change. These bylaw changes have been communicated by mail to all ACVO Members and/or Diplomates and will be voted on at our Annual Meeting of Voting Members (AMVM), our annual business meeting, next month in Baltimore. All Members and/or Diplomates have been mailed voting information and those Members and/or Diplomates not in attendance may vote by mail. A mailed ballot must be received by the ACVO office by October 27, 2017 by 5 pm Mountain Time.

With regard to whether the ABVO is adequately representative of the ACVO Diplomat body at large, the ACVO BOR believes that they are sufficiently representative. If Diplomates feel that the composition of the ABVO requires modification, these Diplomates should work with the ABVO to modify that representation. Active engagement in ABVO Board member nomination and voting process is a critical means by which ACVO Diplomates may ensure appropriate representation.

While the ACVO BOR has affirmed the ABVOs authority to make this decision, they respect the opinion of Diplomates who disagree with the decision, feel that the decision was not made appropriately, or who have asked for the decision to be reconsidered and/or reversed. The ACVO BOR recommends that these Diplomates continue to work directly with the ABVO regarding these and any other concerns. The ACVO BOR believes that the ABVO has responded appropriately to its stakeholders with information on how and why the decision to eliminate the Animal Examination Station was made and notes that the ABVO continues to develop, with input from ACVO Diplomates, increased credentialing requirements to ensure that ABVO residents receive adequate supervised exposure in the examination and surgical management of clinical cases during the course of their residency training programs.

As with any information coming from the ACVO BOR, we would recommend that stakeholders participate in AMVM of the ACVO as well as annual ABVO meetings. These are held at each of the ACVO's Annual Conferences, and remain one of the best opportunities for delivery of information and for input to be received by both boards. We are confident that ongoing interactions between the ABVO and Diplomates will result in a continued and improved understanding of this decision, an ongoing response to that decision, and a continued effective relationship between the ABVO, the ACVO BOR, and our stakeholders.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink on a light yellow background. The signature is cursive and appears to read "Ralph E Hamor".

Ralph E Hamor DVM, MS, DACVO

President, ACVO