



MEMORANDUM

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| DATE | April 12, 2021 |
| TO | Veterinary Medical Board (Board) |
| FROM | Jessica Sieferman, Executive Officer |
| SUBJECT | Agenda Item 11. Hearing on Placement of San Joaquin Valley College RVT Program on Board Probation |

Background

During the January 2021 Board meeting, the Board discussed examination statistics for the California State Board Examination (CSBE), North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE), and Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE). Board staff compiled registered veterinary technician (RVT) candidate pass rates for the VTNE for fiscal years 2018-19 through 2020-21.

The Board staff explained to the Board that, pursuant to California Code of Regulations (CCR), title 16, section [2065.8](#), subsection (a)(2), the Board may place an RVT school or degree program on probation for a period of time not to exceed two years if, for a period of two years, the approved school’s or degree program’s yearly average pass rate for first time candidates falls below 10 percentage points of the state average pass rate for first time candidates who have taken the examination during the same time period.

Board staff identified one RVT program, San Joaquin Valley College (SJVC), whose Board approval may be placed on probation. SJVC’s first-time candidate pass rates for 2018-19 and 2019-20 fell below 10 percentage points of the state average pass.

As a result, the Board voted to place SJVC on probation pursuant to CCR, section [2065.8](#), subsection (a)(2). As part of the due process provisions under CCR, title 16, section [2065.8.2](#), the Board is required to provide notice of probation and an opportunity to be heard. The Board agreed to provide that opportunity to be heard during the April 2021 Board meeting.

Probation Requirements

Pursuant to CCR, title 16, section [2065.8](#), subsection (b), during the period of probation, SJVC would be subject to special monitoring. The conditions for probation may include the submission of periodic reports as prescribed by the Board and special visits by

authorized representatives of the Board to determine progress toward total compliance. (*Id.*) The Board also has authority to extend the probationary period for good cause. (CCR, tit. 16, § [2065.8](#), subs. (c).) In addition to the special monitoring, SJVC would be required to notify in writing all current and prospective students and employees of the probationary status. (CCR, tit. 16, § [2065.8](#), subs. (d).)

If, at the end of a probationary period, SJVC has not eliminated the cause or causes for its probation to the satisfaction of the board, the Board may withdraw its approval of the SJVC program. (CCR, tit. 16, § [2065.8.1](#), subs. (c).)

Update

The Board sent the attached Notice of Veterinary Technician Program Probation and Opportunity to be Heard (notice) to SJVC on March 9, 2021. In the notice, SJVC was notified of the probation hearing and the opportunity to present any information they deemed relevant to the program, including, but not limited to, potential causes of the low pass rates and their plan of action to increase average pass rates to above 10 percentage points of the state average pass rate for first time candidates.

On March 18, 2021, SJVC provided the attached response, which includes everything SJVC has improved since a 2018 site visit performed by the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Representatives from SJVC will participate in the April 23, 2021 Board hearing and answer any questions the Board members may have.

Bureau of Private Post-Secondary Education (BPPE) Approval

As with any private post-secondary education program operating in California, SJVC must be approved by BPPE¹. BPPE's mission is to protect students and consumers through the oversight of California's private postsecondary educational institutions by conducting qualitative reviews of educational programs and operating standards, proactively combating unlicensed activity, impartially resolving student and consumer complaints, and conducting outreach.

In general, BPPE is responsible for the following:

- protecting consumers and students against fraud, misrepresentation, or other business practices at private postsecondary institutions that may lead to the loss of students' tuition and related educational funds;
- establishing and enforcement minimum standards for ethical business practices and the health and safety and fiscal integrity of postsecondary education institutions; and,
- establishing and enforcing minimum standards for instructional quality and institutional stability for all students in all types of private postsecondary educational and vocational institutions.

¹ Education Code section 94874 provides specific exemptions from the approval process. SJVC, however, does not meet any of the listed exemptions.

BPPE initially approved SJVC by means of accreditation; that accreditation coincides with the accreditation of SJVC by the [Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges](#) (ACCJC) through June 30, 2026. ACCJC completed a regular review of SJVC in June 2019, which included an onsite visit, to determine whether SJVC continues to meet ACCJC's Eligibility Requirements, Commission Policies, and Accreditation Standards. In its [June 28, 2019 letter](#), the ACCJC reaffirmed accreditation for seven years.

