
DATE: September 4, 2019

TO: Lisa Eshman, Faculty, Veterinary Technology

FROM: Ben Kaliczak, Research Analyst
Elaine Kuo, College Researcher

RE: Alumni and Employer Surveys, June-July 2019

Overview

Graduating students, one-year and three-year alumni of the Veterinary Technology (VT) program were surveyed to assess their current employment and satisfaction with the program. Employers affiliated with the VT program were also surveyed to document their satisfaction with program graduates. Of the graduates, alumni, and employers surveyed, 17 recent graduates, 14 one-year alumni, 11 three-year alumni, and 17 employers responded.

Highlights

Key findings from the student [Year 0], alumni [Year 1 and Year 3], and employer surveys include:

- How well Foothill’s program prepared them for a career in veterinary technology, and if employers believed Foothill graduates possessed good basic knowledge and clinical skills.
 - “Extremely Well” (24% Year 0, 36% Year 1, 64% Year 3)
 - “Very Well” (59% Year 0, 57% Year 1, 18% Year 3)
 - 94% of employers indicated that Foothill graduates generally possess good basic knowledge and clinical skills.
- Across the four groups surveyed, trends in the strongest and weaker prepared skills indicated by respondents emerged.
 - More prepared skills
 - Anesthesia (65% Year 0, 64% Year 1, 67% Year 3, 29% Employers)
 - Basic Clinical Skills (59% Year 0, 50% Year 1, 67% Year 3, 71% Employers)
 - Medical Nursing (29% Year 0, 57% Year 1, 33% Year 3, 35% Employers)
 - Less prepared skills
 - Pharmacy and Pharmacology (71% Year 0, 21% Year 1, 6% Year 3, 6% Employers)
 - Diagnostic imaging (35% Year 0, 7% Year 1, 33% Year 3, 12% Employers)
 - Dentistry (6% Year 0, 64% Year 1, 44% Year 3, 24% Employers)

- Respondents indicating a career as a veterinary technician related job as their primary occupation (65% Year 0, 100% Year 1, 82% Year 3).
- The majority of respondents would recommend Foothill’s program to another student; however, this rate is not consistent over the three student/alumni groups (65% Year 0, 86% Year 1, 100% Year 3).
- 94% of employers indicated “Yes” when asked if they would hire graduates of Foothill’s veterinary technology program, with 6% indicating “Maybe.” The following explains their responses.
 - *The employees that we have had that came from your program were well qualified to perform their job.*
 - *I always seek out Foothill graduates! Once they receive additional clinical training, they are always excellent techs and employees.*
 - *I always judge a candidate on their own merit and skill set. I do not have the same ready-made expectations of Foothill graduates.*
- Suggestions for improvement from alumni include:
 - More coordination and unifying expectations and course/skill methodology across instructors.
 - 40% Year 0
 - Incorporate more hands-on or real-life scenario practice.
 - 27% Year 0
 - 55% Year 1
 - 33% Year 3

Graduating Students Year 0 Highlights

- 59% (10) of respondents indicating Foothill’s program prepared them “Very well,” and 24% (4) indicating “Extremely well.”
- “Anesthesia,” “Basic clinical skills,” and “Treatment room procedures” are the top three skills graduating students indicated being best prepared by the veterinary technology program (65%, 59%, and 47%, respectively)
- “Pharmacy and pharmacology,” “Diagnostic imaging,” and “Emergency medicine” are the top three skills graduating students indicated being least prepared by the veterinary technology program (71%, 35%, and 29%, respectively).
- 65% of respondents indicated having full-time employment following graduation from Foothill’s veterinary technology program.
- 65% (11) of respondents indicated they would recommend Foothill’s veterinary technology program to others, 35% (6) indicated they “Maybe” would recommend Foothill’s program.
 - 56% (5) of respondents who indicated they would recommend Foothill’s program stated that the program prepared them well.
 - *I think the program along with internship has prepared me to become a vet tech. I feel that instructors were supportive throughout and that it was very affordable.*
 - *Compared to students from other schools we are better prepared and more knowledgeable thanks to the FH Program. I have learned a ton and feel competent enough to take on a challenging job. Ready to gain more experience in the field.*
 - *It is affordable and you gain a lot of hands on experience. You also have a great support structure between students and instructors.*
 - One open-ended response of a student who indicated “Maybe” when asked about recommending Foothill’s veterinary technician program could warrant additional attention:
 - *Depends on the individual. Depends if the individual is willing to put time and effort to succeed in the program. This program will cause you to lose yourself, meaning that you will have less time for yourself, your family, your significant other, your friends, as well as loose time to work and making money. Also depends on the individual's skin (confidence & self-esteem); some of the teachers are pretty catty and unprofessional at times. There have also been some negative comments spoken by a teacher towards the LGBT community and law enforcement to the whole class during class period (as well as towards certain individuals), which was extremely inappropriate and completely unrelated to the class discussion. These incidents were not reported to the director or acknowledged at the moment to the teacher about the hurtful comments because students do not feel safe to say anything when their grades and future are on the line. So, maybe I would recommend an individual to this program; it would depend on the individual because they will need to pick their battles in this program, as well as in this field. There are a lot of*

sacrifices that need to be made physically, as well as mentally and emotionally, to be successful in the Vet Tech Program at Foothill College.

- 88% (15) of respondents gave suggestions or comments for improving Foothill's veterinary technician program
 - 40% (6) communicated themes, more coordination and unifying expectations, and course/skill methodology across instructors.
 - 27% (4) Incorporate more hands-on or real-life scenario practice.

Alumni Year 1 Highlights

- 57% (8) indicated being “Very well” prepared for a career in veterinary technology by Foothill College’s program, with 36% (5) indicating “Extremely well.”
- “Anesthesia,” (64%) “Medical nursing,” (57%) and “Basic clinical skills” (50%) were the top three skills respondents indicated they felt best prepared for in their career as a veterinary technician.
- “Dentistry,” (64%) “Clinical pathology,” (43%) “Emergency medicine,” (21%) and “Pharmacy and pharmacology” (21%) were the top skills respondents indicated they felt least prepared for in their career as a veterinary technician.
- All (14) respondents indicated current paid employment as a veterinary technician related job as their primary occupation.
- 79% (11) indicated their employment status as being “Full-time,” and 21% (3) “Part-time.”
- “Small animal (dog and/or cat and/or pocket pet)” was the most common (71%) description of respondents’ current practice.
- 57% (8) indicated being at their current position for at least one year.
- 50% (7) indicated making \$20 to \$25 per hour at their current position.
- 50% (7) indicated their current practice was located in Santa Clara County.
- 21% (3) indicated they volunteered in a veterinary technician position.
- 71% (10) indicated membership in a Veterinary or Technician professional association.
- 86% (12) indicated that they would recommend Foothill’s veterinary technology program to others; similar themes were present between some of those responses.
 - The program prepared me well (4)
 - Affordable (2)
 - Positive experience (1)
- 79% (11) respondents submitted ideas for strengthening the program that could have prepared them better for entry-level practice as a Veterinary Technician; similar themes were present between some of those responses.
 - Incorporate more hands-on or real-life scenario practice. (6)
 - More Dental Practice (2)
 - More support and flexibility for students working internships (2)
- One open-ended response of a student who indicated “Maybe” when asked about recommending Foothill’s veterinary technician program could warrant additional attention:
 - *Some professors openly and/or directly discouraged students in the career. Stating that they were weak in one way or another and implying they were not capable for the career. I was told multiple statements about not being expected to pass the program, I graduated with honors. I know another member that graduated with me who was directly told she was not a good student by the director. We are both women of color and I would warn anyone of color (especially Hispanic or black) interested in this program of harsh and discouraging treatment if they were planning to apply.*

