

National Board Report

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Item Writers

As noted on page 3, the NBVME convened its annual item writing workshop in Philadelphia this month, at the office of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). At these meetings, people who have agreed to write items for the NAVLE or the QE receive training from NBME staff in the finer points of writing good multiple choice test questions, before they are sent home with their item writing assignment.

Most of these individuals are new to this process, and most of them are unknown to me, except for telephone, mail, and e-mail communications, prior to the workshop. It is always a delight to meet these people for the first time in the lobby of our hotel as we assemble for the three-block walk to the NBME office. By the end of the day, these men and women, most of whom did not know each other when they met that morning, have become friends. Almost all of the item writers find the experience to be enjoyable, which is evidenced by the fact that almost all of them readily agree to participate again the following year. I also appreciate the remarkable diversity in our item writers, who come from many different backgrounds and work experiences.

An examination is only as good as the people who write items for it. The NBVME and I appreciate the hard work that so many outstanding people have put into this over the years. The profession and society benefit greatly from their efforts.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

January NBVME Meeting Report

The NBVME met in Alexandria, Virginia on January 6. Following are some highlights from that meeting.

Job Analysis Vendor Selected

The board selected Applied Measurement Professionals (AMP) of Olathe, Kansas to assist with development of a new NAVLE job analysis. A job analysis describes the knowledge and skills needed by competent entry-level practicing veterinarians, and forms the basis for development of the NAVLE. The present job analysis, also developed with AMP, was conducted in 2002. A new job analysis is one of the goals in the NBVME's strategic plan. Work on the new job analysis has begun with the appointment of an Advisory Committee to oversee the project. The committee plans to meet at AMP headquarters in late April to develop a survey questionnaire, which will be distributed electronically to about 5,000 practicing veterinarians later this year. The new job analysis will result in an updated NAVLE test blueprint.

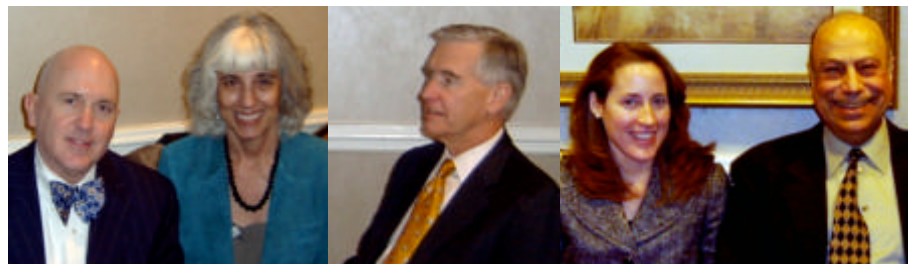
Foresight Report and Workforce Issues Discussed

Drs. Marguerite Pappaioanou and Mike Chaddock of the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges urged the NBVME to participate in a consortium of groups that will ad-

dress important issues facing veterinary medical education, several of which involve licensure and accreditation. These issues were raised in the Foresight report released by the AAVMC in 2007. Dr. John Albers discussed veterinary workforce issues, and ways for veterinary schools to offer students more tracking options that will better prepare them to enter clinical practice. He stated that if individual licensing boards would like to license veterinarians on the basis of expertise in certain content areas or disciplines, there would be a need for licensing examinations tailored to suit those needs. Later in the meeting, the NBVME voted to contribute \$10,000 to support the AAVMC's initiative, and reiterated its interest in participating as a full partner in the North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium.

Passing Standards Approved

The board approved a new criterion-referenced passing standard for the NAVLE, based on the results of a standard setting exercise conducted by Dr. Raja Subhiyah and colleagues at the National Board of Medical Examiners in July 2008. The new standard was applied to examinations administered in the November-December 2008 testing window. The *(continued on page 2)*



At the NBVME meeting: Drs. Mike Chaddock and Marguerite Pappaioanou of the AAVMC, Dr. John Albers of the AAHA, and Janine Hawley and Dr. Raja Subhiyah of the NBME

JANUARY 2009 VCSA

The Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA) is a two-day hands-on practical examination, offered as an option for step 4 of the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards. The VCSA is given at the veterinary technology facilities at Cedar Valley College in Dallas. College faculty and staff assist with the administration of the examination.

On January 10-11, the VCSA was administered for the fifth time. Twelve PAVE candidates took the examination, the most for any administration to date. These candidates were graduates of nine different non-accredited veterinary schools; 11 of the 12 were taking the examination for the first time.

The VCSA consists of 16 stations that require candidates to demonstrate proficiency in a variety of clinical skills. At each station, candidates are evaluated by one or more trained examiners, using checklists to record candidate performance. Four stations test the candidate's communication skills in realistic clinical encounters, using actors who portray clients.

In early February, the NBVME Executive Committee reviewed a report on the results of the January examination, and voted to pass 10 of the 12 candidates.

The NBVME plans to administer the VCSA again in 2010.

Licensing Board Visits Continue

In July, the NBVME approved a plan for NBVME members to visit individual licensing boards. The goal was to try to visit about 20 boards by the July 2009 NBVME meeting. Visits are done by two-person teams, using a presentation that describes how the NBVME is organized and what it does. The visits help licensing board members understand the work that goes into the development of the national licensing examination, and provides them an opportunity to ask questions and provide direct input to the NBVME.