BPPE also performs a minimum of two onsite inspections every five years – one announced and one unannounced. BPPE recently performed an unannounced inspection on February 24, 2021 and found no irregularities or causes for concern.

In addition to participating in two onsite inspections, approved institutions must submit annual reports, including school performance fact sheets, to BPPE. SJVC's annual report summaries are available here:

- [2017 Annual Report Summary](#)
- [2018 Annual Report Summary](#)

The 2019 Annual Report Summary has been submitted and is currently under review by BPPE staff.

AVMA Accreditation

In addition to WASC accreditation and being BPPE approved, SJVC also is accredited through AVMA. The AVMA Committee on Veterinary Technician Education and Activities (CVTEA) accredits veterinary technology programs. All AVMA CVTEA-accredited programs in veterinary technology must meet the Standards of Accreditation of the CVTEA to ensure the quality of the educational experience and the assessment of student knowledge and skills. The AVMA CVTEA also performs regular site visits and evaluates annual, biennial, interim, and terminal reports submitted by accredited programs.

After receiving the response from SJVC, Board staff reached out to AVMA for additional information and confirmation of claims made by SJVC. Staff will provide an update during the April Board meeting.

Action Requested

After reviewing the information provided and discussing concerns with the SJVC representatives, please consider whether SJVC should remain on probation.

Attachments:

1. Notice of Veterinary Technician Program Probation and Opportunity to be Heard, Dated March 9, 2021
2. SJVC Response, Dated March 18, 2021



BUSINESS, CONSUMER SERVICES AND HOUSING AGENCY • GAVIN NEWSOM, GOVERNOR
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS • VETERINARY MEDICAL BOARD
1747 North Market Blvd., Suite 230, Sacramento, CA 95834-2987
P (916) 515-5520 | Toll-Free (866) 229-6849 | www.vmb.ca.gov



Via Electronic and Certified Mail

March 9, 2021

San Joaquin Valley College
Attention: Michele Perez
295 East Sierra Ave
Fresno, CA 93710

NOTICE OF VETERINARY TECHNICIAN PROGRAM PROBATION AND OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD

Dear San Joaquin Valley College Administrators:

Pursuant California Code of Regulations (CCR), title 16, sections [2065.5](#) and [2065.6](#), a school or degree program must apply for and receive approval of the Veterinary Medical Board (Board) to offer a veterinary technician curriculum in this state. The minimum requirements for a school or degree program seeking approval from the Board are detailed in CCR, title 16, section [2065](#).

In addition, the Board may place a school or degree program on probation for a period of time not to exceed two years if “for a period of two years the approved school’s or degree program’s yearly average pass rate for first time candidates who have taken the registration examination falls below 10 percentage points of the state average pass rate for first time candidates who have taken the registered veterinary technician examination during the same time period.” (CCR, tit. 16, § [2065.8](#), subsection (a)(2).) The registration examination required for veterinary technician registration with the Board is the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE).

According to the pass rates obtained by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB), which administers the VTNE, students of San Joaquin Valley College, for two consecutive years in 2018 and 2019, had pass rates on the VTNE below 10% of the California average pass rate for first time test takers. As a result, the veterinary technician program offered by San Joaquin Valley College may be placed on probation.

Please take notice that, on January 29, 2021, the Board approved a motion to place your program on probation.

Please take further notice that, pursuant to CCR, title 16, section [2065.8.2](#), you have an opportunity to be heard during the Board’s next public Board meeting on April 23, 2021, regarding your program’s pending probationary status.

NOTE: Pursuant to Governor Gavin Newsom’s Executive Order N-29-20, issued on March 17, 2020, this hearing will be held by videoconference with no physical public locations. Instructions on how to participate are attached and can also be found on our website.

San Joaquin Valley College
March 9, 2021
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Program Probation Hearing Date: Friday, April 23, 2021
Time: 9:00 AM (UTC-08:00) Pacific Time (US & Canada)

Event address: <https://dca-meetings.webex.com/dca-meetings/onstage/g.php?MTID=e5ed16d4415955debd5f24aab36e4eb76>

Event number: 187 628 0518
Event password: VMB42321

The hearing will be conducted before the Board. During the hearing, you may present any information you deem relevant to your program, including, but not limited to, potential causes of the low pass rates and your plan of action to increase average pass rates to above 10 percentage points of the state average pass rate for first time candidates.