Alumni Year 3 Highlights

- 64% (7) indicated being “Extremely well” prepared by Foothill’s program.
- “Anesthesia” (67%), “Basic clinical skills” (67%), “Medical nursing” (33%), “Pharmacy and pharmacology” (33%), and “Surgical nursing” (33%) were the top skills respondents felt best prepared in their career by Foothill’s program.
- “Dentistry” (44%), “Clinical pathology” (33%), “Diagnostic imaging” (33%), “Emergency medicine” (33%), and “Office and hospital procedures” (33%) were the top skills respondents felt least prepared in their career by Foothill’s program.
- 82% (9) indicated currently being employed for pay in a veterinary technician related job as their primary occupation.
 - 89% (8) indicated working full time (40+ hours per week) at their practice
 - “Small animal (dog and/or cat and/or pocket pet)” was the description given by the majority (67%) of their practice.
 - 44% (4) indicated having been at their current practice for “More than one year but less than two years,” with 22% (2) each indicating being at their practice “More than two years” and “Six months but less than one year.”
 - San Mateo (22%) and Santa Clara (22%) comprised the most concentrated description of the County location of practices.
 - The majority (56%) of respondents indicated making between \$20 an hour and \$25 an hour at the current practice.
- 18% (2) indicated volunteering in a veterinary technician position.
- 27% (3) indicated being a member of a professional Veterinary or Technician association.
- All (11) respondents indicated that they would recommend Foothill’s veterinary technician program to others, with (10) open-ended explanations of their response. Similar themes were present between some of those responses.
 - The program prepared me well (7)
 - Affordable (1)
 - Positive experience (2)
- Respondents (9) submitted ideas for strengthening the program that could have prepared them better for entry-level practice as a Veterinary Technician.
 - Incorporate more hands-on or real-life scenario practice. (3)
 - Had comments but no suggestion (3)
 - More encouragement, mental health support from instructors (1)
 - More support for students working internships (1)
 - Promote more industry participation (1)

Employer Highlights

- 94% (16) indicated that Foothill graduates generally possess good basic knowledge and clinical skills.
- “Basic clinical skills” (71%), “Basic sciences” (41%), and “Medical nursing” (35%) were the top three areas Employers indicated Foothill graduates were best prepared in, compared to graduates from other programs.
 - One respondent stated, “I value how Foothill teaches the students how to be good employees as well.”
- “Dentistry” (24%), “Anesthesia” (18%), “Emergency medicine” (18%), and “Other” (18%) were the top areas Employers indicated Foothill graduates were least prepared in, compared to graduates from other programs.
 - One respondent stated, “No area less prepared but could use additional training.”
- “Work Habits Punctuality Professionalism etc.” (59%) was characteristic indicated by Employers they most valued when hiring new veterinary technicians.
- “Santa Clara County” (29%) was the most indicated practice location from respondents, followed by “San Mateo County” (24%).
- “Small animal (dog and/or cat and/or pocket pet)” (82%) was the most indicated description of their practice by Employers.
- “\$15 per hour to \$20 per hour” (59%) was the most indicated pay rate offered by employers for entry-level veterinary technician positions, followed by “\$20 per hour to \$25 per hour” (41%).
- “\$20 per hour to \$25 per hour” (47%) was the most indicated pay rate offered by employers for veterinary technician positions with 1-3 years of experience.
- 94% (16) indicated “Yes” when asked if they would hire graduates of Foothill’s veterinary technology program, with 6% (1) indicating “Maybe.”
- (9) Respondents gave open-ended responses explaining their response to if they would hire graduates from Foothill’s veterinary technology program.
 - *The employees that we have had that came from your program were well qualified to perform their job.*
 - *I always seek out Foothill graduates! Once they receive additional clinical training, they are always excellent techs and employees.*
 - *I always judge a candidate on their own merit and skill set. I do not have the same ready made expectations of Foothill graduates.*

Full Survey Results: Graduating Students Year 0

Program Preparedness

Graduating students were asked to indicate how their experience in Foothill's AVMA-accredited program prepared them for a career in veterinary technology. Over half (59% or 10) of respondents indicated they are "very well" prepared, 24% (4) indicated "extremely well", 12% (2) indicated "somewhat well", and 6% (1) did not respond to the question.

How Prepared	#	%
Extremely well	4	24%
Very well	10	59%
Somewhat well	2	12%
No Response	1	6%
Total	17	100%

Best Prepared Skills

Graduating students of Foothill's AVMA-accredited veterinary technology program were asked which areas they felt best prepared for a career in veterinary technician (from fourteen multi-choice options and one open-ended response option). The top three skills indicated were Anesthesia (65%), Basic Clinical Skills (59%), and Treatment room procedures (47%).¹

Best Prepared Skills	#	%
Anesthesia	11	65%
Basic clinical skills	10	59%
Treatment room procedures	8	47%
Surgical nursing	7	41%
Animal diseases and public health	6	35%
Dentistry	6	35%
Medical nursing	5	29%
Diagnostic imaging	4	24%
Basic sciences	3	18%
Clinical pathology	3	18%
Emergency medicine	3	18%
Office and hospital procedures	3	18%
Exam room procedures	2	12%
Pharmacy and pharmacology	0	0%
Other	0	0%

¹ This table does not represent the total (17) number of respondents, as multiple fields could represent one response.

Least Prepared Skills

Graduating students of Foothill's AVMA-accredited veterinary technology program were asked about the top areas that they felt least prepared for in their career as veterinary technician, (from fourteen multi-choice options and one open-ended response option). The three skills that respondents indicated they had less preparation were Pharmacy and Pharmacology (71%), Diagnostic Imaging (35%), and Emergency Medicine (29%).²

Least Prepared Skills	#	%
Pharmacy and pharmacology	12	71%
Diagnostic imaging	6	35%
Emergency medicine	5	29%
Animal diseases and public health	4	24%
Clinical pathology	4	24%
Anesthesia	2	12%
Treatment room procedures	2	12%
Basic clinical skills	1	6%
Basic sciences	1	6%
Dentistry	1	6%
Exam room procedures	1	6%
Medical nursing	1	6%
Office and hospital procedures	1	6%
Surgical nursing	1	6%
Other	0	0%

Employment Status

Graduating students were asked about their current employment status as they leave the veterinary technology program. Almost two-thirds of respondents (65% or 11) indicated they are employed and working full-time, 24% (4) employed part-time, and 12% (2) indicating they were in the process of moving.

Employment Status	#	%
Employed full-time	11	65%
Employed part-time	4	24%
Moving away, but have possible clinic I can go to once I move	1	6%
Moving to new state and looking for a job there	1	6%
Total	17	100%

² This table does not represent the total (17) number of respondents, as multiple fields could represent one response.

Professional Associations

Those surveyed indicated if they held current membership of an organized veterinary or technician association. 18% (3) of respondents indicated they were a member of a Veterinary or Technician professional association.

