



# AAFP EXECUTIVE BOARD ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, & EXPECTATIONS

## AAFP's Mission

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) supports its members in improving the health and wellbeing of cats through high standards of practice, continuing education, and evidence-based medicine.

## AAFP's Vision

We are the trusted leaders in feline health and wellbeing for the veterinary community and cat caregivers.

## AAFP's Core Values

**Mission and Member-driven:** We work collaboratively and demonstrate a constant commitment to the best interests of our members.

**Science-based:** We lead with science, providing trusted and evidence-based information. We support veterinary teams in their education and awareness of feline health and welfare, increasing the standards of care for cats, and encourage the ongoing pursuit of knowledge.

**Professionalism:** We uphold high standards for the endeavors of the Association on behalf of our members and the community, acting with integrity, honesty, and respect in all of our individual pursuits and collective initiatives.

**Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access:** We commit to convene and nurture a diverse community of individuals, and respect the dimensions of diversity among us and the populations we serve. We further value the differences in ideas, perspectives, and people in our community in order to foster an environment of inclusion in pursuit of excellence in feline medicine and surgery.

**Accountability:** We practice prudent financial decision-making and accountability, as well as demonstrate commitment, passion, and leadership to our members.

**Respect:** We practice positive and effective communication, promote individual and organizational growth, work as a cohesive team, and support leadership decisions to be one voice for the Association.

## AAFP's Statement of Purpose

The American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) is a professional organization representing feline practitioners who are passionate about the care of cats. The AAFP is dedicated to advancing the field of feline medicine and surgery by setting the standards of feline care through the publication of practice guidelines, position statements, and by providing continuing education.

Through publications, education, and thriving relationships with other organizations, the AAFP engages the veterinary community and its members by facilitating the exchange of scientific data and ideas.

## Executive Board Structure

The Executive Board consists of eleven (11) persons: seven (7) Directors and the President, President-Elect, Immediate Past President, and Treasurer of the Association. The directors consist of seven (7) representatives from the general membership including at least six (6) that hold a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree, or legal equivalent thereof. A veterinary technician Board Member must be credentialed (CVT, RVT, LVT).

In addition, ex-officio members of the Board include the Chief Executive Officer, Board Intern, Technician Representative, and Student Representative.

## General Responsibilities of a Board Member

- A. The principal responsibility of a member of the Board is to act in the best interests of the Association and its members through directing the Association's operations and affairs.
- B. Board Members are the fiduciaries who lead the organization toward a sustainable future tasked with making strategic decisions and adopting sound, ethical, and legal governance policies, as well as making sure the Association has adequate resources to advance its mission and strategic plans.
- C. Summary of the specific duties of a Board member:

### *1. Duty of Care (or Duty to Understand):*

A member of the Executive Board has an obligation to be informed and become familiar with the Association and to understand the issues and challenges it faces. This includes gaining an understanding of the principal operational and financial objectives, strategies, and plans of the Association. Board Members should also be familiar with the results of operations and the financial condition of the Association. This requires that Board Members actively prepare for and participate in all meetings, including reading the reports and other communications sent prior to meetings. If a Board Member has a question, the member should contact the CEO or Board President. The objective is for the Board Member to become sufficiently familiar with the Association's activities to be able to exercise independent judgment that an ordinary prudent person would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances for the overall benefit of the Association and its members. The Board Member owes the duty to exercise reasonable care when they make a decision as a steward of the Association.

### *2. Duty of Loyalty (to Make Informed Decisions):*

After becoming informed and listening to the discussion, the Board Member has an obligation to vote in the best interests of the Association and its members, without regard to any personal interests. Board Members show undivided allegiance to the Association's welfare and when making decisions effecting the Association. A Board Member can never use information obtained as a result of their participation on the Board for personal gain and must act in the best interest of the Association. Once a Board decision has been made, all Board Members are expected to support the decision even if they did not personally agree with it.

### *3. Duty of Obedience (Remain Faithful to the Mission):*

Board Members must be familiar with and act in compliance with the organization's mission, bylaws, and policies of the Association, including the code of conduct, conflict of interest, antitrust, and ethical behavior, as well as legal and regulatory requirements.

4. *Duty to See the Decisions are Implemented:*

While most decisions by the Board are implemented by staff and therefore do not require hands-on involvement, Board Members nevertheless have a responsibility to provide sufficient oversight to ensure the decisions they have been made are implemented by staff and others.

D. The four primary Board responsibilities are:

1. *Set the AAFP's Direction*

This includes engaging in strategic thinking and planning, setting the AAFP's mission and vision for the future, establishing organizational values, representing member interests, and ensuring alignment of the operational plan with the strategic plan.

2. *Create Policies*

This includes ensuring proper governance, implementing internal policies to benefit members and advance the mission, and to ensuring polices are followed.

