VECCS General Membership Meeting

Wed. Aug 12, 2026, virtual, 2:00-3:00PM CST

- Meeting was called to order at 3:01pm EST by Steve Epstein, president
- Emails with links to last year's minutes and reports from all committees have been sent to the membership.
- Steve asked for any comments on or corrections needed for minutes from last year's general membership meeting. None were made.
- Trish Farry made motion to approve the 2025 general membership meeting minutes.
    - Armi Pigot seconded the motion.
    - All present voted to approve the minutes, none voted against.
- The motion passed; the 2025 general membership meeting minutes were approved.

CEO Report – Chris Gray

Chris started thanking the staff working in the office that make all that VECCS accomplishes possible.

Over 10,000 members now. There are 18 staff members supporting VECCS.

Both Spring meetings (Kauai and Stowe) were very successful.

Over 1900 members have taken advantage new membership benefit of Plumbs subscription.

IVECCS 2026 in Savannah is tracking ahead of budget, with over 4,000 coming in person and 500 virtually. Attendees are from 29 countries. IVECCS will be taking over the whole convention center in Savannah.

Finance Report – Alyce D'Amato

Nonprofit Revenue Utilization

All revenue is utilized in service of VECCS mission: "Inspiring excellence in emergency and critical care for animals by cultivating an inclusive community and empowering one another to thrive." The mission statement is read at the beginning of every Board meeting.

Revenue that exceeds operational expenses is used for: Programs, Benefits & Services, Charitable Giving through VECCS Gives.

Ongoing Financial Strategies

Last year talked about finding benchmarks by comparing to comparable groups in the industry but VECCS is unique and difficult to find other organizations to compare to.

- Strong focus on budget driven decisions
- Working towards financial stability without reliance on investment income
- Ongoing analysis of programs & member benefits – Board reviewed all the current programs at in-person meeting in March 2026
    - What is the utilization/value to members?
    - Is it cost neutral or does it generate revenue?
    - Are we attributing appropriate resources?
    - Will it continue to serve members into the future? Should we add new programs or sunset some programs?
    - Is it mission relevant?

Jan-June 2026 budget:

1.5 million in revenue

Budget is just over 1.6 million – very close to what was budgeted

1.9 million actual expenses, budgeted for 2.2 million so it is in our favor. Team has done tremendous job of ensuring financial stability of VECCS!

Looking at 2025 budget (full year)

Total revenue: 8.4 million

Total expenses: 8.8 million

Expenses exceeded revenue by $480,000 so we are working towards not having to rely on investment income. Healthy non-profit would have net revenue of 1-3% without including investment revenue.

Major source of income is IVECCS. Profit on the conference varies quite a bit from year to year depending on the location, attendance, etc.

Any questions? Please email the accounting team at accounting@veccs.org

JEI – FVECC Report – Chris Gray for Laura Riordian

Elise Boller and Nicolette Zardy have stepped down from their positions for personal reasons, JEI continuing to be run by Laura Riordian

FVECC is doing quite well. The advanced and intermediate certificates have been put on pause while both VECCS and ACVECC re-evaluate and VECCS has strategic planning in Jan 2027.

Q1-Q2 initiatives

- Improvement of process to solicit learner feedback and testimonials
- Bulk order agreements
- Global pricing

Q3-Q4 initiatives

- European continuing education offerings (VetCEE)
- Outreach to veterinary schools
- Expanding international reach

Strategic Roadmap

JEI is currently executing several key initiatives to evolve the program and meet global learner needs. Current initiatives include:

- establishing bulk order agreements for organizations with ongoing enrollment needs
- implementing global pricing structures to ensure offerings are equitable
- expanding reach through European continuing education (VetCEE) offerings
- targeted outreach to veterinary schools
- broader international expansion through content localization and partnerships

DEI Committee – Avery Alston

Monthly meetings

Added a few new members and had some resignations

Major achievements:

Mission and vision update – centered around inclusion and excellent

Working group streamlining – better focus, now only have 3 instead of 6 working groups

- IVECCS
- Creative content and social media
- Internal and external education

Digital transformation – onto Board Effects to keep members better updated and informed

Also had liaison change - now Nat Aguigui (many thanks to Nat for all her help!)

Education Committee Report – Julie Dechant

Had some member turnover. Elke Rudloff left the committee, Kelsey Rainha joined.

KEY MATTERS DISCUSSED

Refinement of roles, procedures and processes of Committee

- Evolution of speaker coordinator position
- Defined committee roles and responsibilities

Development of new VECCS educational offerings

- Podcast to highlight JVECC authors/articles in production
- Considering option for industry-sponsored webinars (separate from IVECCS)?

