

**Introduction**

Over the past couple of decades, there has been a significant increase in applications to veterinary schools in Canada. Currently, there are five veterinary colleges in Canada, that being; The Ontario Veterinary College, the Atlantic Veterinary College, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine, the Université de Montréal, and the University of Calgary. The University of Guelph Ontario Veterinary College is holding the title of the top veterinary school in Canada. Veterinary medicine programs are considered to be the most competitive program in Canada. Veterinary schools in Canada are region-based, this means that you can only apply to the school depending on your resident status. This is where the problem arises for many applicants. For the academic year 2019-2020, the Western College of Veterinary Medicine received a total of 396 applications with a seat quota of 78. The admissions average ranged from 80.3% to 95% in 60 credits of post-secondary science courses. British Columbian residents must compete for one of the 20 available seats available for BC students.

**Statement of Problem**

Since the Canadian Veterinary Schools are region-based, this can be problematic for residents of British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and the Territories because there are limited seats for the program resulting in an extremely low acceptance rate for these applicants. For example, BC residents can only apply to the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, whereas Alberta residents are eligible to apply to both the University of Calgary, because it is Albertan based, and the Western College of Veterinary Medicine in Saskatoon, thus increasing their odds of acceptance. Whereas to apply to the University of Guelph Ontario Veterinary College, you must be a resident of Ontario and to apply for the Atlantic Veterinary College it is required you are a resident from either Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, or Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Western College of Veterinary Medicine is the only school that accepts out of province residents. Each year there are 20 available seats for BC residents, 20 seats for Saskatchewan residents, 15 seats for Manitoba, and 1 seat for the Territories. The admission criteria are extremely competitive, each school has specific admission criteria, however, most criteria overlap in the requirements, such as participation of job shadowing in a veterinary field or animal-related environment, pre-requisites of undergraduate courses in biological science and mathematics, and a cumulative average of at least 75% of your undergraduate courses, sometimes even a minimum of 80%. Each of these factors constructs to an even greater competitive entrance process. Such competitiveness results in several repercussions for applicants such as applying and studying overseas leading to additional costs as an international student, competitive entry process which may result in burnout during the undergraduate years, increase in financial debt as a result of retaking courses to achieve a higher grade average, and even changing career paths.

**Proposed Solution**

A possible solution to increase acceptance rates for applicants residing in British Columbia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, or the Territories is to expand the admission criteria to allow seats for residents from all provinces. This proposal is intended for the University of Guelph, Dean of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Jeffrey Wichtel, as well as the veterinary committee involved in the panel interviews and criteria assessment of the potential candidates for the University of Guelph Doctor of Veterinary Medicine Program. The University of Guelph Doctor of Veterinary Medicine program is currently ranked the top veterinary school in Canada and it has 100 seats available for applicants with Ontario residency.

## **Scope**

To better understand the admission process and the competitiveness for veterinary school in Canada, I plan to research and answer:

- What are the entry requirements for the DVM program at the University of Guelph?
- What criteria are assessed to be invited for an interview?
- What is the rank percentage for academics versus non-academic criteria?
- What are the entry statistics for the DVM program at the University of Guelph?
- How much funding is required to increase the number of seats per entrance each year?
- A comparison between the top veterinary school in Canada and Australia.

## **Methods**

My primary sources will include interviews via email and telephone calls with the admissions office of the University of Guelph DVM program located in Canada. I will also review statistical reports presented by the veterinary schools.

Secondary sources will include, but not limited to scholarly articles about the application process for veterinary medicine in Canada, as well as peer review articles about the five different veterinary schools in Canada.

## **My Qualifications**

I have had an interest in pursuing veterinary medicine since I was a young girl. After graduating high school and attending post-secondary school I was eager to attend the Western College of Veterinary Medicine. At the time, this was my only choice as I am a BC resident, and I was not able to move to another province to gain residence status. In pursuing my Bachelor's degree, I received the opportunity to participate in a Go Global University Exchange to Australia. While in Australia, I visited the University of Queensland veterinary school as well as the University of Sydney Veterinary school. I participated in pre-vet clubs both in Sydney, Australia and in Kelowna. I made acquaintances with current vet students in Canada and around the world as well as I have been volunteering at a veterinary clinic for several months in BC and Brazil during the year of 2013 to 2014.

## **Conclusion**

As an active student looking to pursue a career in veterinary medicine, I strongly believe change is needed to allow more seats for residents residing in Canada to attend one of the five veterinary schools in the country. The scope of my research will allow me to develop a more feasible approach for Canadian citizens to have a higher success ratio for acceptance into veterinary school by increasing the number of seats available for each province. Upon your approval, I look forward to actively researching change for the Canadian colleges of veterinary medicine.