3. *Ensure Necessary Resources*

This includes ensuring adequate financial resources, protecting the assets and allocating resources, hiring capable executive leadership, and ensuring the presence of capable volunteer support and responsible Board.

4. *Provide Oversight*

This includes overseeing financial management, minimizing exposure to risk, measuring progress on the strategic plan, and monitoring programs and services.

Additionally, Board Members should champion the Association.

- E. Board Members should be prepared to devote the time and attention required of an effective Board Member. There are two in-person Board meetings annually, one coordinated prior to the annual conference and the other in the spring/early summer. There are 2-4 video-conference meetings scheduled annually, and occasionally the need arises to hold additional video-conference meetings. Board Members are expected to attend all Board Meetings and respond promptly to email messages.
- F. A Board Director term is two years, commencing on the day following the Annual Business Meeting in the fall through the day of the Annual Business Meeting two years later. A Board Director may serve up to three consecutive terms if reappointed.
- G. Board Members are required to sign a Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest Policy.

## General Expectations of a Board Member

The AAFP is dedicated to creating an atmosphere free of discrimination and harassment, sexual or otherwise. Further, Board Members, members, and staff are responsible for respecting the rights of their colleagues and/or AAFP personnel. The AAFP supports the Association of the American Veterinary Medical Colleges' Principles of Inclusion, whereas it states, *"We confront and reject all forms of prejudice and discrimination, including those based on race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, political beliefs, geographic, socioeconomic, and educational background or any other differences that have led to misunderstanding, hostility, and injustice."*

Board Members are expected to:

- Maintain confidentiality of AAFP business.
- Disclose conflict of interest(s).
- Represent the American Association of Feline Practitioners in a professional manner.
- Fully participate in the activities of the Board, including preparing for and attending regular Board meetings, leadership orientation and training, and strategic planning. Adhere to established agendas during Board meetings.
- Adhere to the Code of Veterinary Ethics as determined by national, state, or provincial organizations.
- Maintain communication electronically through email and other means of Association communication. Additionally, any reports or materials required for duty should be submitted in a timely manner.
- Understand the mission, bylaws, strategic plan, and policies of the Association.
- Be respectful of people and ideas.
- Act in the best interests of the Association and membership.
- Uphold the AAFP's Core Values.

## Key Attributes of Board Members

Board Members will:

- Have the ability to think strategically and analytically, and to effectively communicate thoughts and the reasons for them.
- Possess the skillset to use good judgement and make informed decisions.
- Possess the earned respect of other key stakeholder group members.
- Have the ability to work well with others as a member of a collaborative group with group decision-making authority and an understanding of the fiduciary duties of loyalty, care, and obedience.
- Demonstrate understanding of the differences between "oversight" and "supervision."
- Have the dedication to come prepared and participate in meetings and discussions.
- Have a demonstrated familiarity with the body of knowledge related to both the process for which the group is responsible, as well as the substantive content of the subject area within which decisions and choices will have to be made.

- Contribute ideas and solutions.
- Recognize and respect personal differences and styles.
- Be flexible and respect the collaborative relationship among Board Members and between the Board and the staff.
- Strive to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Treat Board Members, staff, and invited guests as equal partners in discussions, while recognizing the Board's ultimate authority to determine policy and strategic direction.
- Recognize their obligation to the members to spend the time they pay for us to assemble on issues of strategy, policy, and program; not personality attributes, personal styles, or individual values.
- Personally support, promote, and protect a leadership culture that celebrates the value of diversity in people and perspectives.
- Recognize that personal disputes that sometimes can arise between individuals have no place in the activity of the Board.
- Support the ultimate decisions of the collective Board even if you personally do not agree.

## Code of Conduct

As a Board Member, I will:

- Show respect for others by using positive body language and words.
- Avoid interruptions.
- Give speakers my full attention, avoiding side conversations or focus on phone or computers.
- Strive for clear and frequent communication.
- Listen and be open to others' opinions.
- Uphold and support group decisions.
- Take responsibility for speaking up and sharing my thoughts.
- Be succinct and to the point when speaking.
- Involve others in decision-making when appropriate.
- Do not create or accept gossip or negative comments about others.
- Keep personal issues personal.
- Show that team goals are the priority.
- Know and follow current procedures and ask if not sure of a process.
- Be sensitive to the impact of email.
- Don't substitute email for personal contact when needed.
- Acknowledge receipt of email by promptly notifying or replying to the sender (only).
- Show integrity by keeping commitments.
- Assume positive intentions by others.
- Share and distribute work.
- Utilize time effectively.
- Be realistic and do not over-promise.
- Notify others if unable to accomplish a goal.
- Ask for help when needed.

## Insurance

The AAFP has policies in place to protect the Association, its activities, and the people who serve including General Liability, Directors and Officers, Event Cancellation, and Cybersecurity Insurance.