Professional Association	#	%
Yes	3	18%
No	14	82%
Total	17	100%

Recommend Foothill's Program

Graduating students were asked if they would recommend Foothill College's veterinary technology program to others. Graduates were provided three options (Yes, No, Maybe), and asked to explain their selection in open-ended responses. Two-thirds of respondents (65% or 11) indicated "Yes," and another one-third (35% or 6) indicated "Maybe".

Recommend Foothill's Program	#	%
Yes	11	65%
Maybe	6	35%
Total	17	100%

Open-ended responses (15) are grouped by themes present in an attempt to categorize messages presented.³ Responses are divided into those who responded "Yes" (9) and "Maybe" (6). Complete open-ended responses are listed at the end of the section.

Response Groupings	Yes	Maybe
The program prepared me well	5	0
Affordable	4	0
Positive experience	1	1
Challenging program	1	3
Conflicting instructions from instructors	0	1
Inappropriate conversations from instructors	0	2

³ This table does not represent the total number of responses as some (longer) responses were tagged with multiple themes in an attempt to capture their intent.

Ideas

Those surveyed were asked to provide any ideas for strengthening the program that could better prepare them for entry-level practice as a veterinary technician. Open-ended responses (15) are grouped by themes present in an attempt to categorize messages presented. Full responses are listed at the end of this section.⁴

Grouping of Ideas	#
Coordinate and unify expectations and course/skill methodology between instructors.	6
Incorporate more hands-on or real-life scenario practice.	4
More encouragement, mental health support from instructors	4
Update curriculum to reflect current industry expectations	3
Expand time between learning new skills and evaluation	2
Hire more instructors	2

Graduating Students Year 0 – Open-ended responses⁵

Would you recommend Foothill's Veterinary Technology program to others?

Yes

- I would recommend but give a disclosure that it is very time consuming and the programs leaders tend to show favoritism.
- I think the program along with internship has prepared me to become a vet tech. I feel that instructors were supportive throughout and that it was very affordable.
 - The program prepared me well
 - Affordable
- I think the program does a good job teaching the knowledge.
 - The program prepared me well
- I have had a really great learning experience and I truly enjoyed learning and doing things everyday
 - Positive experience
- Compared to students from other schools we are better prepared and more knowledgeable thanks to the FH Program. I have learned a ton and feel competent enough to take on a challenging job. Ready to gain more experience in the field.
 - The program prepared me well
- It is like going to a normal community college, which makes it easy to adjust to. There are a lot of lab classes which helps us on getting a lot of technical work and hands on training. The instructors are well experienced in the field and in teaching. It is affordable, which makes it more appealing compared to Carrington College. The only bad thing about the program is that it is VERY far away from where I live, so commuting

⁴ This table does not represent the total number of responses as some (longer) responses were tagged with multiple themes in an attempt to capture their intent.

⁵ Names of faculty have been removed from these responses.

is very tiring. Also, the curriculum is very demanding, making it harder to work full time while going to school full time (especially difficult when you are the one providing for the family). Overall, it is a challenging program, but determined students can graduate with more knowledge than they would learn elsewhere. A good plus for the program is that the teachers are well known throughout the Bay Area, which makes networking very easy. I am very thankful for the program and I am proud to be a graduate from Foothill College Veterinary Technician Program. Thank you!

- Affordable
- Challenging program
- The program prepared me well
- This program is very good for people trying to be a technician on a budget. It is affordable despite the distance one has to travel. Though some of the equipment is a little out of date, and there can be some major issues with the faculty, it is worth the two years to come out with a degree.
 - Affordable
- It is a great program that challenges you but prepares you for real life things.
 - This program prepared me well
- It is affordable and you gain a lot of hands on experience. You also have a great support structure between students and instructors.
 - Affordable

Maybe

- I recommend this program to people who want to get their license quickly and am serious about being in this field. I do not recommend this program to anyone who is shy or sensitive and needs a supportive environment.
 - Challenging program
- The program did really well in preparing me for some real life scenarios. However, at times we were told regulations/guidelines we had to follow that were not consistent among instructors. We would learn material one way, and when another instructor would see us implementing that technique, they would tell us we were wrong even though we were taught that way by another instructor. Also, there were some moments where some classmates expressed their disdain they felt from some instructors. At times, we were expected to perform at a certain level but some instructors would become impatient and would say certain things that would not indicate that they were happy with our learning process. Some instructors would act impatient that we didn't really understand what we were doing and they would tell us to be quick about our task we were learning.
 - Conflicting instructions from instructors
- I tell people that if you want to do it, try but be careful and know it is very hard and stressful and you will cry a lot of not get much sleep but you will leave knowing what you are doing. I say if you really want it is possible

- Challenging program
- Depends on the individual. Depends if the individual is willing to put time and effort to succeed in the program. This program will cause you to lose yourself, meaning that you will have less time for yourself, your family, your significant other, your friends, as well as loose time to work and making money. Also depends on the individual's skin (confidence & self-esteem); some of the teachers are pretty catty and unprofessional at times. There have also been some negative comments spoken by a teacher towards the LGBT community and law enforcement to the whole class during class period (as well as towards certain individuals), which was extremely inappropriate and completely unrelated to the class discussion. These incidents were not reported to the director or acknowledged at the moment to the teacher about the hurtful comments because students do not feel safe to say anything when their grades and future are on the line. So, maybe I would recommend an individual to this program; it would depend on the individual because they will need to pick their battles in this program, as well as in this field. There are a lot of sacrifices that need to be made physically, as well as mentally and emotionally, to be successful in the Vet Tech Program at Foothill College.
 - Inappropriate conversations from instructors
 - Challenging program
- The most knowledgeable and best instructors are retiring and cutting back on teaching the core classes or retired during our last year. Although I do not doubt that the remaining instructors are/were good in practice, they do not teach as well. Due to this aspect, success in their classes is due to self-motivation and self-learning. These specific instructors also lack professionalism at times. It is a catty profession filled with women and they warned us during the very beginning to not get caught in it. However, they play into this role and make passive aggressive comments toward each other and to the students which is not only immature but also inappropriate. I have overheard them say negative things about other students on several occasions. As students, we can be annoying, but they need to respond with constructive criticism instead of passive aggressive comments.
 - Inappropriate conversations from instructors
- I really enjoyed the program, however I feel like some teachers were too harsh at times. I sometimes would have a really hard time focusing because I felt like they were silently judging. [removed] is an amazing teacher, but I always feared doing practicals because she made me so nervous for some reason. A lot of people in my class felt the same way and wished she wasn't so harsh on us at times. I have to say though, I believe the best person for teaching here was [removed] and it's sad to hear that she won't be teaching here as much.
 - Positive experience

What ideas do you have for strengthening the program that could have prepared you better for entry-level practice as a Veterinary Technician?

