

National Board Report

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

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A Cooperative Effort

As noted on the right, we have now completed the first administration of the NAVLE. The process began nearly four years ago, with the development of a Request for Proposal and the January 1998 selection of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) to be our test vendor. Contracts were signed with the NBME and with each licensing jurisdiction in North America, outlining responsibilities for the development and administration of the new computer based examination. NAVLE content experts, item writers, and item reviewers met numerous times to develop an item bank suitable for the examination and to review draft forms of the NAVLE. Candidate information materials were printed. The NBEC's web site was expanded to add NAVLE candidate information, sample questions, and a practice examination. A database was developed to keep track of NAVLE candidates. Literally thousands of telephone calls and e-mails to the NBEC office (often over 50 calls and e-mails per day) helped candidates, licensing boards, and schools answer questions, solve problems, and quash rumors.

To attempt to acknowledge everyone who played a role in the successful implementation of the NAVLE would be clearly impossible. However, I must mention a few key people. NBEC members, past and present, deserve credit for their vision and dedication in laying the ground work for the NAVLE program. Dr. Aggie Butler and her colleagues at the NBME and Prometric clearly deserve a lot of credit for

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First NAVLE Administration Completed

The new computer based North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) was administered to candidates for the first time November 20-December 16, 2000. Nearly 2900 candidates took the NAVLE during the first testing window at Prometric testing centers throughout North America. Scores from the first administration were reported to licensing boards on January 31, and boards reported scores to candidates.

Since this was the first administration of an entirely new examination, some problems were expected. Over all, however, the problems were remarkably few. Based on what we have learned, we will make some minor adjustments to the application process prior to next fall's administration.

We had hoped to have an on-line application and credit card payment option available for use during the November-December testing window, but unforeseen delays meant that it had to be postponed. The on-line application option was ready for use for the April 2001 NAVLE administration.

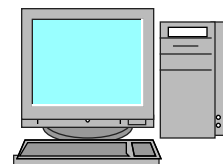
The vast majority of scheduling permits were mailed to candidates by the target date (30 days prior to the opening of the test window). We received only a few calls from candidates who were unable to schedule the NAVLE on a date and at a center convenient to them. Several veterinary schools worked directly with the Prometric center nearest them to schedule their students, a procedure that seems to have worked well. Prometric set up a temporary testing center in Prince Edward Island to accommodate candidates at the Atlantic Veterinary College, because there was no permanent center in the province and the nearest center was over 100 miles away.

A few candidates were unable to take the examination on their scheduled date, either due to things that were the candidate's fault (forgetting to bring their scheduling permit or showing up on the wrong day) or circumstances beyond the candidate's control (technical problems or centers closed due to weather). In the former cases, candidates were treated as "no shows" and had to pay an additional fee to be rescheduled, because the NBEC is obligated to pay for each candidate whose name appears on our eligibility list, whether they take the examination or not. In the latter cases, candidates were rescheduled at no additional cost.

Several candidates were convinced that they saw only five of the six blocks of items in the exam. However, when their response files were checked, all of these candidates did in fact see all six blocks.

All candidates approved for test accommodations by their licensing board and the NBEC received appropriate accommodations.

The NBEC office is now processing applications for the April 9-21 administration of the NAVLE. We extended the application deadline beyond the normal date of 60 days prior to the opening of the test window to accommodate candidates who did not pass the examination in November-December and who needed to retake it in April. Scheduling permits should be mailed to the majority of candidates by the March 9 target date. Approximately 800 candidates will take the NAVLE in April.



NBEC Meets in San Diego

The NBEC's winter meeting was held at the US Grant Hotel in downtown San Diego on January 20. The most important item of business was approving the passing standard for the NAVLE, which is described on page 3.

The NBEC reviewed plans for the new qualifying examination, which will be used as part of the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB). The qualifying examination will be designed to assess a candidate's knowledge in basic science areas not addressed adequately on the NAVLE. Developed in cooperation with the National Board of Medical Examiners, the qualifying examination will be a 300 item multiple choice examination covering five broad content areas: anatomy, physiology, pharmacology, microbiology, and pathology. It will be administered to candidates at Prometric testing centers on two common dates each year, beginning in December or January 2001. During the meeting, Dr. Jan Krehbiel was appointed to serve as the NBEC's representative on the eight-member PAVE board.

The NBEC agreed to hold a strategic planning session in the Chicago area in June.

At the last two meetings, the NBEC has discussed the idea of a name change. It is apparent that the NBEC no longer functions as a committee. Several suggestions for a
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NAVLE Security and Confidentiality Reminder

The NAVLE is expensive to develop and administer. It is also what is called a "high stakes" examination, meaning that the results of the NAVLE are used by licensing boards to help determine whether a candidate is eligible to be licensed to practice veterinary medicine. Consequently, maintaining the security and integrity of the examination is very important.

All NAVLE candidates must agree to the following statement of confidentiality when they take the examination. This statement appears on the computer screen at the beginning of each NAVLE, and the candidate cannot proceed with the examination without agreeing to it:

"This examination contains test materials that are owned and copyright by the National Board Examination Committee for Veterinary Medicine (NBEC). Any reproduction of these materials or any part of them, through any means, including but not limited to, copying or printing electronic files, reconstruction through memorization and/or dictation, and/or dissemination of these materials or any part of them is strictly prohibited."

Candidates must not discuss the content of the NAVLE with anyone, and are prohibited from attempting to reproduce NAVLE items from memory, whether for their own use or for distribution to other candidates.

