

National Board Report

A Quarterly Newsletter of the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

Volume 17 Issue 3

© National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners

August 2012

Deadlines

This month, the NBVME office completed processing NAVLE applications for the November-December 2012 testing window, and submitted the eligibility files to the National Board of Medical Examiners.

The application receipt deadline for the November-December testing window is August 1, and that deadline has not changed since 2008. Nevertheless, when the on-line application was taken down from the NBVME web site the morning of August 2, the telephone calls and e-mail messages started coming in. Candidates who could not document that they had submitted both the national NAVLE application and a state approval application prior to the deadline were not happy to learn that they would have to wait until December to apply for the April 2013 testing window.

The NBVME is not in the business of preventing qualified candidates from taking the NAVLE. However, in order to be fair to all candidates, we must be consistent in adhering to the established deadlines. Our contracts with licensing boards and with the NBME specify deadlines for each step in the process, and those deadlines have to be met. We are always looking for ways to make the process simpler for candidates, and are open to suggestions on how we can improve things, so that we don't have people missing important deadlines. Ultimately, though, it is the candidate's responsibility to read and follow directions, ask questions if they are not sure about something, and get everything in on time.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

July NBVME Meeting Report

The NBVME held its summer meeting in Boise, Idaho July 19-21. Boise is the home of NBVME member Joyceanne Fick, and it provided an outstanding setting for the meeting.

In Executive Session, the board approved a budget for the new fiscal year (June 1, 2012 - May 31, 2013), projecting income of about \$3 million and expenses of about \$2.5 million.

Also in Executive Session, the board reviewed an interim progress report on the proposed collaboration between the NBVME and the National Board of Medical Examiners, focusing on the NAVLE. Dr. Peter Scoles, NBME Senior Vice President, and Ms. Janine Hawley, NBME Senior Assessment Officer, participated in that portion of the Executive Session.

During the General Session, the board reviewed correspondence regarding membership, noting that three members were completing the maximum of three, three-year terms on the board (see page 3). Dr. Jack Wilson was named by the Canadian National Examining Board to succeed Dr. Sylvie Latour, and the American Association of Equine Practitioners selected Dr. Patricia Provost to succeed Dr. Benjamin Franklin. Dr. Provost was a member of the NBVME's Examination Development Advisory Board (EDAB). A successor to Dr. Lila Miller will be elected by the AAVSB at its meeting in September.

The board reviewed the status of a proposal to eliminate the separate state NAVLE application and approval process, and have all candidates be approved directly by the NBVME. Although the proposal

would greatly simplify the application process for candidates and boards, a few boards have expressed opposition to it, citing provisions in their state's practice act. The NBVME agreed to continue the present application and approval process, with the NBVME office approving candidates on behalf of those licensing boards that request that service. The NBVME is performing this service for 25 boards for the 2012-13 testing cycle.

The board reiterated its policy that NAVLE scores are to be reported only to licensing boards, and not to third parties, such as residency programs.

The board agreed to explore the possibility of adding a third NAVLE testing window between April and November-December, and also to consider moving from fixed testing windows to continuous testing.

The board appointed Drs. Darcy Shaw and Mark Hilton to new three-year terms on the EDAB. To succeed Dr. Provost as one of the two equine content experts on the EDAB, the board named Dr. Fernando Marqués, a faculty member at the Western College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Saskatchewan. Dr. Marqués has served as a NAVLE equine item writer for several years.

NBVME officers for 2012-2013 are Dr. Dennis Feinberg, Chair; Dr. Gary Gackstetter, Chair-Elect; Ms. Joyceanne Fick, Secretary-Treasurer; and Dr. Rick Tubbs, Past Chair.

The next NBVME meeting will be in Atlanta January 24-26, and the board will hold a one-day strategic planning meeting in Minneapolis on May 10.

CANDIDATE FEEDBACK

Each year, Prometric and the NBME compile responses provided by NAVLE candidates to the post-test survey. All of the responses, including hundreds of free-text comments, are provided to NBVME members, NBVME staff, and EDAB members for review and evaluation. A summary of some of the responses is included in the annual NAVLE Technical Report.

The responses fall into three main areas of responsibility. Concerns about the test items, including style, format, and image quality, are primarily the responsibility of the NBME's editorial staff. Concerns about the test delivery process, including computer operation and the test center environment, are Prometric's responsibility. Finally, the NBVME office is the primary focus of concerns about the NAVLE application and approval process, and correspondence with candidates.

Clearly, it is not possible to deliver a complex examination like the NAVLE to over 4,500 candidates per year at nearly 300 sites all over the world and satisfy everyone, even though we would all like to do just that. However, the NBVME values input from candidates, whom we view as our customers, and we evaluate these comments seriously and take steps each year to improve the NAVLE testing experience.

Analysis of NAVLE® Candidate Performance

For the past seven years, the NBVME has prepared annual reports showing the performance of NAVLE candidates from accredited schools on the main content areas of the examination. These reports are available on the "NAVLE Reports" page on the NBVME's website, (www.nbvme.org/?id=82). The most recent report was prepared in July, after the release of the 2011-12 NAVLE School Score Reports to accredited schools.

The first section of the report shows that 96% of accredited school graduates passed the NAVLE at the time of graduation. This includes candidates who passed on their first attempt in either November-December or April (93% and 83%, respectively) and those who failed the examination in the fall but passed on repeating it in April (67%). The numbers reveal that 130 of the 3,603 2012 graduates of AVMA accredited schools who took the NAVLE during 2011-2012 did not pass the examination at the time of graduation.