- I feel the communication among professors could be worked on. Seems that many teachers are unaware of what we are being taught or where we are in our studies, so many important facts get slipped. This leaves the students in an awkward position of feeling like they are behind, because they haven't been taught, and the other professor feeling frustrated because we are not knowledgeable in the subject matter. This effects confidence levels and ultimately, future jobs.
 - Coordinate and unify expectations and course/skill methodology between instructors.
 - Update curriculum to reflect current industry expectations
- Though focus on the VTNE is great, I feel that we need practice or info for real-life scenarios so that we do not get over whelmed when entering our internship sites.
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
 - Update curriculum to reflect current industry expectations
- Stop threatening all of us with failure constantly. It adds a layer of unnecessary stress. Not all of the professors are approachable and negative reinforcement is the norm. I think talking to people who are struggling individually is a better approach than yelling at the whole class. I also think that labs could utilize kinesthetic learning better, especially the clinic skills class. Doing the things would help more than a demonstration or a lecture. Clin Path lab was the best at this. Finally, I don't think it's fair to grade us in anesthesia the first time we are the anesthetist (IV cath and scrubbed in nurse is ok). We were all SO nervous and got graded very harshly imo. This is very discouraging as a student.
 - More encouragement, mental health support from instructors
 - Expand time between learning new skills and evaluation
- More communication among staff members and what to teach. In some courses, I felt unprepared especially when it came to anesthesia lab. I felt that pharmacology didn't set me up for the drugs for anesthesia lab. We learned about some of the drugs for anesthesia when we were already to help perform surgeries during the same quarter. It felt unfair and we were out of the woods when it came down to be expected to make our own drug protocol when we hardly went over it in our classes. This program gives you so many chances to fail rather than pass. It is understandable that the RVT program is one of the best in Northern California. However, every day felt like I could fail the program.
 - Coordinate and unify expectations and course/skill methodology between instructors.
- More positivity from the instructors. We all know that burn out and compassion fatigue is a very real reality in this field and it all starts with a trickledown effect. I think there could be a better balance between pushing us to really learn and encouraging us with support. At the end of the day, we are still students. No question should be considered a stupid question and I think the patience level with some of the instructors is at an all-time low.
 - More encouragement, mental health support from instructors
- Allow for a 3 year option that students can opt into.
- More clinical scenarios to go through and practice how to go about certain things
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.

- Better coordination between lectures and labs would be beneficial. Dentistry was a successful class since the same instructor conducted lectures and labs and it flowed very well. Better coordination of lectures would also help free up lab time for more hands on experience. On the schedule we have a lot of lab time but usually half of each lab is just more lecture. Better organization of teaching materials could also help. In some classes Canvas got extremely cluttered and important papers were hard to find. Improving PowerPoints slides by reducing number of slides and condensing text to key points would have helped me stay focused and follow along better. Maybe a short tutorial for instructors on how to organize PPTs effectively would be an option? Diseases class was a good class with a good teacher but had too much detailed information on paper that was impossible to retain and distinguish in the end. Maybe more case studies in which student can learn the disease with an image of an animal and the course of treatment rather than just symptoms, diagnosis, and treatment. It was a packed class so there is not that much room to add color but maybe for prominent diseases it would add help?
 - Coordinate and unify expectations and course/skill methodology between instructors.
 - Update curriculum to reflect current industry expectations
- Possibly having more instructors that are well trained in veterinary technology and teaching would help. There are many students compared to instructors. Two instructors that have taught my class are retiring, so I think they are going to need some help. Students are very eager to learn and improve on their skills aside from class time, so instructors need to be available to help.
 - Hire more instructors
- Communication between the students and teachers, more up to date and functioning equipment, less condescending attitude from the teachers. Have a better understanding for how the program is to be run, rather than treating your students like guinea pigs every year. Consistency among how teachers treat their students as well as each graduating class.
 - Coordinate and unify expectations and course/skill methodology between instructors.
 - More encouragement, mental health support from instructors
- Better teachers, more teachers like [removed], she has the most compassion and passion for her students and actually care about our wellbeing and knowledge. I wish the program actually cared about making sure students passed and worked to help students pass, instead of purposely failing students by changing due dates without warning and by changing the grading rubric or the difference of opinion by having multiple teachers grading the same exam differently. This program is great for knowledge but very bad for mental health and mental stability. The lack of understanding and willingness to help students is unlike any other university or college I have ever heard of. There is no willingness to help students who have been vomiting the day an assignment was due and received a 0 when they failed the entire program by 4 points. Or students who failed a class by a single %. I have seen many of my classmates have issues like this and it is disheartening that if something happens it doesn't matter you still have to show up. I have classmates who came to class right after family member died because it is common knowledge that it doesn't matter what happens you show up cause you can't afford to miss classes. There is also a Everyman for themselves

mentality that the instructors push on the students which is so unlike working in an actual clinic. Working in a clinic is a group team activity where working together creates a cohesive understanding environment and here it's throw people under the bus and you are on your own, it makes you feel very alone. I feel like more time working on practical skills dealing with the program animals we have is helpful. Having a horse was incredibly helpful even if it was challenging at times. Having program animals is one of the best parts of this program.

- More encouragement, mental health support from instructors
- Coordinate and unify expectations and course/skill methodology between instructors.
- Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
- I personally learned a lot in this program. I have gained a lot of experience and knowledge by those these teachers, but I could have used less drama and unprofessionalism by the teachers. The hands-on proportion of the program was the most beneficial to my success. Being able to physically demonstrate my skills as a veterinary technician was best done by practicing it in the program. Continuous use of shelter animals allowed us to become better technicians, as well as practice proper husbandry and patient care. Possibly reaching out to students on campus to help with their veterinary needs could help further the student's skills, such as holding vaccine clinics or nail trimming serves. This platform could also start conversations with others on campus about the program, help raise money and awareness, and provide client education. This will also provide students with the hands-on experience along with advancing client communications through these interactions.
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
- They need more instructors that can teach, have the patience to teach, and who can motivate the students. We were one of the lucky classes that was taught by two of the "oldies but goodies."
 - More instructors
- I wish we could have gone over pharmacology better and not have rushed through all the drugs so fast. I think that we should get rid of trajecsys [sic] because it wasn't helpful at all. I was able to practice more things at my clinic when I had a physical copy of the things we had to get signed off. After we switched, the technicians were less helpful at going out of their way to teach me things without having a physical reminder of what needed to be practiced.
 - Coordinate and unify expectations and course/skill methodology between instructors.
 - Expand time between learning new skills and evaluation
- Learn anesthesia meds in pharmacology. More review on surgical monitoring machines.

Full Survey Results: Alumni Year 1

Program Preparedness

Alumni who graduated one year ago rated how their experience in Foothill’s AVMA-accredited program prepared them for a career in veterinary technology. Over half (57% or 8) indicated they were “Very well” prepared, 36% (5) “Extremely well” prepared, and 7% (1) indicated “Somewhat well” prepared.

How Prepared	#	%
Extremely well	5	36%
Very well	8	57%
Somewhat well	1	7%
Total	14	100%

Best Prepared Skills

Year One alumni were asked to identify the top three areas where they felt best prepared for their veterinary technician career (from fourteen multi-choice options and one open-ended response option). The three highest areas respondents selected included “Anesthesia” (64%), “Medical nursing” (57%), and “Basic clinical skills (50%)⁶

Best Prepared Skills	#	%
Anesthesia	9	64%
Medical nursing	8	57%
Basic clinical skills	7	50%
Treatment room procedures	6	43%
Diagnostic imaging	4	29%
Emergency medicine	4	29%
Pharmacy and pharmacology	4	29%
Animal diseases and public health	3	21%
Office and hospital procedures	3	21%
Surgical nursing	3	21%
Dentistry	2	14%
Exam room procedures	2	14%
Basic sciences	1	7%
Clinical pathology	1	7%
Other	0	0%

⁶ This table does not represent the total (14) number of respondents, as multiple fields could represent one response.

