

Prof. Albert Cornelissen: Comparison AVMA and EAEVE/FVE Accreditation

Dear colleagues,

I feel honoured by the fact that our President – Marcel Wanner - has invited me to present this lecture. This meeting is an important annual event, in which we discuss the developments and achievements in education across our schools with the aim to enhance the quality of our curricula *and* our graduates, *thus* leading to a stronger profession.

Our president has asked me to present an overview of the differences between the evaluation protocols as carried out by EAEVE/FVE and AMVA/CMVA. I will of course do this, but have taken the liberty to widen my presentation. I have organized my lecture around two themes. First, what is the best environment to shape an excellent curriculum? Here I will address issues on the connection 'school and environment' and the interconnection of education and research. I like to share my views on these important issues, which is based on my personal experience in my 10-year period as dean and my active participation in this association. In the last part – Marcel – I will compare the evaluation protocols of EAEVE/FVE and AMVA/CMVA and indicate the major differences.

Nowadays, the environment of universities has changed dramatically. Universities participate in globalization. Here I like to quote William Brody: "Universities, like houses of worship, are among the few institutions that have survived fundamentally unchanged for centuries. This inertia has been their intrinsic advantage. Yet today they are subject to the same forces and stresses created by globalization that confronts all other aspects of society". This view is fully correct. Universities have indeed to respond rapidly to new challenges and new circumstances. We had to respond rapidly to changes in the profession, changes in national and European legislation as well as new views on how young adults study. We, therefore, adapted and introduced significant changes in our curriculum in 1995, 2001 and again in September 2007 with the introduction of the Bachelor and Master structure.

Brody states in his essay also that "Existing research universities are liable to lose their leading role unless they are able to form, or join, worldwide networks of researchers working at the frontiers of knowledge." And he continues with: "At first blush, it seems hard to imagine two less similar entities than a multinational oil company and a prestigious regional research university. Yet they are very similar in this one respect: both must ultimately respond to the fundamental need to go where the resources are". Also this is our experience. Universities cannot longer rely on full governmental support for their schools. We had to substantially increase our funding portfolio and started to exploit the commercial activities of our hospital function. We also had to reassess our research programmes on basis on the external evaluations in 1999 and 2005.

Research output has grown markedly and is transferred to the profession, relevant governmental bodies and society at large. This is achieved through the many advisory functions that staff members fulfil. We also collaborate extensively with other 'knowledge institutions' and key persons of these institutions have a part-time professorship at our school. These collaborations do not only contribute to regional development, but also strengthen our position in research. Finally, we have intensified our task for knowledge transfer to national and European industry; this has had a positive effect on our research grant portfolio.

Globalization, the fast developments in information technology and the existence of large scientific databases, does not only make most of what we do transparent, but is also used to judge our output on items as impact and quality. This is done on a large scale and is used to rank us. This information is used by students, schools, faculty management, University Boards and the responsible ministries. All our stakeholders use this information to determine their policies in education and research and distribution of budgets; thus we have to act. This is nicely worded by Michael Alvarez: "It is clear that different university environments are unique, and there is no single model or approach to enhancing career services that can simply be copied from one campus to the next. Nevertheless, there is a common ground in the challenges that universities and their trainees face, in light of their shared desire for high-quality research and good career progression". The core of this message is *that departments and faculty members must accept the need to change and reject the status quo.*

The message is indeed: Schools, departments and faculty members must accept the need to change and reject the status quo. This implies a proactive strategy and thus the fact that we have to be aware of the national and international developments and the relevant reports addressing veterinary medicine and more general reports on the status and strategy of universities. "Today's rapid advancements in veterinary medicine, veterinary technology and medical information have spurred an increase in specialized services and practices. These developments have produced intense, continuous pressure on veterinarians to remain current with new trends. The basic principle of business management that applies across industries holds true in the veterinary field – update, or stagnate." This statement comes from Keith Richter of the Veterinary Specialty Hospital in San Diego. This is exactly in line with the message of all recent international reports on the future of the veterinary profession; the future of the profession is diversification and line up with the medical profession; the concept of 'One Health'. The veterinary field will continue to diversify as new insights, technologies and treatments or preventive procedures are developed. Graduates are expected to accumulate more specific knowledge needed for the various sectors in the field and are expected to be more adequately trained in various parts of the field.

The ingredients for modern curriculum development have been discussed extensively over the past years in our Association. These form a solid basis for quality in teaching, but more is required:

- [1] Formulate, in conjunction with the profession, relevant governmental bodies and industry, the day-1 skills of graduates;
- [2] Develop a curriculum in which 'healthy and diseased' make up the central core with a further integration of animal health, animal welfare and veterinary public health;
- [3] Develop extramural – guided - clinical training;
- [4] Strengthen 'evidence based' veterinary medicine by interconnecting research outcomes in the curriculum;
- [5] Develop objective criteria to judge the performance of teaching staff.