To provide ample opportunity for the Board to review your information, please provide a written response no later than March 19, 2021. Your response will then be included in the Board's meeting materials.

Please visit the Board's website at www.vmb.ca.gov to get a copy of the agenda or feel free to contact me at Timothy.Rodda@dca.ca.gov or (916) 318-6369.

Sincerely,



Timothy Rodda
Administration/Licensing Manager
Veterinary Medical Board

March 18, 2021

Department of Consumer Affairs
Veterinary Medical Board
1747 North Market Blvd., Suite 230
Sacramento, CA 95834-2987

Att'n: Timothy Rodda, Administration/Licensing Manager

Dear Mr. Rodda:

We would like to acknowledge receipt of your letter dated March 9, 2021, entitled, NOTICE OF VETERINARY TECHNICIAN PROGRAM PROBATION AND OPPORTUNITY TO BE HEARD. We would also like to confirm that our program and college will now plan to have representation at the Board's next public meeting on April 23, 2021.

In addition, we will now provide an initial summative response in order to meet your March 19, 2021 written response deadline. Our representatives will be prepared to address any questions and they will work to provide additional detail and information requested, both during and after the meeting, as desired by the Board.

After the most recent American Veterinary Medical Association / Committee on Veterinary Technician Education (AVMA/CVTEA) accreditation site visit in 2018, our San Joaquin Valley College (SJVC) Fresno Campus Veterinary Technology program was asked to review and make modifications to its curriculum in order to better produce the knowledge base of an entry level Veterinary Technician, as evidenced by VTNE results, employer surveys and other student outcome assessments.

The program staff then went to work and – after appropriate AVMA/CVTEA reviews and approvals, launched its completely rewritten and updated course content in the 36-week Veterinary Assistant program – its largest program offering at the time, foundational on which to further build. Additionally, the program launched its newly created Veterinary Assistant – Veterinary Technology (VA-VT) Bridge degree program, one that fully aligns to the CVTEA Veterinary Technology Student Essential and Recommended Skills List. The program staff wrote the new curriculum as a department in a joint effort with subject matter experts along with a Central Administrative Office (CAO) Curriculum Specialist, working alongside the Academic Affairs team. All aspects of the curriculum were addressed, including program and course learning outcomes, outline and syllabi content (depth and breadth), mastery assessment questions for the various quizzes and exams, more effective course sequencing, and the like. The overall intent of the revision was to increase the rigor of the curriculum while most fully aligning with the expectations of AVMA/CVTEA and VTNE competency evaluations. Backwards design processes were used in order to increase critical thinking throughout the program.

Finally, last year, the program also received AVMA/CVTEA approval to offer a completely new Veterinary Technology full associate degree program, one which fully benefited from all of the above referenced work. This new full degree program was officially launched with the June 2020 cohort start. It is 76-weeks and 77-units long so there currently are no graduates yet who have tested on

the VTNE exam. The first cohort of this new full degree program is anticipated to complete by the end of 2021.

It's important to note that during this time of program revision, ongoing progress reports and action plans were submitted to the AVMA/CVTEA. Plus, there was ongoing dialogue and checking for understanding and appropriateness, to ensure that the program and CAO staff were working in the right direction. All of these reports and plans were received and ultimately approved, and they continued to demonstrate the substantial work and progress that the program staff were making, with the intent to ultimately achieve more successful VTNE outcomes.

In addition, it's also important to note that the CAO Curriculum Specialist did a scan of programs provided by other schools approved by the AVMA/CVTEA, analyzing as much information as possible about their curricular offerings and program outcomes. The goal was to triangulate our content to best ensure alignment with appropriate approaches while also seeking to best meet AVMA/CVTEA standards and the competencies required to be successful on the VTNE. So, internal program content experts were fully utilized along with insights from comparisons with other successful outside approved programs, all while coordinating with the AVMA/CVTEA.

