

Dear Newest Members of Class of 2025,

Congratulations on your acceptance to the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine! Your hard work and dedication have led you to this amazing accomplishment. Take a deep breath and appreciate this moment. You did it!

I remember when I received my acceptance letter. At first, it doesn't feel real. Then your head starts to spin with excitement and you immediately start imagining the path to your future as a veterinarian. Our college provides the platform for you to start exploring that dream and making it a reality.

This year, however, things may feel a little different. The trials and tribulations of 2020 have left most of us stressed, tired, and uncertain of what the future will look like. Know that the entire college community and I are here for you. We understand what it has been like to study and work through difficult circumstances and uncharted territory. We haven't met you all yet, but we care deeply about your future and are working tirelessly to ensure you have the best experience and education that you can.

Our college is a place of endless opportunity. We boast some of the greatest innovators in research and clinical medicine, incredible educators invested in your journey, and an impassioned and hardworking student body that are paving the way for the future of veterinary medicine all under one roof. I urge you to immerse yourself in the incredible community that has been built here as soon as you can. Your time here is valuable and will go by quicker than you think.

One of the ways to take advantage of these opportunities is through participation in organizations and clubs through our SAVMA Chapter. SAVMA is the Student Chapter of the American Veterinary Medical Association. We are the student division of the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA). Our college's student leadership structure is referred to as an "Umbrella School", which means SAVMA oversees all organizations within the college, acting somewhat like a student government association. As SAVMA leadership, a few other students and I, attend three national meetings a year to discuss our chapter and advocate for Virginia-Maryland Students and our profession as a whole. You have entered a profession that thrives on supporting one another and building community. When I attend meetings with the SAVMA leaders from veterinary

schools across the country we work together to share ideas and strategies for bringing you the best veterinary school experience we can.

As you begin your studies you will grow more and more excited to take your knowledge outside the classroom. At Virginia-Maryland we have a wide variety of student clubs and organizations that will allow you to meet like-minded students, delve deeper into your interests, and apply your knowledge to hands-on experience. Our clubs provide students with opportunities such as participating in hands-on wet labs with live animals and cadavers, experiencing rounds with clinicians from the teaching hospital, attending lectures on innovative advances in veterinary medicine, participating in suture clinics, gaining access to professional advice and mentorship, and much more. There is a club for every interest and I encourage you to try things that you have never experienced before.

Our SAVMA Chapter also provides support to the student body where they need it most. We provide you with resources such as free yoga classes, wellness tips, opportunities to learn about debt management, international veterinary opportunities, wine tasting socials, trivia nights, and much more. We also work with clubs to co-sponsor college-wide events that bring the students, faculty, and staff together to have fun and raise money for worthy causes like the Compassionate Care Fund and the Stray Fund at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Our SAVMA Chapter cares deeply about each of your personal and professional goals, but as a whole we strive to ensure we support all facets of your life, not just your academic and professional selves.

I hope you all are excited to start the next chapter of your life in Blacksburg. Before orientation begins, however, make sure you take some time for yourself. Although many veterinarians will tell you that vet school was the best four years of your life, it is an incredible amount of work that just doesn't stop. Don't let school worry you just yet. Soak up your summer. You have the rest of your life to focus on your career and learn everything you want to know about veterinary medicine. Take this summer to spend time with your family and friends and explore the hobbies that you normally don't have time for. You will think fondly of these times when you are a fourth-year clinical student running solely on caffeine and adrenaline.

As your SAVMA President, I hope to do all I can to make your experience the best it can be. I urge you to take every opportunity you can throughout your four years here to enhance your learning and grow both as a person and a veterinary professional. I am here, first and foremost, to serve and support you. I promise to always make myself available to you for questions, concerns, support, and solid memes. There are many times that I have leaned on older students to who I can ask silly questions and vent about the hard parts of vet school. I aspire to be that person for each one of you and connect you with others that can do the same.

Cherish and hold on to that feeling you had when you received your vet school acceptance letter. In vet school, you will experience some of your highest highs and some of your lowest lows. You will meet some of your best friends and accomplish things that you never thought you were capable of. When you feel tired beyond belief and just about ready to give up think back on that feeling and why you are here. You were accepted into this program for a reason and you should be proud to be a member of this class.

Welcome to vet school Class of 2025! You did it.

Sincerely,  
Jillian Kazmierczak