Least Prepared Skills

Year One alumni were also asked to identify the top three areas where they felt least prepared for as veterinary technicians (from fourteen multi-choice options and one open-ended response option). The least prepared skills identified include “Dentistry” (64%), “Clinical pathology” (43%), both “Emergency medicine” and “Pharmacy and pharmacology” (21% each).⁷

Least Prepared Skills	#	%
Dentistry	9	64%
Clinical pathology	6	43%
Emergency medicine	3	21%
Pharmacy and pharmacology	3	21%
Animal diseases and public health	2	14%
Basic clinical skills	2	14%
Exam room procedures	2	14%
Office and hospital procedures	2	14%
Surgical nursing	2	14%
Anesthesia	1	7%
Basic sciences	1	7%
Diagnostic imaging	1	7%
Medical nursing	1	7%
Treatment room procedures	1	7%
Other	0	0%

Employment Status

All (14) respondents indicated they are currently employed for pay in a veterinary technician-related job as their primary occupation.

Employed	#	%
Yes	14	100%
No	0	0%
Total	14	100%

Work Status

A majority of respondents (79% or 11) indicated they are working full-time while the remaining noted they are working part-time (21% or 3).

Work Status	#	%
Full-time: 40 hours per week or more	11	79%
Part-time: Less than 40 hours per week	3	21%
Total	14	100%

⁷ This table does not represent the total (14) number of respondents, as multiple fields could represent one response.

Practice Description

Respondents (14) were asked to describe the veterinary setting where they were employed.⁸ A majority (71%) indicated their practice mostly served small animals (dogs, cats, pocket pets), 14% (2) research, and 7% (1) indicated their practice was a Wildlife Rehab center in an open-ended response.

Practice Description	#	%
Small animal (dog and/or cat and/or pocket pet)	10	71%
Research	2	14%
Academic	1	7%
Avian exclusive	1	7%
Exotic exclusive	1	7%
Not-for-profit organization (humane society, nature ctr, etc.)	1	7%
Small animal plus avian	1	7%
Other	1	7%
Equine exclusive	0	0%
Government	0	0%
Industry or commercial organizations	0	0%
Large animal exclusive	0	0%
Mixed practice, large and small animal	0	0%
Uniformed services	0	0%

Time at position

Those surveyed (14) were asked to indicate how long they worked at their current position. 57% (8) of survey respondents indicated they have been at their current position for at least one year, and 43% (6) indicating “Six months but less than one year.”

Time at Position	#	%
Six months but less than one year	6	43%
At least one year	8	57%
Total	14	100%

⁸ This table does not represent the total (14) number of respondents, as multiple fields could represent one response.

VT Job Description

Respondents employed in the veterinary technician field were asked to describe their job title in an open-ended response. The majority (78% or 7) wrote their job description as “Registered Veterinary Technician,” while 11% (1) “ER/ICU RVT,” 1% (1) “Registered Veterinary Technician, Outpatient Services and Surgery,” and the remaining five (5) did not respond to the prompt.

Job Description	#	%
ER/ICU RVT	1	11%
Registered Veterinary Technician	7	78%
Registered Veterinary Technician, Outpatient Srvs and Surgery	1	11%
Total	9	100%

Note: There were five (5) nonrespondents and they are excluded from the total (N=14).

Hourly Wage

Those surveyed (14) were asked how long they worked at their current position. 50% (7) of respondents reported making between \$20 and \$25 an hour at their current position, 21% (3) between \$15 and \$20 an hour, 14% (2) between \$25 and \$30 an hour, and 14% (2) between \$10 and \$15 an hour.

Hourly Wage	#	%
\$25.01/hr to \$30/hr	2	14%
\$20.01/hr to \$25/hr	7	50%
\$15.01/hr to \$20/hr	3	21%
\$10.01/hr to \$15/hr	2	14%
Total	14	100%

County

A majority (50%) of respondents indicated their place of employment is located in Santa Clara County, 21% (3) in San Mateo County, and 14% (2) in each San Francisco and Santa Cruz counties.⁹

County	#	%
San Francisco County	2	14%
San Mateo County	3	21%
Santa Clara County	7	50%
Santa Cruz County	2	14%
Total	14	100%

Volunteer Status

Those surveyed were asked whether they volunteered in a veterinary technician-related position. Roughly one-fourth (21% or 3) indicated they currently volunteer, while 79% (11) did not.

⁹ Counties not indicated are Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Solano, and Sonoma.

Volunteer	#	%
Yes	3	21%
No	11	79%
Total	14	100%

Professional Association

A majority (71% or 10) identified they are a member of an organized veterinary or technician association, with 29% (4) indicating they are not.

Professional Association	#	%
Yes	10	71%
No	4	29%
Total	14	100%

Recommend Foothill's Program

A majority of Year One Alumni (86% or 12) indicated they would recommend Foothill College's veterinary technology program to others.

Recommend	#	%
Yes	12	86%
Maybe	2	14%
Total	14	100%

Open-ended responses (9) about why they would recommend Foothill's program were grouped by themes to categorize the feedback.¹⁰ Full responses are listed at the end of this section.

Response Groupings	#
The program prepared me well	4
Affordable	2
Positive experience	1

Suggestions for strengthening the program in order to better prepare for entry-level practice include incorporating more hands-on/real-life practices, more dental practice, and more support/flexibility while on internships. Full responses are listed at the end of this section.¹¹

Grouping of Ideas	#
Incorporate more hands-on or real-life scenario practice.	6
More Dental Practice	2
More support and flexibility for students working internships	2

¹⁰ This table does not represent the total number of responses as some (longer) responses were tagged with multiple themes in an attempt to capture their intent, while some responses did not deliver a clear message or category.

¹¹ This table does not represent the total number of responses as some (longer) responses were tagged with multiple themes in an attempt to capture their intent.

One-year Alumni – Open-ended responses¹²

Would you recommend Foothill's Veterinary Technology program to others?

Yes

- Foothill RVT program helped get the basic information and skills for someone with no experience to be comfortable working in a vet hospital to continue improving learned skills.
 - The program prepared me well
- Well prepared for the VTNE, teachers who care, cheaper than private, interning at the same place was helpful.
 - Affordable
 - The program prepared me well
- Comprehensive program that is balanced between book learning and practical skills to teach both the tools and the mindset to be a well-rounded RVT
 - The program prepared me well
- The experience for the cost of school was worth every penny, I am 100% free from student debt because I did not have to take out loans to go to college.
 - Affordable
- It's awesome. Great instructors.
 - Positive experience
- I felt it prepared me better than any online program ever could
 - The program prepared me well
- I would give those who are interested in the program the following advice: Expect the program to be a very demanding and time-consuming two years. There are animals on campus that the students will be responsible for providing care. You get out what you put in. If you want to become a good tech, you need to apply yourself and study a lot. Learn to be flexible and how to work with others - there are many different personalities you will come across in the program and internship/worksites.

Maybe

- For some it is not practical - affording Bay Area rent and going to school is very hard. Also for some alternate route is better.
- Some professors openly and/or directly discouraged students in the career. Stating that they were weak in one way or another and implying they were not capable for the career. I was told multiple statements about not being expected to pass the program, I graduated with honors. I know another member that graduated with me who was directly told she was not a good student by the director. We are both women of color and I would warn anyone of color (especially Hispanic or black) interested in this program of harsh and discouraging treatment if they were planning to apply.

¹² Names of faculty have been removed from these responses.

