

National Board Report

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Confused Candidates

The NBVME office recently completed processing NAVLE applications for the November-December testing window. Most candidates seem to have little or no difficulty submitting the required applications and fees by the appropriate deadlines, but there are always a few who have problems. To be fair to all candidates we must enforce established policies and deadlines in a consistent manner.

Some candidates seem to rely more on what classmates or school officials tell them than on what is available to them on the NBVME website and in the NAVLE candidate bulletin. Others claim that absence from school for clinical rotations prevented them from meeting the deadline. Still others just can't seem to be able to read clear instructions, and/or fail to contact our office for assistance when they have questions. It seems that many of these are among the ones who wait until the last minute to apply.

The main source of confusion is the requirement for candidates to submit two applications, one national NAVLE application and a separate application for approval by a licensing board. Two years ago, the NBVME proposed eliminating the separate board approval step. Most boards (including the 23 that use the NBVME office to handle their approvals) favored the idea, but a few had some understandable concerns with the proposal as presented. The NBVME is exploring ways to address these concerns in an effort to come up with a plan that all parties can accept.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

July NBVME Meeting Report

The NBVME held its summer meeting in Bar Harbor, Maine July 22-23.

In Executive Session, the board approved a budget for 2011-2012, and agreed that the NAVLE fee for the 2012-2013 testing cycle would remain \$550, the same as it was for 2010-11 and 2011-12. The board accepted the audit for the 2009-10 fiscal year, showing income of \$3,116,595, expenses of \$2,451,209, and unrestricted net assets on June 30, 2010 of \$4,423,071.

During the General Session, the board gave final approval to an NBVME member job description that lists the duties and qualities expected of an NBVME member. It will be shared with constituent organizations when they are asked to appoint members to the NBVME.

Dr. Jay Hedrick, NBVME Chair, presented a recommendation for two new standing committees. An Executive Director Advisory Committee will work with the Executive Director on existing and new examination projects, contracts, and vendor relations. Dr. Dennis Feinberg was appointed to chair the new committee, which will also include Drs. Gary Gackstetter and Meg Glattly. The other new committee is a Finance Committee, which will review budget and financial information prior to each board meeting, and also look at the investment policy and financial records and reports. The Finance Committee will include NBVME Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Benjamin Franklin, Dr. John Tait, and Ms. Joyceanne Fick.

Responding to comments made by licensing board members during the NBVME's 2008-2010 visits to boards, and in a follow-up survey of board members conducted this spring, the NBVME decided to work with the NBME on a new medical records examination. To keep costs down, the examination likely will be a paper and pencil examination given by licensing boards on demand, and graded in the NBVME office. This procedure is used presently with the NBVME's two species specific examinations.

Dr. Marguerite Pappaioanou, Executive Director of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges gave an update on the North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium (NAVMEC). The NBVME served as a co-sponsor of NAVMEC, with former member Dr. Mike Thomas serving as Vice-Chair of the NAVMEC Board.

Also in attendance at the meeting was Dr. Peter Scoles, Senior Vice President of the National Board of Medical Examiners. Dr. Scoles reviewed the US Medical Licensing Examination program, and discussed ways to assess clinical skills, professional behavior, and communications. He offered to work with the NBVME on future collaborative projects.

The board appointed Drs. Susan Little, Norman LaFaunce, and Karen Lehe to new three-year terms on the Examination Development Advisory Board.

NBVME officers for 2011-2012 are Drs. Rick Tubbs, Chair; Dennis Feinberg, Chair-Elect; Ben Franklin, Secretary-Treasurer; and Jay Hedrick, Past Chair.

EXPANDED OVERSEAS NAVLE TESTING

When the NAVLE was first offered at Prometric testing centers outside the US, US Territories, and Canada in 2003, it was given only in countries where there was an AVMA accredited veterinary school. Beginning with the April 2011 administration, the NAVLE is now offered at additional overseas locations, at Prometric centers that also offer the United States Medical Licensing Examination. These centers meet the same standards for facilities, staffing, and security as do centers in North America.

