

National Board Report

A Quarterly Newsletter of the National Board Examination Committee for Veterinary Medicine

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Looking Back

The older I get, the more I appreciate history. When we are young, we tend to think that we have all the answers. However, it is apparent to me now that we truly do stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us.

I have enjoyed writing the "From the Past" columns for this newsletter (14 of them so far), because it allows me to read through the old NBEC minutes. Doing so helps keep things in perspective.

One of the most significant events in the history of the veterinary medical licensing examination program was the transfer of ownership of the item bank. From the beginning, the test vendor, the Professional Examination Service (PES) owned the item bank for the NBE and, later the CCT. In fact, the NBE was often referred to as the "National Board - PES Test." Dr. Whitey Albrecht was one of those who believed strongly that the examination should be owned by the sponsoring organization, not by the company that develops it. Following a period of determined negotiation, he and his colleagues were able to come up with a contract that specified that the AVMA owned the item bank. That change enabled the NBEC to put the NBE and CCT out for competitive bid for the first time in 1988. It also made it possible for the NBEC to become an independent organization in 1994, and allowed the NBEC to seek competitive bids for the NAVLE in 1997.

Thank you, Dr. Albrecht, and the other visionary NBEC members who served this organization so well in years past.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

Albrecht Receives First NBEC Award

Dr. Duane T. (Whitey) Albrecht of Englewood, Colorado received the first NBEC Award during the NBEC's July 13 meeting in New Orleans.

The award was established by the NBEC earlier this year to recognize people who have made significant personal contributions to the national licensing examination program.

Dr. Albrecht was a logical choice to receive the first award. A member of the NBEC from 1971 to 1988, Dr. Albrecht led the organization through a major restructuring in the late 1970's. He was also instrumental in overseeing transfer of ownership of the examination item banks from the Professional Examination Service to the AVMA/NBEC in 1987. During Dr. Albrecht's service on the NBEC, several other major developments took place, including the introduction of the Clinical Competency Test (CCT) and development of a revised examination blueprint for the National Board Examination (NBE) and CCT.

Examination security was always one of Dr. Albrecht's priorities. He established the NBEC's Security Contingency Committee and led efforts to ensure that new forms of the NBE contained items that were never previously administered, thereby severely inhibiting the ability of candidates to subvert the security of the examination by memorizing questions.

"Among Dr. Albrecht's greatest contributions was his drive for excellence," notes Dr. William Kay, long time consultant to the Professional Examination Service who worked closely with Dr. Albrecht from 1977 to 1988.

Dr. Albrecht's resume includes many notable achievements. Those particularly relevant to the licensing examination program include, in addition to 17 years of service on the NBEC (Chair of NBEC in 1980-81), membership in the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (President of AAVSB in 1975-76), service on the Colorado

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Dr. Michael Groves, NBEC Chair (left) presents the first NBEC Award to Dr. Albrecht

NBEC Membership Changes

At the July meeting, the NBEC honored two members whose terms expired and welcomed two new members to the committee to fill the vacancies.

Dr. James Brace represented the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) on the NBEC from 1990 to 1999, serving as NBEC Chair in 1995-96. Dr. Brace is Associate Dean in the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Tennessee. His replacement as AAVMC representative is Dr. Janver (Jan) Krehbiel. Dr. Krehbiel is Associate Dean for Academic and Student Affairs in the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University. He is board certified in pathology.

Dr. Dean Frey served as one of the four NBEC members appointed by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB) from 1993 to 1999 and chaired the NBEC in 1996-97. Dr. Frey is owner of the Frey Pet Hospital in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Dr. Frey's replacement is Dr. James Dalley of East Lansing, Michigan. Dr. Dalley is immediate past president of the AAVSB, and a former member of the Michigan State Board of Veterinary Medicine. He recently retired from the faculty of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University where he was a small animal clinician.

From the Past: History of the NBEC Number 14 in a Series

Security is always a big concern for a licensing examination program. The challenges involved with developing, printing, shipping, administering, and scoring an examination given to thousands of candidates each year are daunting. Therefore, it is not surprising that security concerns appear from time to time.

As noted in a previous issue of the *National Board Report*, when the NBE was first given, it was possible for a candidate to take the same examination on different days in different jurisdictions. The problems of dealing with the concerns of many different licensing boards made the goal of a common testing date a difficult one to attain.