What ideas do you have for strengthening the program that could have prepared you better for entry-level practice as a Veterinary Technician?

- More dental, and hands on skill practice though I have known idea how that would work
 - More Dental practice
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
- More hands-on dentistry.
 - More Dental practice
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
- No papers, more small tests - forces you to learn more.
- More clinical skills practice. Discussion of pay rates and what's reasonable for a vet tech here. Mock practice of taking x-rays by yourself. (The ties, the marker, positioned properly, the program ready just the flow of it.)
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
- More hands on learning, simulating actual veterinary case and technician related roles
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
- Simulating emergency scenarios so an entry-level RVT has an idea of how to be useful in the moment
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
- More hands on
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice.
- Having school start later in the day in the second year so we can go to our internships and work on surgeries early in the morning. Also encourage students to get a part time job (even if it's once a week) at a clinic as a Veterinary assistant to help gain experience
 - More support and flexibility for students working internships
- Fair treatment. My biggest difficulties in the program usually stemmed from rules I later found only applied to me.
- Smaller class sizes, stricter program requirements and applications versus lottery for admissions
- I think the program does a good job covering as much as it can in the two years by giving students many different opportunities for learning new skills. I think the only thing that could give students more preparation is working more hours at their internship/job site.
 - More support and flexibility for students working internships

Full Survey Results: Alumni Year 3

Preparedness

Alumni who graduated three years ago were asked whether Foothill's AVMA-accredited program prepared them for a career in veterinary technology. Among all (11) respondents, 64%

(7) indicated that they had been “extremely well” prepared by Foothill’s program, 18% (2) indicated “very well,” and 18% (2) did not answer the question.

How Prepared	#	%
Extremely well	7	64%
Very well	2	18%
Somewhat well	0	0%
No Response	2	18%
Total	11	100%

Best Prepared Skills

Year 3 alumni were asked to identify the top three areas that best prepared them for or a veterinary technician career (from 14 multi-choice options and one open-ended response option). Two-thirds of respondents (67% or 6) indicated both “Anesthesia” and “Basic clinical skills” were best-prepared skills, with another one-third (33% or 3) indicating “Pharmacy and Pharmacology,” “Surgical nursing,” and “Medical nursing” were their best-prepared skills.¹³

Best Prepared Skills	#	%
Anesthesia	6	67%
Basic clinical skills	6	67%
Medical nursing	3	33%
Pharmacy and pharmacology	3	33%
Surgical nursing	3	33%
Clinical pathology	2	22%
Exam room procedures	2	22%
Diagnostic imaging	1	11%
Emergency medicine	1	11%
Animal diseases and public health	0	0%
Basic sciences	0	0%
Dentistry	0	0%
Office and hospital procedures	0	0%
Treatment room procedures	0	0%
Other	0	0%

¹³ This table does not represent the total (14) number of respondents, as multiple fields could represent one response. Respondents who indicated “No” to be currently employed for pay in a veterinary technician related job as their primary occupation were omitted for non-response.

Least Prepared

Year 3 alumni were also asked to identify the top areas where they felt least prepared (from 14 multi-choice options and one open-ended response option). These topics included “Dentistry” (44%), “Clinical pathology” (33%), “Diagnostic imaging” (33%), “Emergency medicine” (33%), and “Office and hospital procedures” (33%).¹⁴

Least Prepared Skills	#	%
Dentistry	4	44%
Clinical pathology	3	33%
Diagnostic imaging	3	33%
Emergency medicine	3	33%
Office and hospital procedures	3	33%
Pharmacy and pharmacology	2	22%
Anesthesia	1	11%
Treatment room procedures	1	11%
Animal diseases and public health	0	0%
Basic clinical skills	0	0%
Basic sciences	0	0%
Exam room procedures	0	0%
Medical nursing	0	0%
Surgical nursing	0	0%
Other	0	0%

Employment

82% (9) of respondents indicated “Yes,” they were currently employed for pay in a veterinary technician related job as their primary occupation, and 18% (2) indicated “No.”

Employed	#	%
Yes	9	82%
No	2	18%
Total	11	100%

Work Status

Of the (9) respondents who indicated being employed in the veterinary technician field, 89% (8) indicated they worked “Full-time,” and 11% (1) indicating they worked part-time.

Work Status	#	%
Full-time: 40 hours per week or more	8	89%
Part-time: Less than 40 hours per week	1	11%
Total	9	100%

¹⁴ This table does not represent the total (14) number of respondents, as multiple fields could represent one response. Respondents who indicated “No” to be currently employed for pay in a veterinary technician related job as their primary occupation were omitted for non-response.

Practice Description

Respondents who reported being employed in the veterinary technician field (9) were most likely working in a “Small animal (dog and/or cat and/or pocket pet)” practice (55% or 6), followed by a “Not-for-profit organization (humane society, nature center, etc.)” (18% or 2). The remaining Year 3 alumni indicated they were working in an “Academic”, “Exotic exclusive”, or “Small animal plus avian” setting (11% or 1 for each setting).

Practice Description	#	%
Small animal (dog and/or cat and/or pocket pet)	6	67%
Not-for-profit organization (humane society, nature ctr, etc.)	2	22%
Academic	1	11%
Exotic exclusive	1	11%
Small animal plus avian	1	11%
Research	1	11%
Avian exclusive	0	0%
Equine exclusive	0	0%
Government	0	0%
Industry or commercial organizations	0	0%
Large animal exclusive	0	0%
Mixed practice, large and small animal	0	0%
Uniformed services	0	0%
Other	0	0%

Time at position

Among respondents who reported current employment in the veterinary technician field (9), 44% (4) of respondents indicated “More than 1 year but less than 2 years”, 22% (2) for “More than 2 years” and “6 months but less than 1 year”, 11% (1) “Less than 6 months”, and 22% (2) did not respond to the question.

Time at Position	#	%
More than two years	2	22%
More than one year but less than two years	4	44%
Six months but less than one year	2	22%
Less than six months	1	11%
Total	9	100%

Note: Two (2) respondents did not answer this question (N=11).

County

Almost half of respondents indicated their current employment is either in Santa Clara or San Mateo Counties (44%). One-third reported working in another Bay Area county (Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco), while the remaining Year 3 alumni are working in Southern California (San Fernando County) or out-of-state (Colorado) (22% or 2).

County	#	%
San Mateo	2	22%
Santa Clara	2	22%
Alameda	1	11%
Contra Costa	1	11%
Larimer County - Fort Collins, CO	1	11%
San Fernando Valley	1	11%
San Francisco	1	11%
Total	9	100%

Hourly Wage

Over half of the Year 3 Alumni respondents reported earning between “\$20.01/hr to \$25/hr” (56% or 5), with another 22% (2) between “\$25.01/hr to \$30/hr.”

Hourly Wage	#	%
More than \$30/hr	1	11%
\$25.01/hr to \$30/hr	2	22%
\$20.01/hr to \$25/hr	5	56%
\$10.01/hr to \$15/hr	1	11%
Total	9	100%

Note: Two (2) respondents did not answer this question (N=11).

Volunteer

The majority of Year 3 Alumni do not volunteer in a veterinary technician capacity (82% or 9).

Volunteer	#	%
Yes	2	18%
No	9	82%
Total	11	100%

Professional Associations

Almost three-fourths of respondents indicated “No,” (73% or 8) and 27% (3) indicated, “Yes.”