Preliminary VTNE exam results have now started to come in for the VA-VT Bridge program, as these students have only recently begun to complete their program – unfortunately, many with delays given COVID-19 related interruptions with program externship requirements during the past year. The most recent VTNE results show an initial 50% first-time pass rate – which more closely meets the anticipated AVMA/CVTEA minimum 3-year average threshold for accredited programs. However, this was only an initial and a very small sample after the above referenced curriculum revisions. The program will continue to monitor the success of its Bridge program graduates as well as the progress of the students in the full degree program. The program's long-term goal, of course, is to exceed the minimum AVMA/CVTEA threshold and to maintain a strong first-time pass rate average, in order to best ensure the professional success of our program graduates as they work in the communities we serve.

In addition to revisions to the program's curriculum, and in an effort to be proactive before the referenced AVMA/CVTEA site visit, in late 2017, the program created an Action Plan to better address the needs of its existing degree program graduates as well as those pending degree program graduates. The *Vet Tech VTNE Action Plan* was created and it included focus areas in Graduate Test Preparation, Review Course, Staffing, and Integrated Test Prep, as shown in the following chart:

Vet Tech VTNE Action Plan
November 2017

| Focus Areas | Tasks | Owner | Impact |
|----------------|---|---------------|-----------|
| Grad Test Prep | Graduate identification (~61 2016 grads, 70 2017 grads) | Cindy/Michele | 131 grads |
| | Study Sessions (now through March 15 th) | Cindy/Xenia | |
| | Application oversight | Cindy | |

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| Review Course | Staffing- Hire 2+ additional p/t faculty Determine best faculty for review course | Cindy/Lisa | 68 pending 2018 grads |
| | Course Content- Evaluate exam prep (timed, length, utilization of text prep software) | Michele | |
| | Evaluate Review Course – Moved from 4 day/week to 1 day with PIP | Cindy/Michele/Annette | |
| | Test Prep- Determine best start date given 90-day license. Currently begins at review course to allow for continued prep after grad up to test | Michele | |
| Staffing | Reduce PD teaching load (currently Bio 32) | Cindy/Lisa | |
| | New hire training (Ashley + TBD) | Lisa | |
| Integrated Test Prep | Review sample questions | All faculty | 18 grads* for 6/7/18 grad July/Nov exam <i>Each cohort increased impact</i> |
| | Assign quiz/exam revisions by course 1/22: 101, 104, 340*, 207* 1/20: 105 2/26: 330, 300, 403, 406 3/6: 205 4/10: 208 5/15: 308 | Cindy/Michele | |
| | Evaluate revisions Jan-May | Michele | |
| | | | |

The following shows the SJVC Fresno graduates' first-time performance on the VTNE exam from 2017 through the present:

VTNE First-Time Pass Rates

| <u>2017</u> | <u>2018</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>2020</u> | <u>2021</u> |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 28% (13/46) | 31% (10/32) | 37% (15/41) | 20% (3/15) | 50% (1/2) |

Given the Action Plan focuses noted above, the program did experience an increase in first-time pass rates, evidenced by the results of 2018 and 2019. By 2020, though, and before the program had graduates from the new VA-VT Bridge program or from the newly created full-degree program, there were very few graduated students remaining to test from the now former full degree program, as the few remaining students in that program were officially taught-out near the end of 2019. Thus and until the program has more VA-VT Bridge program graduate results, and until there are graduates from the newly implemented and completely revised full degree program, we will not know more comprehensively how current graduating students are performing.

Likewise, we recognize that it will take a significant number of successful first attempts to move and positively impact the program's 3-year average – key to how AVMA/CVTEA evaluates the program. Our ability to do this has been limited by the smaller number of students graduating from a degree program, given the focus on the Veterinary Assistant certificate program for a significant period of time. However, the program is confident that the combined efforts of the Action Plan focuses along with the newly implemented and revised curriculum and program tracks will have a continued positive impact on overall VTNE first-time pass rates.

Thank you for your ongoing partnership with our school and Veterinary Technology program. Please do not hesitate to let us know if there is anything additional that we can provided before the next Board meeting.

Respectfully yours,



Greg Osborn, MEd, MA
Corporate Director of Program Compliance

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Cc: Michele Perez, Veterinary Technology Program Director, SJVC Fresno Campus
Krysten Schweighart, Academic Dean, SJVC Fresno Campus
Dr. Sumer Avila, Provost, SJVC Central Administrative Office