On top of these specific goals, recent developments in veterinary medicine have to be translated into a modern veterinary curriculum, focused on the objectives: problem-solving skills, social and communicative skills, academic training, a species oriented differentiation and the awareness of life-long learning. High quality patient care is essential for educational- and research programmes. A substantial budget that allows for a solid basic funding for para-clinical and clinical departments is a prerequisite, so that these departments can have excellent clinical facilities and infrastructure at their disposal. This is essential to stay in same level of playing field as the top specialized private clinics.

Although we could continue to address education, I like to stop here and turn to research and its relation to education and 'evidenced based' veterinary medicine. The mission of most universities and thus your school is to be an international recognized teaching and research university. Research universities are not only evaluated at the level of the school and in national systems, but do fall under the rules of globalization as indicated earlier in my lecture. Their science has thus to be at the forefront of scientific developments. Here competition is harsh, but also challenging and – more importantly – a strong position can be obtained. Here, I will use my Utrecht experience.

In 2005 it became clear that the Dutch government planned to reallocate part of the direct funding budget of universities based on their fund raising capacity. Therefore, we started a reassessment of our research program. We formulated specific goals for our research programmes:

- [1] To maintain a programme that contributes to *veterinary* medicine, including clinical research *and* education;
- [2] To reassess our research programmes in order to obtain 'more focus and critical mass';
- [3] To boost our quality by a further integration of disciplines in order to enhance scientific innovation;

- [4] The restructuring of our research programmes should lead to a better position for attracting and retaining high potential scientists as well as increase our fund raising capacity.

A consequence of focusing research in thematic research programs is that it is no longer possible to cover the full width of clinical veterinary research concordant with the broad mission of the school. Various acute veterinary problems may require an immediate and flexible response by our staff. In addition, research outside the focus of the thematic research programs may be required to maintain and develop a high level of veterinary specialization, e.g., by specialists in training. For this specific purpose our school has allocated a substantial part of its research budget. To further enhance our international visibility and to allow for cost-effective sharing of expensive research facilities, we also intensified the interaction with other research groups within and outside of the UU.

The clinical research program interacts with the thematic research programs and, thereby, the two mutually contribute to deepening the insight in veterinary medicine and improving the scientific quality of veterinary research and education. It goes without saying that this so-called 'sixth research program' of the FVM differs from the five thematic research programs in that it consists of a variety of research projects rather than a coherent research program. All our students participate in this research, since they carry out a 3 month research project.

Research is in line with education also accredited. To execute research management and enhance the quality of research program the development of appropriate indicators are a prerequisite; they have to be transparent and fair but challenge researchers in their strive for quality. Here our school has thirty years of experience. The internal evaluation system has gradually grown to the stage where we are now. The indicators are adjusted to the research direction of the program. The yearly evaluations contribute to a good insight in the research performance of the different research groups over time and, more importantly, allows for timely redirection of research programs. We do not only monitor the quantitative aspect of the output, but also look closely to the quality of this output and how this contributes to the overall visibility of the school. The criteria used are identical for all programs, but adjusted for the orientation of the program. Here we use ISI-fields, since these are used in external evaluations and citation analyses. Besides the publications, we also score the number of grants that are obtained. Visibility and recognition of research groups are very important determinants for future successes in grant applications and private funds. More importantly they are also the major determinant in attracting promising young researchers and top scientist for the more senior functions within the school. Finally, we also take into account more distant

related markers of esteem such as editorships and invitations for key note lectures at international meetings and awards. I cannot say that our evaluation system is the sole factor that has contributed to the improvement of our research programs, but it has enhanced the awareness that quality in science is an important driver for [inter]national success.

Organization and management are also critical factors in success. Many European Veterinary Schools have here a traditional attitude. They are mainly looking inwards. This was also the case in Utrecht. We have, however, changed our position. We collaborate with other faculties and are aware and influence now the policies of our university. We talk intensively with the profession and partners with similar missions, such as the Animal Sciences Group of Wageningen University, the Animal Health Service, The National Institute of Public Health and the Environment etc. Collaboration is more fruitful than competition and does strengthen our international position. It is not always easy, since it implies that you have to bridge the competencies of academic professionals. However, successes on basis of collaboration are very convincing arguments. Moreover, and more importantly it becomes visible during the accreditation of our education and research programs.

Finally, within our association we have discussed international recognition of qualifications and quality assurance & accreditation over a long period. We have taken important steps over the last years, which will contribute to the idea of 'Bologna': the creation of a European professional. Visitations and accreditation are important drivers for curriculum and research developments within our schools and will boost the status of our profession. Also here we see trends of globalization. Within Europe politicians are creating a 'European Higher Education Area' and within veterinary medicine AMVA/CMVA, the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, its counterpart in Australia and New Zealand and EAEVE/FVE have started to compare their procedures and regulations to explore the possibility of a more uniform accreditation system for veterinary education. Since our school is evaluated by AMVA/CMVA since 1972, Marcel Wanner has asked me to give an overview of the present differences of the protocol used by AMVA/CMVA and EAEVE/FVE. This is done in the next five slides.