Nearly all licensing boards have in their practice act and/or board rules a statement to the effect that fraud or deception in the procurement of a license is sufficient grounds for the board to deny a license, or to suspend or revoke a license that has already been issued. Therefore, candidates who violate the statement of confidentiality, in addition to violating copyright law, are placing their license and career in jeopardy.

Security is a cooperative effort. The NBEC appreciates the cooperation of candidates, licensing boards, and veterinary schools in continuing efforts to ensure that the NAVLE remains a valid, reliable, and cost effective examination.

Correction

In the last issue of the *National Board Report*, we inadvertently omitted one name from the list of NAVLE item writers. Dr. Cheryl Dhein also served as an item writer last year.

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NAVLE Passing Standard Established

The NAVLE, like the NBE and CCT before it, uses criterion referenced scoring. This means that the passing standard is fixed, based on the content of the examination, and does not vary depending on the performance of candidates.

The NAVLE passing score was established by two groups of veterinarians (judges), who met at the NBME office in Philadelphia in mid January. Eleven veterinarians formed the first group, and eight participated in the second group.

The NBEC used the modified Angoff method to set the NAVLE passing score, the same method used for most licensing and certification examinations.

Each group first received an orientation to the process from NBME staff psychometricians. The judges were instructed to focus on the borderline candidate, one just barely qualified to practice veterinary medicine at entry level.

Each group of judges

completed two practice rating sessions, and then individually rated a set of NAVLE items. Ratings were based on each judge's independent estimate of the percentage of minimally qualified candidates who would answer each item correctly. The ratings of each judge were then pooled to arrive at an overall recommended passing score.

The ratings from each standard setting panel, which yielded remarkably consistent recommended passing points, were presented to the NBEC at its January 20 meeting, and the NBEC approved the final passing standard. The passing standard yielded a pass rate for criterion candidates (first time test takers who were senior students at accredited veterinary schools) of approximately 90%. This passing rate is within the range of passing rates seen with the NBE and CCT in recent years.

The passing standard approved in January will remain in place for the next several years, so the

passing standard exercise will not need to be repeated after each NAVLE administration. Equating procedures are used to accommodate minor differences in difficulty between various forms of the NAVLE.



NBME psychometrician Dr. Marc Gessaroli addresses the NBEC

NBEC Member Profile: Dr. George Cardinet

Dr. George Cardinet of Winters, California is the NBEC's newest member. He was appointed to the NBEC by the AVMA Council on Education to fill the term of the late Dr. Richard Hawe, who died unexpectedly last November. He was elected to the Council in 1997.

Dr. Cardinet was born in Oakland and is a third generation Californian. He received his DVM and PhD (comparative pathology) degrees from the University of California Davis. After graduate school, he served on the faculty at Kansas State University for eight years before returning to Davis. There, he rose through the faculty ranks to become Chair of the Department of Anatomy. He also served the veterinary school in four different positions as Associate Dean. In addition, Dr. Cardinet held a faculty appointment in the

UC Davis School of Medicine for 16 years. He retired from UC Davis in 1996 and presently serves as Professor



Emeritus in the Department of Veterinary Anatomy, Physiology, and Cell Biology.

Dr. Cardinet received many honors and awards during his career, including the Norden Distinguished Teaching Award and the UC Davis Alumni Achievement Award. His teaching areas included gross and microscopic anatomy, histopathology, and histochemistry. Dr. Cardinet's research interests focused on neuromuscular disorders in animals.

Dr. Cardinet and Claudia, his wife of 43 years, have four grown children and five grandchildren. Family activities and hiking are his principal interests these days. He is pictured in the photo with his son Matt at the summit of Mt. Dana in Yosemite.

NBEC Meets in San Diego (continued from Page 2)

new name were considered, some keeping the "NBEC" acronym and others requiring a new acronym (and new letterhead, logo, and web address). The consensus was that a return to the NBEC's original name, the National Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (NBVME) was most appropriate. Staff was asked to work with the NBEC Executive Committee to assess the impact of the new name on contracts, articles of incorporation, and office changes that will have to be made. The final decision on the name change will be made by the NBEC.

In other actions, the NBEC approved an increase in the honorarium paid to NAVLE item writers, and allowed staff to evaluate requests for refunds from NAVLE candidates who are unable to take the examination on their scheduled date.

The next NBEC meetings will be in Philadelphia on April 5-6, for review of NAVLE forms, and in Boston on Tuesday, July 17.



Drs. Norman LaFauce, Catherine Cross, and Roger Magnusson at the NBEC meeting in San Diego

A Cooperative Effort (continued from Page 1)

making the NAVLE the quality examination that it is. Charlotte Ronan and her colleagues at the AAVSB provided invaluable support and assistance as the NAVLE was introduced. Staff members at licensing board offices processed candidate applications and approvals and reported scores. Faculty and staff members at veterinary schools helped NAVLE candidates with application and scheduling issues. Finally, some people may not know

it, but the NBEC staff consists of only two people. Tonee VanderVliet, who works three quarters time for the NBEC, was responsible for processing NAVLE applications and fees, and she deserves a great deal of credit. As the title indicates, the NAVLE clearly is a cooperative effort. My sincere, heartfelt thanks to all who helped it become a reality.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

National Board Examination Committee
for Veterinary Medicine
Post Office Box 1356
Bismarck, ND 58502

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