Following are the overseas locations where NAVLE candidates took the examination during the November-December 2010 and April 2011 testing windows:

Allahabad, India - 2
 Amsterdam, Netherlands - 10
 Ankara, Turkey - 1
 Auckland, New Zealand - 28
 Barcelona, Spain - 1
 Buenos Aires, Argentina - 1
 Dubai, UAE - 2
 Dublin, Ireland - 30
 Edinburgh, UK - 48
 Glasgow, UK - 38
 Gurgaon, India - 16
 Hong Kong, - 1
 Hyderabad, India - 8
 London, UK - 68
 Melbourne, Australia - 48
 Perth, Australia - 45
 Seoul, South Korea - 10
 Singapore - 2
 Sydney, Australia - 25

2011 NBVME Award: Dr. Mike Thomas

Dr. Mike Thomas received the NBVME Award during the board's July 22 meeting in Bar Harbor.



Dr. Thomas graduated from veterinary school at Auburn University in 1968. In 1982, he moved back to his native Indiana, where he now owns a group of veterinary hospitals. Dr. Thomas served as President of the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) in 2001-02. He has been active in other professional organizations, including the Companion Animal Parasite Council, the Veterinary Information Network, and several practice management groups. The AAHA appointed Dr. Thomas to the NBVME in 2001, and he served for three, three-year terms, chairing the board from 2005-2006 and again from 2006-2007.

Significant accomplishments made by the NBVME under the leadership of Dr. Thomas include the development and successful implementation of the Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment, hiring of new legal counsel, two strategic planning sessions with outside facilitators, adoption of a NAVLE retake policy, revision of the NBVME Bylaws, the use of the Qualifying Examination by accredited veterinary schools, revision of the NBVME's species specific examinations, and the beginning of an

outreach program to veterinary licensing boards. During the outreach program, Dr. Thomas visited 15 state licensing boards, providing information to board members on the NBVME, and collecting input from board members. From 2006 to 2008, as a member of the NBVME Executive Committee, Dr. Thomas served on several hearing

panels, investigating cases of possible irregular behavior on the part of NAVLE candidates.

In presenting the award to Dr. Thomas, Dr. Hedrick cited his dedication to the betterment of the profession, his remarkable work ethic, his willingness to help with any board activity whenever possible, and his strong desire to see the NBVME fulfill its vision as the recognized leader providing examinations for veterinary medicine. Dr. Hedrick noted that Dr. Thomas has continued to serve after leaving the board, through participation as the NBVME's representative to NAVMEC, and participation in NAVLE item review meetings. In accepting the award, Dr. Thomas commented that his accomplishments would not have been possible without the work of others who had gone before him, and he stressed the importance of giving back to the profession.

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The purpose of the *National Board Report* is to educate, to inform, and to communicate information about the objectives and programs of the NBVME. The opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official opinions, views, or policies of the NBVME or any of its members, unless expressly so stated.

Dennis A. Feinberg, DVM, *Chair-Elect*; Linda L. Blythe, DVM, PhD; Joyceanne Fick, *Public Member*; Benjamin Franklin, Jr., DVM, *Secretary-Treasurer*; Meg Glattly, DVM; Gary D. Gackstetter, DVM, MPH, PhD; Thomas B. Hairgrove, DVM, DABVP; Jay Hedrick, DVM, *Past Chair*; Jayne Jensen, DVM; Sylvie Latour, DVM; Lila Miller, DVM; John D. Tait, DVM, MBA; Rick Tubbs, DVM, MS, MBA, DACT, DABVP, *Chair*. John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD, *Executive Director*



NBVME in Bar Harbor, Maine. L to R: John Boyce, Gary Gackstetter, Sylvie Latour, Jayne Jensen, Ben Franklin, Meg Glattly, Jay Hedrick, Joyceanne Fick, Lila Miller, Dennis Feinberg, Rick Tubbs, John Tait, Lynda Blythe, and Tom Hairgrove.

