



MULTICULTURAL VETERINARY
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

Silenced by the Study: How NAVTA's DEIB White Paper Harms the Communities It Claims to Champion

Executive Summary

April 21, 2026

Overview

In 2025, the National Association of Veterinary Technicians in America (NAVTA) published its first-ever [report on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging \(DEIB\) in the veterinary technician profession](#).¹ The Multicultural Veterinary Medical Association (MCMVA), an organization representing marginalized veterinary professionals, welcomed this effort. We read the report carefully, identified serious problems, and reached out to NAVTA not simply to offer constructive feedback, but to do what the report failed to do: amplify the voices of the few marginalized technicians who did respond to the survey and provide an honest picture of what this profession actually looks like for those on the margins. What followed was not collaboration; it was dismissal and then harm.

A Critical Truth About Research: Numbers Can Lie

Most people assume data and statistics are neutral. They are not. How research is designed, who gets to participate, how results are analyzed, and what conclusions are drawn are all human decisions and those decisions can reflect bias, erase marginalized experiences, and lend harmful ideas the false authority of science. Statistical methods were originally developed as part of the eugenics movement, used to give "scientific" credibility to racial hierarchy and discrimination.² Research is only trustworthy when those conducting it are willing to question their own methods and correct course when harm is identified. NAVTA was not willing to do that.

What Happened When We Spoke Up

MCMVA represents marginalized veterinary professionals across roles, not all of us are technicians, but all of us live the experiences this report claimed to study. When we raised concerns, we were not outside critics - we were the people this research was about. That distinction matters enormously.

Christina Loftin, Brian Tesch, and Michael Ramirez, three of the report's authors, and NAVTA's DEIB committee responded by email implying our critiques reflected a fundamental misunderstanding of research. This revealed a profound unwillingness to consider the expertise and identity of the people raising these concerns. It is a form of harm scholars call *epistemic violence*: being told your knowledge doesn't count, that those in positions of authority get to decide you are not qualified to speak about your own community's reality.³ It happened to us, and it happened to the marginalized participants in this survey through the way their responses were handled.

We then met with NAVTA hoping for genuine dialogue. The report's authors did not attend, leaving us to wonder whether they did not consider our concerns worthy of their presence. NAVTA representatives arrived unprepared. The Executive Director, Phil Russo, called our calm, professional advocacy "aggressive," "angry," and "hostile." The NAVTA Board said nothing about these microaggressions and no apology followed. NAVTA has not responded to our final communication and continued offer of collaboration. The burden of educating those who caused harm fell entirely on those who were harmed, itself a reflection of the inequity DEIB research is supposed to address.⁴

Problems with the Report

The majority of respondents were white, cisgender, heterosexual, married, and non-disabled - a sample that reflects the most privileged demographics in the profession, not its diversity. The experiences of different racial, gender, and other identity groups were collapsed together in ways that made individual voices invisible.

In one striking example, the study ran a regression analysis, a statistical technique used to measure whether certain factors influence an outcome, comparing 191 cisgender respondents against a single transgender respondent, then claimed the result was non-significant. A finding of non-significance from an analysis that was never statistically valid to begin with is not a finding at all. It is a flaw dressed up as a conclusion.

Based on these flawed analyses, and there were multiple, the report concluded that race, gender, and identity do not significantly affect how veterinary technicians experience their workplaces. This directly contradicts a large body of existing research, and it contradicts the lived experiences of the marginalized professionals MCVMA represents.⁵⁻⁸

Beyond This Statement: A Call for Dialogue, Accountability, and Change

A report like this, published by a major professional association, carries institutional weight. When it says the profession is largely equitable, people believe it. Funding

decisions get made. Policies get shaped. And the real experiences of marginalized technicians get buried under the authority of numbers that were never designed to capture them.

Marginalized communities are not simply research subjects. When research is about us, we must be partners in designing it, conducting it, and reviewing its conclusions. Our expertise, including the expertise of lived experience, is not optional. NAVTA's unwillingness to meaningfully engage with MCVMA's concerns is not just an institutional failure. It is a demonstration of exactly the problem this report was supposed to help solve.

Veterinary medicine cannot claim to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging while continuing to produce research about marginalized communities without their meaningful participation. This harm is not unique to this report or this exchange, rather it reflects systemic gaps in how our profession approaches research, accountability, and the lived experiences of marginalized professionals. These issues extend beyond veterinarians, touching technicians, receptionists, kennel staff, support workers, and the communities veterinary medicine serves.

MCVMA had a responsibility to speak up out of love for this profession and the people in it. Every email sent, every meeting attended, every offer of collaboration extended was an act of care. We believe a better profession is possible, and we remain open to dialogue on any aspect of this statement, the report, or the path forward. But it must be built honestly, accountably, and together.

Read our analysis of the study and full statement [here](#).

References

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