Strategic Science Communication for a Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory

Maci Guay
Texas A&M University
maciguay@tamu.edu

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Introduction

The Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) processes over 200,000 accessions and runs more than 1 million tests each year. In fall 2025, I conducted a structured self-assessment of my effectiveness as a communications assistant at TVMDL during the 10-week Science Influencers Mini Program internship. Under the supervision of the TVMDL Communications Program Manager, Mallory Pfeifer, I focused on strengthening professional communication skills in writing, visual messaging, and structured information gathering to enhance TVMDL's public presence and credibility among diverse audiences.

Purpose

The purpose of this internship was to improve my science communication skills and achieve a high audience engagement rate by refining how I create and present technical content. I aimed to enhance readability, visual organization, and message clarity to support education and outreach for public audiences and clients who rely on diagnostic resources and must choose among laboratories nationally and internationally.

Procedures

This experience took place at TVMDL in College Station, Texas, where I collaborated with diagnosticians, laboratory supervisors, and technicians to gather source material for communication products. I conducted a reflective evaluation of previously published work, assessed interview techniques, and identified areas for improvement. Using structured interviews and direct observation of diagnostic processes, I refined methods for collecting and organizing technical information.

Articles were intentionally revised to enhance readability through concise paragraphs, clear headings, and selective use of bullet lists. Evidence indicates that structured formatting improves reader response, with bullet-pointed text rated more favorably than equivalent paragraph text (Ayre et al., 2025). In addition to written communication, I expanded into visual content development, including scientific illustrations and branded graphic materials.

Results

The internship strengthened my science communication abilities and produced measurable audience impact. During the 10-week period, I authored nine strategically formatted news-style articles that achieved an average engagement rate of 81%, demonstrating strong audience response. Additionally, I developed three informational articles for TVMDL's online educational library, which were published following the internship and expanded the agency's educational resources. Improved writing efficiency enabled faster content production and more consistent publication schedules. This increased productivity and confidence supported my transition into a salaried communications specialist role, where I assumed broader

responsibilities, including launching a TVMDL Instagram account and developing recurring multimedia content featuring visual graphics and video production.

Summary

This internship strengthened my professional development as a science communicator and demonstrated measurable impact in audience engagement and educational outreach. Through enhanced writing efficiency, strategic information gathering, and audience-centered messaging, I cultivated skills that bridge laboratory science, veterinary practice, and public understanding. The experience positioned me to continue advancing communication strategies that promote accessible, credible scientific information and further the mission of veterinary diagnostics on a regional and global scale.

References

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