When the schools approve their candidate rosters each year before the school score reports are generated, they can provide information on the student's class rank, class focus, and GRE rank. If they do, their report will include performance data in those areas. It is not surprising that performance on the NAVLE is correlated well with class rank; the passing rate for the four quartiles is 100%, 98%, 94%, and 80%. Similarly, the candi-

date's score on the Graduate Record Examination, which many schools use as a criterion for admission, is also clearly related to subsequent performance on the NAVLE.

Because the NAVLE includes questions on all animal species commonly seen in private practice, it is sometimes seen as an unfair assessment for students who choose to track in one or more species areas. However, these score reports show that the overall passing percentage and mean NAVLE score for students in the five class focus categories (small animal, mixed animal, companion animal (which includes small animal and equine), food animal, and other) are virtually identical.

The final section of the report shows how students identified with the five class focus areas performed on NAVLE items in the canine, feline, bovine, porcine, and equine content areas. As one would expect, students in the small animal class focus scored the highest on the canine and feline items, those in the companion animal area (which includes equine) did the best on the equine items, and those in the food animal area did the best on the bovine and porcine items. What is notable, however, is how little difference there really is, with all scores within one standard deviation. In addition, the percent correct on the whole examination was virtually identical (either 73 or 74%) for candidates in all five class focus areas.

The *National Board Report* is published quarterly by the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (NBVME®), PO Box 1356, Bismarck, ND 58502. Phone (701) 224-0332, fax (701) 224-0435, mail@nbvme.org, <http://www.nbvme.org>.

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Dennis A. Feinberg, DVM, *Chair*; Linda L. Blythe, DVM, PhD; Joyceanne Fick, *Public Member and Secretary-Treasurer*; Meg Glattly, DVM; Gary D. Gackstetter, DVM, MPH, PhD, *Chair-Elect*; Thomas B. Hairgrove, DVM, DABVP; Jay Hedrick, DVM; Jayne Jensen, DVM; Patricia J. Provost, MS, VMD, DACVS; John D. Tait, DVM, MBA; Rick Tubbs, DVM, MS, MBA, DACT, DABVP, *Past Chair*; Jack Wilson, DVM. John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD, *Executive Director*



Outgoing Members Honored in Boise

At the end of the July 20 meeting in Boise, three NBVME members were recognized for completing nine years of service on the board. Dr. Rick Tubbs, NBVME Chair, presented plaques to Drs. Ben Franklin, Sylvie Latour, and

Lila Miller. In addition to his position as a board member, Dr. Franklin served on the NBVME Executive Committee for five years as the board's Secretary-Treasurer.

NBVME members are appointed directly by the NBVME's nine constituent organizations to three-year terms. Members may be appointed to a maximum of three terms.

New NBVME Member: Dr. Patricia Provost

The American Association of Equine Practitioners has named Dr. Patricia Provost of North Grafton, Massachusetts to succeed Dr. Benjamin Franklin as its designee on the NBVME. Her first term as an NBVME member began at the close of the July 20 meeting.

A native of western Pennsylvania, Dr. Provost graduated from the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania in 1985. After graduation, she completed an internship in equine medicine and surgery at the University of Missouri, and an equine surgical residency at Michigan State University. Dr. Provost became a Diplomate of the American College of Veterinary Surgeons in 1992. She has been a faculty member at the Tufts Cummings College of Veterinary Medicine since 1990.



At Tufts, Dr. Provost works as an equine surgeon and clinician, and has several teaching responsibilities, including equine clinical skills, large animal medicine and surgery clinics, and fourth year equine surgery clinics. She chaired the Curriculum Committee

for several years, and has recently served as chair of the Companion Animal Health Fund, an internal funding source for research. Dr. Provost is the advisor for the Tufts student chapter of the AAEP.

Dr. Provost has served for several years as a NAVLE equine item writer and reviewer, and several of her students have gone on to serve as NAVLE item writers and in other examination development and review capacities. In 2006, Dr. Provost was appointed by the board to serve as one of the two equine content experts on its Examination Development Advisory Board.

Dr. Provost is an avid rider, says she owns "too many racehorses" and confesses that she is "one cat shy of being a crazy cat person."

NBVME Examination Updates

NAVLE®

A total of 4,025 candidate eligibility files have been received and processed in the NBVME office and submitted to the NBME for the November 12-December 8, 2012 testing window. 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 from the Assessment includes a NAVLE performance prediction based on how well the candidate did on the Assessment. There are three English forms and two French forms of the Assessment available now, and one additional form in each language should be available this fall. Two accredited schools are now purchasing vouchers allowing each of their senior students to purchase an assessment. Additional

schools interested in doing this should contact the NBVME office.

Copies of the 2011-2012 NAVLE Technical Report were mailed to each of the NBVME's constituent organizations, each licensing board, and each accredited veterinary school this month. The report is also available on the NBVME's web site. A total of 4,729 candidates took the NAVLE during the 2011-2012 testing cycle, including 3,603 criterion candidates (senior students at accredited schools taking the examination for the first time), 515 non-criterion candidates from accredited schools (including graduate veterinarians, repeating candidates, and candidates testing with accommodations), and 611 students and graduates from non-accredited schools.

The 96% overall 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 repeat-

ing the examination in April) compares to 98% for 2009-2010 and 2010-2011. The mean score for fall criterion candidates was also somewhat lower in 2011 (521) than it was for the two previous years (534 and 537).

Qualifying Examination

The Qualifying Examination (QE), a 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 28 PAVE candidates at nine locations on September 13. Future QE administrations are planned for January 17 and May 16, 2013. The 2012-2013 QE Bulletin of Information for Candidates is available on the NBVME's web site. Copies of the 2011-2012 QE Technical Report were mailed this month to all licensing boards that accept PAVE certification. The technical report is also available on the NBVME's web site.