Two factors, including a desire for efficiency and a tendency toward complacency, appear to have led to a crisis in NBE security in the late 1970's. As anyone who had tried to write items knows, it is difficult to write good items. It is also expensive to develop new items. So, when good items are identified, it is tempting to use them over and over. It is also easy to assume that potential colleagues will not attempt to subvert the security of the licensing examination program. Nevertheless, at the July 1978 National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners meeting in Dallas, the Board heard reports of apparent theft of NBE booklets and saw evidence that some booklets had been photocopied. A recent graduate told the Board about his "concerns, experiences, attitude and recommendations" regarding the security of the NBE. Earlier that

year, Dr. D.T. Albrecht had met with students at another university who described to him elaborate efforts to debrief candidates leaving the NBE and then compile sets of old NBE questions for use by subsequent candidates.

At the meeting, a variety of options were considered to address the security concerns, including developing all new items for each NBE, and publishing the entire NBE item bank. The item bank was never published, but several new security improvements were adopted, including:

- extensive development of new items, resulting in an NBE that was composed of essentially all new items;
- two common testing dates for all licensing boards (begun in 1981);
- review and tightening of security provisions with licensing boards, outlined in a memo from PES to licensing boards in 1980;
- computerization of the item bank, which facilitated better item review and examination preparation procedures;
- introduction of the CCT as a separate licensing examination (begun in 1979). (The CCT has always used all new problems.)

Clearly, all the security problems were not solved, but these were significant enhancements.

The NAVLE will eliminate most security concerns associated with administration of a paper and pencil examination, but the computer based format creates a few new security concerns that the NBEC will be dealing with in the months ahead.

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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 NBEC. The opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official opinions, views, or policies of the NBEC or any of its members, unless expressly so stated.

R.B. Baker, DVM, *Chair*; Nancy L. Collins, DVM, *Chair-Elect*; Norman LaFaunce, DVM, DACT, *Secretary-Treasurer*; Michael G. Groves, DVM, PhD, DACVM, *Past Chair*; Catherine Cross, DVM, DABVP; James Dalley, DVM, MS; Donald D. Draper, DVM, PhD, MBA; Richard S. Hawe, DVM, DABVP; Al Hopkins, DVM; Jenna Jones, *Public Member*; Jan Krehbiel, DVM, PhD, DACVP; Roger A. Magnusson, DVM, DABVP; David Sandals, DVM, MSc. John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD, *Executive Director*

NBEC Meeting Highlights

The NBEC met at the Sheraton New Orleans on July 13. **Clinical Proficiency Examination**

The Clinical Proficiency Examination (CPE) is a practical clinical skills examination given to candidates as part of the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (ECFVG) program. It is also used in Canada as part of the licensure process. In April, the NBEC submitted a proposal to the AVMA Executive Board outlining its plans for assuming responsibility for the CPE. The Executive Board tabled the NBEC proposal, and instead created two task forces to look at the CPE. Dr. James Brace represented the NBEC on the first task force, which met earlier this month to look at criteria for CPE sites. The second task force will meet later this year to develop a request for proposal for outsourcing the CPE; the NBEC representatives will be Drs. Nancy Collins and David Sandals.

In a related action, the NBEC voted to support the American Association of Veterinary State

Boards (AAVSB) in its effort to assume responsibility for the administrative functions of the ECFVG program. The 38 boards represented at the AAVSB's Delegate Assembly in New Orleans voted unanimously for the AAVSB to assume responsibility for the ECFVG program, and for the NBEC to assume responsibility for the CPE. **School Score Reports**

The Committee approved a draft agreement between the NBEC and the AVMA Council on Education that will provide for the transfer of summary school score reports to the Council, for use by the Council in evaluating its accreditation essentials. No individual candidate score data will be released.

NAVLE update

Ms. Aggie Butler of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) gave the Committee an update on the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE). She provided a current list of 300 Sylvan

Technology Centers, where the NAVLE will be given. At present, there is a test center within 75-80 miles of each veterinary school in North America with the exception of the Atlantic Veterinary College in Prince Edward Island. New sites are being opened frequently, so the situation will change by the time the NAVLE is first administered in November 2000. Those interested in finding a Sylvan site can do so by accessing the Sylvan web site (<http://www.sylvanprometric.com>) and looking under "Step 1 USMLE." The USMLE is the NBME's physician licensing examination now being administered at Sylvan centers.

