

Biennial Conference 2021



The 5th Biennial Summer Conference of the Teaching Academy of the Consortium of West Region Colleges of Veterinary Medicine will be held virtually July 12-15, 2021. This year's theme of the conference will focus around Competency-Based Assessment. Our key note speakers will include [Dr. Karen Hauer](#) from UCSF and a team from the AAVMC-CBVE group. The conference will also include additional workshops, educational scholarship and teaching innovations presentations, and poster sessions.

Additionally, in conjunction with the conference, the Faculty Development Initiative is planning on virtually delivering VETS.

Ongoing Efforts & New Initiatives:

Ongoing initiatives and standing committees:

• *Steering Committee:* While busily working on overall direction of the RTA and strategic decisions, the committee hosted a successful RTA winter meeting and selected a platform to facilitate communication and house RTA documents.

• *Membership Committee:* After soliciting and reviewing applications, the committee recommended and the Steering Committee approved 14 new fellows: from CSU (3), UCD (2), UofA (2), WSU (4) and WU (3).

• *Local Peer Observation of Teaching:* This working group has completed its mission to develop tools to facilitate local peer observation and coaching of teaching. Now in the implementation phase, the onus is on all of us to put the instruments and processes to use!

• *External Peer Review of Teaching:* This initiative continues to hone open-source templates, coach candidates and unit administrators in developing portfolios, and further review submitted portfolios, generating external review letters for tenure/promotion of instructionally focused faculty.

• *Faculty Development:* After the initiative successfully established the VETS Fundamentals program for teachers new to the classroom (formerly VETS 1.0), it ran a pilot of the VETS Selective program for faculty to focus on improving constructive alignment and teaching in a specific course area (formerly VETS 2.0). The group launched four new subcommittees as described below.

Recently launched initiatives

• *Quantification of Teaching Effort and Effectiveness:* Develop and provide tools to quantify teaching effort that encompasses the variety of teaching environments and modalities used by RTA faculty

Faculty Development subcommittees:

• *Clinical Teaching:* Focus on developing and enhancing the teaching that happens in the clinical setting.

• *Educator Wellbeing:* Support educators in being whole healthy human beings with the skills, knowledge, ability, and expertise to provide high quality educational experiences to the students they teach

• *Program Delivery and Evaluation – Scholarship:* Design and implement data collection strategies for workshop and seminar offerings, and support the creation of educational scholarship related to FD initiatives

• *Student Assessment:* Collect resources for faculty regarding delivering and evaluating student assessments and share ideas and knowledge about best practices.

Upcoming Initiative

• *Staying connected and engaged:* A series of monthly sessions that will spotlight member school and facilitate interactions of RTA fellows in small groups across schools.

Summer Coffee Hour

In response to challenges faced by educators during the COVID-19 pandemic, the RTA's Faculty Development Initiative (FDI) hosted a series of sharing sessions on "Teaching in the Online and Hybrid Setting" during the months of July and August. The goal of the sessions was for faculty to share strategies for teaching in online contexts. The 3-5 minute-long show-and-tell-style sessions focused around the topics of Technology, Technical Skills, Assessment, and Wellbeing. 113 different faculty from the 6 institutions participated; 97% of the respondents planned to incorporate something they learned during the sessions.

Educational Innovation Research

Funds are available for 3-5 projects with a budget range, per proposal, of \$2,000-\$15,000. The focus is on educational innovation in the framework of hybrid and remote instruction.

The application process will have 2 phases: **Preproposals in form of a 1-page letter of intent are due March 1, 2021.** Scholars of selected projects will submit Full proposal by March 31, 2021. More details are available on the RTA webpage:
<https://teachingacademy.westregioncvm.org/educationalresearch/>

Making Teaching Matter beyond the RTA

In 2020, members of the RTA published 4 manuscripts documenting the processes and products generated through the inaugural working groups and the RTA leadership team. These publications represent milestones for the RTA and move us toward broader dissemination of our work and research. This scholarly work by RTA fellows from 5 member schools has the potential to truly making teaching matter, not just at member schools but around the world.
[Link to the articles on the RTA website.](#)

Challenges we Embrace:

Making Teaching Matter Going Forward

The RTA and its fellows have accomplished much in 2020 (see Box: Highlights). Looking to the future, three specific areas emerge as challenges and will require attention and action.

A major concern surrounding the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is faculty burnout. Facing and dealing with the expectation to transform entire curricula from in person to remote delivery, coupled with the relentless stressors the pandemic exerts on life in general, has taken a significant toll on faculty. Clearly, faculty are tired and zoom fatigued. Consequently, productivity has slowed. We implore RTA fellows to accept this reality, extend compassion to themselves, and support each other.

Growth is important but can be associated with pain. It is imperative that the RTA connects and engages new fellows and integrates the 7th member school. In the ongoing pandemic, many faculty are already stretched beyond capacity and struggle to maintain both wellness and momentum. In this context, the Biennial meeting this coming July presents an unique and critical opportunity to meet new fellows, forge connections among schools, and extend the RTA's reach beyond current fellows to veterinary educators in general at CSU, Mid-Western University, OSU, UCD, University of Arizona, WSU, and Western University. Crowd-sourcing energy, enthusiasm and engagement through broad participation of fellows at the meeting will go a long way to meet this challenge.

The continuing support of the leadership of the Consortium's colleges will be particularly important in these trying times. It takes the complete buy-in and decisive action from administrators to execute the implementation of the processes and products developed by the RTA, to publically recognize RTA fellows for their valuable contributions to instruction and teaching excellence, and to provide continued financial commitment during economically challenging times as the RTA expands its membership and initiatives.

Finances and Activities

For information on the support and expenditures in the past year, see the attached table. For all programs, this has been an interesting and challenging year. As many meetings were moved to virtual, the RTA has continued to provide professional development and delivered several desired outcomes through online platforms. As we grow (we have added another program to bring our

schools to a total of 7 now) significant challenges remain. Growth and future efforts will require greater funding. We are looking to provide grants for collaboration and grow with further online resources, and we look forward to continued support. Note: For more detailed information on the support and expenditures during 2020-2021, see the attached appendices.

2020 Highlights

- Winter Meeting in Phoenix, AZ (February 2020)
- Publications of four manuscripts in the Journal of Veterinary Medical Education (JVME)
- University of Arizona became the 7th member of the WRCVM Consortium RTA.
- 14 New Fellows were accepted into the RTA
- RTA summer coffee hour - a series of sessions on topics relating to hybrid and online/remote instructions
- RTA provided external review and letters of recommendations for 5 teaching dossiers.
- Launch of new (to us) platform to facilitate communication and collaboration.

