

From the President's Desk

Progress in innovation

Emily E. Volk, MD

July 2023—About a year ago, I used this column to talk about the CAP's efforts to prioritize innovation and to create more pathways for staff and members to help keep us on the cutting edge. I know "innovation" can seem like a meaningless buzzword that organizations throw around without putting anything substantial behind it, so I wanted to come back to the topic and show that we really are taking it seriously at the CAP.

The innovation plan is now well underway, with new measures being rolled out on our committees and in activities undertaken by our CAP staff. One of my favorite elements is that we have created a structured innovation initiative designed to solicit ideas that will help us continue to deliver on our core mission to maintain excellence in the laboratory so we can generate the most reliable results for our patients.

In 2022, the focus was on developing plans and clear guidance for how we want to help identify, fund, and manage innovation activities. This year, it's all about putting those plans into action. The CAP Board of Governors has now reviewed and approved the innovation guidance plans, which are separated into five categories: funding, processes, staffing support, tools and technology, and communications.

Funding has now been secured for these programs, and teams are developing a tracking process that will help the staff manage operations and budget. Internally, key staffing elements have been put in place with specific team members assigned to lead and manage our innovation efforts, along with training to ensure they are aware of the new programs.



Dr. Volk

We also have technologies under development. The CAP is committed to ensuring transparency around the innovation programs, so the team is creating a module in our Higher Logic member engagement platform that will allow us to see which ideas have been proposed and what happened to each one along the path to approval or rejection. Members will be able to use the module to add their own comments or to build on existing ideas. The module should be available this summer, and I encourage you to check it out and engage with the CAP to help us further our innovative ideas.

Ultimately, the Board of Governors Executive Committee will prioritize the ideas and allocate funding to explore them. This represents a new exploration funding pathway designed to evaluate ideas with the understanding that they won't all be successful. Accepting failures as a natural part of trying new ideas is essential to the pursuit of innovation. We're creating space to allow the good ideas to thrive while other ideas fail quickly and without any negative impact.

As you can see, the CAP's plans are not about paying lip service to the concept of innovation. We are doing real, substantive work in this area in ways that I believe will help us facilitate institutional learning and streamline the

adoption of improvements. These new initiatives build on a long and proud history of innovation at the CAP, and they help show our continued commitment to our laboratories and members so they can deliver the best care to our patients.

Dr. Volk welcomes communication from CAP members. Write to her at president@cap.org.