New Officers

The NBEC elected the following officers for 1999-2000: Dr. R.B. (Butch) Baker, Chair
Dr. Nancy Collins, Chair-Elect
Dr. Norman LaFaunce, Secretary-Treasurer
Dr. Michael Groves, Past Chair.

NBEC Member Profile: Dr. Don Draper

Dr. Donald D. Draper is one of two NBEC members appointed by the American Animal Hospital Association. Referring to Dr. Draper as a person who wears many hats would not do justice to his varied and distinguished career in veterinary medicine. Evidence of his versatility is his present title: Professor of Anatomy, Animal Behavior, Ethics, and Practice Management at the College of Veterinary Medicine at Iowa State University.

A native of Buckingham, Iowa, Dr. Draper received his DVM degree from Iowa State in 1966. He received advanced training in anatomy at the University of Missouri (MS and PhD degrees) and recently received an MBA degree in agribusiness from Iowa State.

At the College of Veterinary Medicine, Dr. Draper has taught a variety of courses, including anatomy, neurophysiology, animal behavior, professional ethics, and veterinary practice management. He

has also served as Associate Dean of the college and Director of the Veterinary Medicine Endowment Fund. Dr. Draper's teaching expertise has been recognized with the Norden Distinguished Teacher Award and, more recently, the honorary designation of University Professor.

Dr. Draper has been active in organized veterinary medicine, including the American Animal Hospital Association, the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges, and the Iowa Veterinary Medical Association, serving as IVMA President in 1997-98.

Outside the veterinary college, Dr. Draper's interests include swine production (he is a past President of the Iowa Duroc Breeder's Association), grain farming, real estate development, and 4-H.

Dr. Draper was recently named the NBEC's representative to the Educational Commission for

Foreign Veterinary Graduates.

Dr. Draper and his wife Dee have one daughter, Kirsten Linney. In his spare time, he enjoys reading, fishing, and flower gardening.



NBEC Audit Approved

The NBEC's audit for calendar year 1998 was approved by the NBEC in New Orleans. Copies were sent last month to each of the organizations represented on the NBEC, along with a copy of the NBEC's 1998 Annual Report.

The audit, completed by Brady, Martz & Associates of Bismarck, shows 1998 total revenue of \$1,170,177 and total expenses of \$1,051,679, resulting in an increase in unrestricted net assets of \$118,498. Major expenses included \$759,485 to the Professional Examination Service for test administration, and \$83,480 to the American Association of Veterinary State Boards. The NBEC spent \$36,234 for examination research and development purposes in 1998.

Copies of the audit are available from the NBEC, as are copies of the organization's IRS Form 990, as required by federal law. The NBEC is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt not for profit corporation.

NBEC Award

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State Board of Veterinary Medicine (1970-80), and membership on the Educational Commission for Foreign Veterinary Graduates (1978-1983). Dr. Albrecht has also been very active in the AVMA, serving on the AVMA Executive Board (1979-82) and as AVMA President in 1983-84. He still serves the profession through membership on the American Veterinary Medical Foundation board.

A native of Iowa, Dr. Albrecht graduated from veterinary school at Iowa State University in 1950. After an internship at Angell Memorial Animal Hospital and one year as a small animal clinician at Iowa State, he founded the Aspenwood Animal Hospital in Denver, where he worked from 1952 until his retirement in 1990. He and his wife Elinor have four children. A

licensed pilot, Dr. Albrecht spends most of his time these days traveling the world, playing golf, and skiing.

"In reviewing the list of possible recipients for the first NBEC Award, the committee concluded that Dr. Albrecht was a logical and unanimous choice," noted Dr. Groves. "His relentless dedication to improving the quality and security of the national licensing examinations, and his vision for the future of the NBEC are greatly appreciated by those of us who now serve as NBEC members. It was truly an honor for us to be able to present this award to Dr. Albrecht."

The award consisted of a framed photograph of a herd of bison in an early winter snowstorm, taken by photographer Pat Gerlach in the badlands of western North Dakota.

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