

Executive Summary

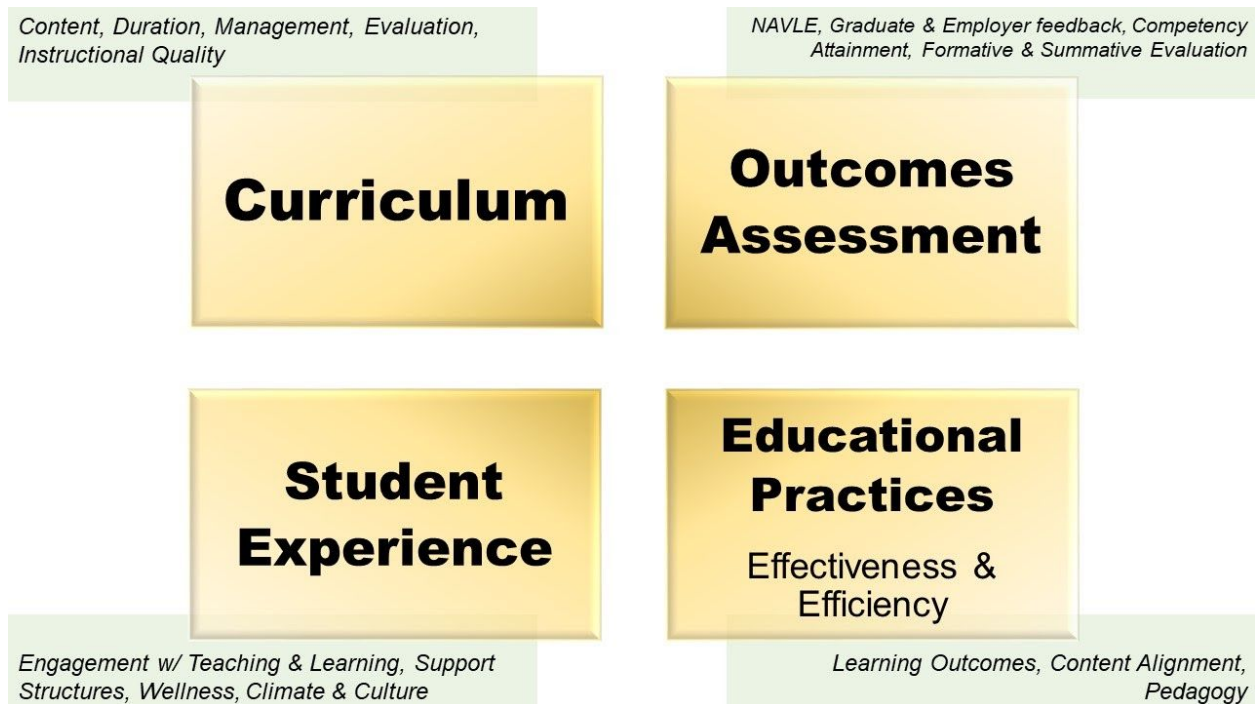
Curricular Review Mission & Vision:

The purpose of this curricular review is to evaluate and determine the strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for growth within our curriculum. The review fulfills our obligation to examine our curriculum every seven years under AVMA accreditation guidelines, and furthermore considers what aspects of the current framework do and do not align with goals set by the Curriculum Strategic Planning Committee in the spring of 2019.

Process

To achieve this task, we gathered eight members of the CVM faculty and staff, plus one CVM Alumnus who is a practicing DVM. This “Core” team met throughout the Fall 2019 semester with a mix of faculty and staff representatives from every academic department, Educational Support Services, Student Services, and Student Affairs.

The curriculum was divided into four dimensions for consideration:



Particular attention was paid to the structure, organization, and policies defining each area of the curriculum and how students and educators interacted with and within the existing framework.

Conclusions were drawn from a wide range of quantitative and qualitative data sources. We used national benchmarks and internal objectives to determine if we are effectively and

efficiently achieving the goals set by the AVMA and the Curriculum Strategic Planning Committee.

Findings

Curriculum (AVMA CoE Standard 9)

Strengths

- ❖ Instructional time is devoted to every competency area identified by Standard 9.
- ❖ Learning Outcomes maps allow for rapid searching and sorting of curricular content by ESS and Curriculum Review Committees.

Weaknesses

- Our content organization between and within courses and years does not effectively scaffold the development of learners' competence from beginner to proficient in accordance with a backwards design.
- Skills and knowledge content areas are not sufficiently integrated in a manner that would promote their co-development across the years.
- The use of selectives to “fill the gaps” of minority focus area basics is indicative of the need for a broader core curriculum that prepares all focus areas for day one competency. To produce competent practitioners that can apply their skills in a wide variety of contexts, we must ensure the core learning experience is sufficiently diverse, and not silo key content in limited-access selectives and electives.

Outcomes assessment (AVMA CoE Standard 11)

Strengths

- ❖ Our graduates have the basic scientific knowledge, values, and most skills required of an entry-level veterinarian.
- ❖ All nine COE competencies are taught and assessed summatively. Formative assessment use is increasing across most courses.

Weaknesses

- We lack a clearly structured and organized system of competence progression assessment that deliberately coordinates demonstration and observation opportunities with instruction and skills practice in a timely manner.

Student Experience

Strengths

- ❖ Selectives, electives, clubs, externships, and other opportunities provide learning and engagement experiences outside the standard “core” curriculum.
- ❖ Student feedback is used heavily for evaluating course quality and influencing the direction of development.
- ❖ Student evaluations paint a generally positive picture of the college and learning experience. Satisfaction with career and specialization choices is high.

Weaknesses

- The number of students seeking counseling for stress and anxiety issues related to academics and quality of life is increasing.
- There is too much variance in the quality of communication from advisors.
- Messaging around academic priorities is muddled. The design of our curriculum emphasizes grades over growth and mastery. The implicit message of this is antithetical to our explicit mission to develop growth and mastery minded students.
- Student trends towards solo study and avoidance of lectures presents a source of potential disconnection between students and faculty.
- The clinical environment, though generally positive, has well-being issues that could be avoided with clearly communicated expectations, and greater consistency of interaction quality between students and services.

Effectiveness and Efficiency of Educational Practices

Strengths

- ❖ Course Coordinators, ESS, FCCCE, and Department Heads collaborate to have session-level learning outcomes written for most courses.
- ❖ Clinical Problem Solving, labs, and other courses engage students in interactive learning activities that stress higher order thinking.
- ❖ Various organizations coordinate to provide a suite of educational skills development opportunities.

Weaknesses

- Understanding of what constitutes best pedagogical practices and strategies remains mixed, at best, across the faculty and staff.

- Learning outcomes need continued refinement towards integration of content within and between both years and courses.
- There is no system or map for ascertaining course prerequisites and establishing that content delivery is appropriately timed.
- Skills and knowledge development are not mapped together, making it quite difficult to integrate the two efficiently and effectively.
- Engagement with professional development varies greatly by instructor, leading to highly differing conceptions of the curriculum, pedagogy, and best practices.
- Assessment of teaching quality rests on student evaluations and rare peer observations tied to promotion.
- Perception of reward associated with educational practice improvement is unclear.
- We need to reframe the mission and collaborative approach of team-taught courses towards providing a more consistent and professional learning experience.