Professional Association	#	%
Yes	3	27%
No	8	73%
Total	11	100%

VT Job Description

Respondents who indicated having employment in the veterinary technician field were asked to describe their job title in an open-ended response; similar responses grouped for readability. Over half (57% or 8 indicated their job title was “Registered Veterinary Technician,” while 7% (1) selected “ER/ICU RVT,” and 36% (5) did not respond to the question.

Job Description	#	%
ER/ICU RVT	1	7%
Registered Veterinary Technician	8	57%
No Response	5	36%
Total	14	100%

Recommend Foothill’s Program

Those surveyed reported they would recommend Foothill College’s veterinary technology program to others (100% or 11).

Recommend	#	%
Yes	11	100%
Maybe	0	0%
Total	11	100%

Open-ended responses (10) of those asked if they would recommend Foothill College’s veterinary technology program to others were grouped by themes present in an attempt to categorize messages presented.¹⁵ Responses sorted into those who responded “Yes” (7) along their open-ended responses. Full responses are listed at the end of this section.

Response Groupings	#
The program prepared me well	7
Affordable	1
Positive experience	2

Those surveyed were asked to provide any ideas for strengthening the program that could have prepared them better for entry-level practice as a Veterinary Technician with an open-ended response. Open-ended responses (9) sorted by themes present in an attempt to categorize messages presented. Full responses are listed at the end of this section.¹⁶

Grouping of Ideas	#
Incorporate more hands-on or real-life scenario practice.	3
Made comments but had no suggestions	3
More encouragement, mental health support from instructors	1
More support for students working internships	1
Promote more industry participation	1

¹⁶ This table does not represent the total number of responses as some (longer) responses were tagged with multiple themes in an attempt to capture their intent.

Three-year Alumni – Open-ended responses¹⁷

Would you recommend Foothill’s Veterinary Technology program to others?

Yes

- Great program, taught by dedicated amazing staff
 - Positive experience
- Yes! I have a few colleagues who have asked about the program and I have said nothing but great things about. Have continued to encourage those interested to pursue a vet tech education to learn the “why” and not just perform the “what”.
 - Positive experience
- This program best-prepared helps students without any experience become a full functional tech after graduation. The skills and academic knowledge are well taught in this program.
 - The program prepared me well
- It is the best program to prepare you for the field. I feel it’s the most extensive.
 - The program prepared me well
- Excellent program. Great for overlap into other medical professions.
 - The program prepared me well
- I work with almost exclusively Carrington graduates. And I truly feel more educated in more areas than they are.
 - The program prepared me well
- Very extensive programs. Felt very prepared after graduating.
 - The program prepared me well
- Very helpful program to prepare you for the veterinary field and multiple areas you can grow in. Very diverse teaching methods for all types of students. The hands on experience was very useful. I enjoyed learning something new every day and able to apply it to my current position.
 - The program prepared me well
- This is an excellent program, and by far the best option compared to other programs in the area. It is also affordable.
 - Affordable
- I think the education I got really benefited me to enter a workforce with a bunch of people with no formal education in the field and/or on the job training I've also found since leaving CA that the veterinary environment is a lot harsher and employers claim they wanted educated people and I've encountered a lot of DVMs, fellow CVTs too intimidated by my knowledge and it has kept me from getting certain jobs even at university levels
 - The program prepared me well

¹⁷ Names of faculty have been removed from these responses.

What ideas do you have for strengthening the program that could have prepared you better for entry-level practice as a Veterinary Technician?

- I think as much hands-on experience as possible is helpful.
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice
- What encouraged me to pursue a career in research veterinary technology was the tour we took at Stanford research center. That experience opened my eyes to the various opportunities within research to expand my skill set and work with a range of species. Not only did I get a good understanding of the day to day responsibilities as a tech in research, but I also got a pretty good idea of what the salary benefits would be in the field. The Stanford techs inspired me to choose the route I am on today and I will forever be grateful for that experience. Being able to make a difference in our two-legged patients and our four-legged patients. Contributing to the innovation of therapies/medicines for humans and animals. Foothill VT should continue to have days like this to tour all industries within veterinary technology so students have a more clear and confident career path/development. As stated in a previous question, more hands on rodent restraint and techniques would have been helpful (hands on dosing & blood collection routes - IP, IV, IM, PO, SQ, ID, RO, jugular, submental, etc.). Luckily I learned majority on the job, but it would have been nice to have done all of the above at least once or a few times.
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice
- The program animals on campus are really precious for our skills practice. Also, the instructors are knowledgeable and informative.
 - Comments, but no suggestions
- Letting the students know this job will always be for love, not for the money. They're going to have to work hard for very little pay in a job that demands a lot. That was the hardest pill for me to swallow. Academically, I feel like more time to intern while going to school would be beneficial. A lot of the skills I developed came after I graduated. I feel like the on-the-job training could have really benefited my classes and helped retention do the material after graduation.
 - More support for students working internships
- Active participation in state-wide and national vet tech profession betterment. Pushing vet nurse title and wage increase
 - Promote more industry participation
- More hands on with IVC, wrapping limbs with bandaging and more hands on with taking xrays, evaluating technique and retaking them with better technique
 - Incorporate more hands on or real-life scenario practice
- I felt the program prepared me beyond an entry level position.
 - Comments, but no suggestions
- No suggestions, it was a well-rounded program and it would be too hard to cram in any more information in 2 years. The rest just needs to be learned on the job.

- Comments, but no suggestions
- I think it would be helpful to have better coping skills with bullying in the workplace among co-workers I've been the victim of this a lot since leaving CA and tools to cope with that mentally and emotionally would have been very helpful because I almost left this career for something else
 - More encouragement, mental health support from instructors

Full Survey Results: Employer

Skills

Employers indicated whether Foothill College veterinary technology graduates generally possess good basic knowledge and clinical skills related to the field, and some explained their response. 94% (16) of respondents indicated “Yes”, and 6% (1) did not respond to the question.¹⁸

Possess good basic knowledge and skills	#	%
Yes	16	94%
No Response	1	6%
Total	17	100%

Best Prepared

Those surveyed were asked to indicate three topic areas where Foothill College veterinary technology graduates are generally better prepared compared to other program graduates (from fourteen areas and one open-ended response option). 71% (12) of respondents indicated “Basic clinical skills,” 41% (7) “Basic sciences,” and 35% (6) “Medical nursing.” No respondents indicated “Dentistry” or “Diagnostic imaging,” and 6% (1) indicated “Other” stating: “I value how Foothill teaches the students how to be good employees as well.”

Best Prepared Skills	#	%
Basic clinical skills	12	71%
Basic sciences	7	41%
Medical nursing	6	35%
Anesthesia	5	29%
Treatment room procedures	5	29%
Animal diseases and public health	3	18%
Exam room procedures	3	18%
Surgical nursing	3	18%
Clinical pathology	2	12%
Office and hospital procedures	2	12%
Pharmacy and pharmacology	2	12%
Emergency medicine	1	6%
Other	1	6%
Dentistry	0	0%
Diagnostic imaging	0	0%

¹⁸ Open ended responses to this question are listed in full at the end of the Employer section.