NAVLE Standard Setting Exercise Planned

Like most licensing examinations, the NAVLE is scored using a criterion-referenced, or content-based, scoring procedure. The passing standard is fixed, and all candidates who meet or exceed the passing standard will pass, regardless of the performance of other candidates. This scoring approach requires periodic evaluation of the

passing standard by a group of content experts. The present passing standard was derived and approved in 2008.

A new NAVLE standard setting exercise will be conducted by the National Board of Medical Examiners in December. A group of judges will evaluate the difficulty of a set of

NAVLE items. NBME psychometricians will use the collective ratings to establish a recommended passing standard. That standard will be approved by the NBVME, and will be applied to the November-December 2011 examination before scores are released in January 2012.

New NBVME Staff Member: Laurie Holverson

Laurie Holverson joined the NBVME staff as Office Manager in June, replacing Debbie Larson, who retired after eight years of service to the NBVME.



Laurie worked for 15 years as a licensed veterinary technician at several Bismarck-Mandan area practices. Prior to joining the NBVME staff, Laurie worked eight years for a company that conducts clinical trials. As a Certified Clinical Research Coordinator, she worked with local physicians, their patients, and pharmaceutical companies to organize and conduct clinical research studies. Downsizing in the pharmaceutical industry resulted in her being laid off from that job earlier this year.

Laurie's primary duties at the NBVME include processing NAVLE applications for the 23 state licensing boards for which the NBVME handles approvals, and arranging NBVME meetings.

Laurie is a native of Bismarck, and is a graduate of North Dakota State University and Dickinson State University. She is also a certified nursing assistant.

Laurie has been training, showing, coaching and judging dressage and hunter horses and riders for over 20 years. She earned her United States Dressage Federation gold medal, and is a USDF associate instructor. She is a member of the US Equestrian Federation, the American Riding Instructor Association, the American Association for Horsemanship Safety, Dakota Dressage and Eventing, and the Bismarck English Riders. Laurie has a twin sister, and is fortunate to have her adult son and parents nearby. Laurie and her boyfriend Terry enjoy outdoor activities.

NBVME Examination Updates

NAVLE®

The application deadline for the November-December 2011 NAVLE testing window was August 1, and a total of 3,809 candidate eligibility files have been processed in the NBVME office and submitted to the NBME. Candidates will be able to access their e-permits online by the end of September, allowing them to make their testing appointments with Prometric.

NAVLE Self-Assessments, consisting of 200 items formatted like the actual examination, are available for purchase on the NBVME's web site for \$50 each. The score report includes a prediction of future NAVLE performance based on the candidate's performance on the Assessment. There are three English forms of the Assessment and two French forms.

Copies of the 2010-2011 NAVLE Technical Report were mailed to each of the NBVME's constituent

organizations and to each licensing board earlier this month. The report is also available on the NBVME's web site, as is a separate 2010-2011 candidate performance report. A total of 4,592 candidates took the NAVLE during the 2010-2011 testing cycle, including 3,239 criterion candidates. The passing rate for criterion candidates at graduation (including those who passed on their first attempt in the fall, and those who failed in the fall but passed on repeating the examination in April) was 98%, the same as 2009-2010.

Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Examination (QE), a 300-item web-based basic science examination, is the step three requirement of the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE). The NBVME office has made arrangements to administer the QE to 44 PAVE candidates at 12 locations on September 15. Future QE

administrations are planned for January 19 and May 17, 2012. The 2011-2012 QE Bulletin of Information for Candidates is available on the NBVME's web site. Copies of the 2010-2011 QE Technical Report were mailed earlier this month to all licensing boards that accept PAVE certification. The report is also available on the NBVME's web site.

Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA)

The VCSA is a two day hands-on examination of clinical and communication skills, used as an option for step four of the PAVE program. The next administration has not been scheduled at this time. Candidates apply for the VCSA through the AAVSB office. A Technical Report on the VCSA, covering all administrations to date, was mailed earlier this month to licensing boards that accept PAVE certification.