ACHIEVEMENTS

Non-IVECCS Educational Programs

- VECCS VIN webinars – transitioned to bimonthly starting in July; upload to VECCS Education Portal and maintain RACE approval
- Selected speakers for Monthly Mingles (particularly case discussions)
- Provided input on VECCS sponsorship at 2026 EVECC Congress and topic/speaker ideas for VECCS/EVECCS 2026 London Vet Show
- Speakers
    - 2026 ACVIM: Beth Davidow and Jennifer Waldrop (in-person); Claire Sharp (on demand)
    - 2026 VMX: Jacob Wolf and Rachel Williams (in-person); Jacob Wolf and Krista Keller (virtual)
    - 2027 VMX: Kristen Zersen and Kendon Kuo (in-person); Alexandra Pfaff and Kirsten Zersen (virtual)
- VECCS Learning + Lab
    - December 2025: Neurology/Ophthalmology Struggle (Heidi Barner Heller, Robert Swinger)
    - October 2026: RECOVER certification
    - December 2026: Inaugural VetCOT ATLS Provider certification course
- Spring Symposia (two offered in 2026 and 2027)
    - 2026: Kauai, HI and Stowe, VT

- 2027: Costa Rica (March 18-21, 2027) and Napa, CA (April 1-4, 2027)
    - Costa Rica speakers: Chrissie Rutter, Claire Sharp, Tina Wismer
    - Napa speakers: Marisa Ames, Ben Brainard, Steve Epstein, Armi Pigott

Seeking ideas for new educational offerings or volunteers to provide non-IVECCS educational programs.

- Desire to provide offerings that appeal to the breadth of VECCS membership

Looking forward to new committee members joining in 2026-2027!

Thank you to Elizabeth Rozanski and Julie Dechant (terming off the committee). Congratulations to Elisa Mazzaferro (incoming Chair) and Jake Wolf (non-IVECCS Speaker Coordinator)!

Facilities Certification Committee – Chris Gray for Amanda Hilliard

The Board decided to sunset the current facility certification process due to high costs and low uptake, notified committee about 6 weeks ago.

Limited number of facilities that obtained certification (approx. 50-60).

Facilities can submit up to the beginning of Dec to obtain a 2 year certification that will end in 2028.

When VECCS has strategic planning in Jan 2027, we will re-evaluate what this program could look like in the future.

Grants and Scholarships Committee Report – Ridglea Callahan for Tara Barron

The committee completed the review and voting process for all current IVECCS grants and scholarships, including:

- Steve Haskins Memorial Scholarship
- Jen Devey Emergency Procedures Scholarship
- NAVEMS Certification Course Scholarship
- MedVet IVECCS Student Travel Scholarship

Committee voting for the VTNE Scholarship is scheduled to open on August 17, 2026.

Also continue to look at VECCS Educational Speaker grants

For SVECCS

- Change agent scholarship (fall and spring)
- Education grant (fall and spring)

Scholarship & Grant Development

The committee is actively discussing and developing proposals for new scholarship and grant opportunities designed to expand access to emergency and critical care education, training, and hands-on professional development.

Current proposals under development include:

- VECCS Emergency & Critical Care Clinical Immersion Scholarship
    - A proposed scholarship providing recipients with an immersive clinical experience in veterinary emergency and critical care, with the goal of increasing exposure to the specialty and supporting professional development.
- IVECCS RECOVER Scholarship
    - A proposed scholarship to increase access to RECOVER education and certification opportunities associated with IVECCS, supporting continued advancement of CPR knowledge and preparedness within the veterinary community.
- IVECCS Emergency Procedures Lab Technician Grant
    - A proposed grant specifically designed to provide financial support for veterinary technicians to attend the Emergency Procedures Lab at IVECCS, expanding access to hands-on training and advanced emergency procedural skills.

IVECCS Program Group Report – Steve Epstein for Adesola Odunayo and Melissa Evans

1. Reviewed feedback from IVECCS 2025 to identify opportunities for program improvement. Evaluated educational tracks, workshop and laboratory offerings, multilingual programming, and conference logistics.
2. Discussed strategies to enhance veterinarian case reports through mentorship and improve educational programming.
3. Reviewed venue logistics for 2025, scheduling to better facilitate use of large rooms for popular lectures, keynote speaker selection, and committee succession planning.

4. For IVECCS 2026 and future years, initiated strategic planning for the next conference cycle, including early development of the scientific program
5. Discussed whether future meetings should continue using an annual conference theme or instead emphasize flexibility to encourage a broader range of high-quality submissions. Committee consensus favored maintaining a diverse program centered on emerging and clinically relevant topics rather than restricting submissions to a single theme
6. Discussed opportunities to better recognize the diversity of conference attendees and professional backgrounds while maintaining an inclusive educational program.
7. Reinforced expectations for invited speakers regarding communication, deadlines, and timely submission of educational materials.