Least Prepared

Those surveyed were asked to indicate three topic areas where Foothill College veterinary technology graduates are generally less prepared compared to other program graduates (from fourteen areas and one open-ended option). About one-fourth (24% or 4) indicated “Dentistry,” 18% (3) “Anesthesia,” 18% (3) “Emergency medicine,” and 18% (3) “Other.” The remaining (3) respondents who marked “Other,” two stated “N/A” or “None,” and the third remarked “no area less prepared but could use additional training.”

Least Prepared Skills	#	%
Dentistry	4	24%
Anesthesia	3	18%
Emergency medicine	3	18%
Other	3	18%
Clinical pathology	2	12%
Diagnostic imaging	2	12%
Exam room procedures	2	12%
Medical nursing	2	12%
Office and hospital procedures	2	12%
Animal diseases and public health	1	6%
Basic clinical skills	1	6%
Basic sciences	1	6%
Pharmacy and pharmacology	1	6%
Surgical nursing	1	6%
Treatment room procedures	1	6%

Valued Characteristic

Employers were asked to indicate the single characteristic they most valued when hiring veterinary technicians (from four options and the option to add an open-ended response). Over half (59% or 10) of respondents indicated “Work Habits Punctuality Professionalism etc.,” and another one-fourth (24% or 4) reported “Clinical Skills,” while 12% (2) “Communication Skills,” and 6% (1) indicated Technical Knowledge”.

Valued Characteristic	#	%
Work Habits Punctuality Professionalism etc.	10	59%
Clinical Skills	4	24%
Communication Skills	2	12%
Technical Knowledge	1	6%
Total	17	100%

Open-ended responses are listed below (unedited):

- Along with all the others listed are all equally important. I look for a well-rounded individual.
- Technical skills can be taught. Work ethic, professionalism, and soft skills cannot.
- Eagerness to learn and progress in the field. Proactive in getting the training they need. Gets along with others. Can work in a team environment. Technical skills come with time and commitment to improve one’s skills. If you do not have a good attitude or

cannot get along with anyone, good clinical skills and or knowledge do not carry as much weight.

- We hire for culture (compassion, team work, willing to admit what one does not know, client communication). Skills and knowledge are important but can usually be developed.
- Work habits and communications skills equally valued as well.

Location

Employers surveyed were asked which county their practice is located. Over half identified Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties (53%), 18% (3) each for Alameda and San Francisco counties, and 12% (2) Santa Cruz county.

Location	#	%
Alameda County	3	18%
San Francisco County	3	18%
San Mateo County	4	24%
Santa Clara County	5	29%
Santa Cruz County	2	12%
Total	17	100%

Practice Description

Employers surveyed were asked to describe their practice.¹⁹ The majority of respondents (82%) indicated “Small animal (dog and/or cat and/or pocket pet),” with 12% (2) each indicating “Not-for-profit organization (humane society, nature center, etc.),” “Small animal plus avian,” and “Other.”

Practice Description	#	%
Small animal (dog and/or cat and/or pocket pet)	14	82%
Not-for-profit organization (humane society, nature ctr, etc.)	2	12%
Small animal plus avian	2	12%
Other	2	12%
Academic	0	0%
Avian exclusive	0	0%
Equine exclusive	0	0%
Exotic exclusive	0	0%
Government	0	0%
Industry or commercial organizations	0	0%
Large animal exclusive	0	0%
Mixed practice, large and small animal	0	0%
Uniformed services	0	0%
Research	0	0%

¹⁹ This table does not represent the total (17) number of respondents, as multiple fields could represent one response.

Other practice descriptions reported are listed below:

- do see rodents, and reptiles on certain occ [sic]
- Emergency/specialty

Starting Wage

Employers surveyed were asked about the starting wage offered for veterinary technicians at their practice. Over half (59% or 10) of respondents indicated “\$15.01/hr - \$20/hr” and another 41% (7) indicated “\$20.01/hr - \$25/hr”. Respondents indicated no other starting hourly rates.

Starting Wage	#	%
\$15.01/hr - \$20/hr	10	59%
\$20.01/hr - \$25/hr	7	41%
Total	17	100%

Wages After One to Three Years

Employers were asked about wages for veterinary technicians at their practice with one to three years of experience. Almost half (47% or 8) indicated “\$20.01/hr - \$25/hr”, another 35% (6) “\$15.01/hr - \$20/hr”, and 18% (3) “\$25.01/hr - \$30/hr”. Respondents indicated no other hourly wage rates.

After Wage	#	%
\$15.01/hr - \$20/hr	6	35%
\$20.01/hr - \$25/hr	8	47%
\$25.01/hr - \$30/hr	3	18%
Total	17	100%

Would Hire from Foothill

The majority of employers (94%) indicated they would hire another Foothill program graduate, with one respondent indicating “Maybe.” Open-ended responses listed in full below the following table.

Would Hire from FH	#	%
Yes	16	94%
Maybe	1	6%
Total	17	100%

Would Hire from Foothill – Yes

- They tend to continue to be eager to grow their skills, are less reserved and more likely to push their boundaries and gain skills.
- They are easier to train due to the knowledge they've obtained.
- As with any program, some students are more adept than others. The Foothill program students we have been involved with seem very well prepared for work in a general practice clinic.
- The employees that we have had that came from your program were well qualified to perform their job.

- We generally have these graduates here for at least 3 quarters which serves as an extended working interview. During this time we learn what their strengths and areas of growth are and we work with them to develop all skills.
- They are more prepared than C. College students in all areas from question number 5.
- I always seek out Foothill graduates! Once they receive additional clinical training, they are always excellent techs and employees.
- It has been a pleasure having a new hire of such caliber

Would Hire from Foothill – Maybe

- I always judge a candidate on their own merit and skill set. I do not have the same ready made expectations of Foothill graduates.

Employer - Open Ended Responses

Do Foothill Students Possess Good Basic Knowledge & Skills?

Yes

- They are generally eager to learn, come in with a better understanding of disease processes so they can tie together their knowledge with the things they are being asked to do.
- Students seemed more prepared to what to expect.
- In my experience the Foothill techs have had a thorough education as far as academic study is concerned.
- The Foothill College program seems to prepare students very well for passing their licensing exams and for providing them with good basic knowledge.
- The employees that we have had that came from your program were well qualified to perform their job.
- Generally Foothill students have relatively good knowledge of veterinary basics however technical skill is variable (in regards to basic skills). Some students have great skill while others have below basic skill sets.
- Students are learning the basic skills at school and are able to apply them as they rotate through Outpatient, ICU, Lab/X-ray, and Surgery depts.
- Yes their knowledge is good. They just need hands on practice in order to connect the knowledge and physical skills. The only way to gain this connection is by preforming them in practice.
- I have found that Foothill RVT graduates have an excellent base of clinical knowledge. They have also been taught the "citizenship" aspects of how to be a good employee.
- have a great deal of knowledge, decent clinical skills, and equally important know how to get the answers they need
- Normally have advanced knowledge of the disease process and great technical skill sets

No Response

- I left the yes/no blank because in the past it would've always been a yes. We currently have Foothill graduates on staff and they are an important part of the team. The last few Foothill students have been disappointing. Regardless of there [sic] nice personalities. Some of the challenges we faced were with listening, retention, and or

getting involved. Unfortunately all of these are imperative to learning and growing both in the field as well as on a technical team.

Methodology

The Veterinary Technology surveys were administered online between June 24 and July 29. The program director sent an email inviting all graduating students, Year 1 and Year 3 alumni, and employers of program graduates with the survey link embedded.

Source

FHDA IRP, Remark survey software