ACHIEVEMENTS

1. The 2025 meeting was very successful and the feedback received from attendees about the scientific program was excellent. Identified opportunities for program mentorship in the veterinarian case reports.
2. The 2026 scientific program is set and registration for the conference is very strong
    a. Opportunities for ER doctors, technicians, and residents in critical care
    b. Also eliminated the last ½ day and will evaluate how things go
3. Kate Hopper, the Veterinary Multidisciplinary Board Review Coordinator, is stepping down and a call has gone out to have her position filled. Program group is reviewing the applications.
4. Alex Lynch has joined the program group
5. Call for submissions for 2027 has already gone out – will stay open until the end of Sept. Looking for new speakers as often as possible. Also continue the Fundamentals from the Trenches program.
6. Sept 9-13, 2027, at Gaylord in Grapevine TX

CURRENT FOCUS

1. The main focus at this time is addressing any changes/issues that come up in preparation for the 2026 meeting while starting to plan the 2027 meeting.

Practice Leadership Report – Susie DeCook

Leadership Connections: fully booked for 2026, working on 2027.

Average about 24 participants/session

The committee hosted virtual round table discussions about common leadership topics. The sessions were moderated by ECC professionals, as well as a social worker and veterinary surgeon.

VECCS Leadership Academy:

After the committee was tasked with building a budget for an updated Power of Ten Leadership Program in 2025, the board requested a plan to expand the program to more than 10 attendees to allow for a greater community impact. The committee completed the proposal for the new VECCS Leadership Academy in July 2026. The budget for the new program is currently being completed.

Key Initiatives & Updates

Future of PLC – Strategic planning

- Working on VECCS leadership community platform (listserv-type) for better connectivity
- Exploring a quarterly virtual leadership forum to discuss real-world challenged and foster peer coaching
- Considering partnerships with international societies (e.g. EVECCS) for shared best practices
- Discussing potential development of a leadership-focused certificate or diploma through VECCS

Looking ahead – 2026-2027 priorities

- Finalize 2027 Leadership Connection schedule
- Finalize VECCS Leadership Academy, securing sustainable funding and refining curriculum
- Launch a leadership community platform to enhance member networking and knowledge sharing
- Review and refine Practice Leader of the year Award criteria for 2027
- Continue recruitment and onboarding of new PLC members to ensure continuity and diversity

Several members nearing term limits, call for applicants – 14 interested applicants, currently reviewing

VECCS Gives – Alyce D'Amato for Deanne Pawlisch

Disaster giving – budget is $100k/year, currently have donated $50k – Venezuelan earthquake $10k, Spain wildfires $15k, Texas flooding $15k, and Canadian wildfires $10k

If any money is left at the end of the year, they will re-evaluate programs and award the balance.

$25k spectrum of care grant "Effect of pre-op imaging on surgical findings and cost of care in spontaneous hemoabdomen in dogs – awarded to Alexia Berg at Tufts

Project for Animal Welfare event

- Sunday 9/13 in Savannah, partnered with Renegade Paws Rescue to provide pet health care to those that cannot afford it.
- Raffle fundraising covers cost of event and any extra money will be donated to Renegade Paws Rescue to support the work that they do.
- Please buy raffle tickets!

JVECC Report – Chris Gray for Jamie Burkitt, Editor in Chief

Submissions trend – slightly less than in prior year but overall trend still good

Decisions through end of 2025 were delayed due to new platform initiated by Wiley creating a backlog of manuscripts.

KEY MATTERS DISCUSSED

- Assistant Editors rotated off – with many, many thanks for years of service:
    - Sophie Adamantos
    - Steve Epstein
    - Jinni Sinnott-Stutzman
- Old Business:
    - Challenges in finding qualified reviewers & reviewer burnout – industry wide problem
    - Improved backlog – currently ~8-9 months acceptance to proofs.
    - Transition to new peer review platform in winter 2025. This negatively impacted workflow and the peer review process, due to challenges in internal and external communications, lack of workflow visibility among team members, inability to action manuscripts across the team (e.g., to cover leaves).
- New Business:
    - Considering publisher options – VECCS-JVECC team, hopefully transition to new publisher by 2028

CURRENT FOCUS

1. Continue working through backlog of accepted articles
    a. Ideal acceptance-to-pub interval ~6 months
    b. 4-6 more issues at current pace to achieve this
2. Determine ideal publication structure / vendor

New Business

None brought forward by any members

- Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Alyce D'Amato
- Seconded by Anthony Coronado
- All voted in favor to adjourn
- Meeting adjourned at 3:54PM EST

Respectfully submitted by Lori Waddell, Secretary of VECCS