To date, visits have been made to boards in New Jersey, North Carolina, Missouri, Maine, Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Tennessee, Georgia, Texas, and Mississippi. Visits have been scheduled between now and July with Alabama, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Nevada, Ohio, Indiana, West Virginia, Washington, Idaho, and Virginia.

Boards interested in scheduling a visit should contact Bridget Whittey in the NBVME office.

January NBVME Meeting Report

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board also approved a passing standard for the Qualifying Examination. That standard was first applied to the September 2008 examination, and will be used on subsequent QE forms, which will be equated to the September 2008 form.

New NAVLE School Score Reports Implemented

Beginning with the fall 2008 NAVLE testing window, candidates who are senior students at accredited schools were offered the opportunity to consent to have their score reported to their school. The percentage of students who granted consent ranged from 70-99% at most schools. These reports were issued by the NBVME to veterinary schools in mid-February.

Audit Accepted

The board accepted the audit for the 2007-08 fiscal year, prepared by Brady Martz & Associates. The audit shows revenue of \$2,767,512, expenses of \$2,184,112, and unrestricted net assets as of June 30, 2008 of \$3,321,323. Copies of the audit were sent to the NBVME's constituent organizations in January. The NBVME has a conservative investment policy, which the board believes is prudent given its status as a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation. The NBVME has not experienced any losses on its reserves since it began to operate as an independent organization in 1995.

Next Meeting Scheduled

The next NBVME meeting will be on Saturday, July 25 in La Jolla, California. Persons interested in attending the meeting should contact the NBVME office for more information.

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NAVLE® and QE Item Writers for 2009

Each year, the NBVME invites content experts to serve as item writers. The NBVME's Examination Development Advisory Board has primary responsibility for identifying NAVLE item writers. QE item writers are selected by NBVME staff, with input from NBVME members and present and former item writers. Experienced item writers are welcome to serve more than one year, but new individuals become involved in the item writing process each year.

New NAVLE item writers for 2009 include Drs. Elisabeth Snead, Alex Gallagher, Reid Groman, and Beth Boynton (canine); Anthony Nanton and Vicki Thayer (feline); Don Benoit (pet bird); Doug Aspros (other small animal); Bob Larson and Tom Graham (bovine); John Angelos (small

ruminant); Donna Shettko (equine); Christa Irwin and Locke Karriker (swine); Dale Boyle (public health); and Maggie Coffey and Henry Yoo (professional behavior, communications, and practice management). They will join 12 returning NAVLE item writers to write and review questions to be used for the first time on examinations administered in 2010-11.

New QE item writers for 2009 include Drs. Eric Rowe (anatomy), Hari Goyal (histology), James Schadt and Murli Manohar (physiology), Lora Ballweber (parasitology), Fred Tippett (pathology) and Karen Russell (clinical pathology). These individuals will work with returning QE item writers Drs. Kevin Anderson (anatomy), Pete Bill (pharmacology),

Mary Hondalus (bacteriology), and Sanjay Kapil (virology and immunology) to write and review new QE items.

Twenty-three new NAVLE and QE item writers participated in an item writing workshop at the NBME office in Philadelphia on February 24. During the workshop, participants received training from NBME staff in how to write good multiple choice items, after which they were given the opportunity to write and edit some items and review them as a group.

Forms of the QE to be administered in September 2009 and January and May 2010 were reviewed and approved by ten 2009 QE item writers at the NBME office on February 25.



NAVLE and QE item writers at the Item Writing Workshop in Philadelphia on February 24, 2009



QE item writers: Drs. Fred Tippett, Lora Ballweber, James Schadt, Murli Manohar, Hari Goyal, and Sanjay Kapil.

2009-10 NAVLE AGREEMENTS

Letters of Agreement between the NBVME and individual licensing boards covering the 2009-2010 NAVLE testing cycle will be mailed to boards on March 5.

The NAVLE candidate fee will increase from \$500 to \$525. The testing windows will be November 16 - December 12, 2009 and April 12-24, 2010. The application receipt deadlines will remain August 1 and January 3.

For the 2008-09 testing cycle, the NBVME office handled approvals on behalf of 12 licensing boards. Three additional boards have requested that our office perform this service for them in 2009-2010. Beginning this fall, candidates applying through boards for which the NBVME handles approvals will be able to complete their state application online and pay the \$50 state application fee by credit card.

Examination Statistics

NAVLE

A total of 3,448 candidates took the NAVLE during the November 17-December 13, 2008 testing window. Scores were reported to licensing boards on January 26. There were 2,880 criterion candidates, 169 non-criterion candidates, and 399 foreign-trained candidates. Criterion candidates are senior students at AVMA accredited schools taking the examination for the first time.

The passing rate for fall 2008 criterion candidates, based on the passing standard approved by the NBVME at its January meeting, was about 93%, compared to 92% and 90% for the same group in fall 2007 and 2006, respectively. At press time, the NBVME office has submitted 783 candidate eligibility records for the April 13-25, 2009 NAVLE administration.

Qualifying Examination

The most recent web-based Qualifying Examination (QE) was administered to 151 PAVE candidates on January 15, 2009. The examination was offered in Grenada, St. Kitts, and Grand Cayman, at 21 sites in the US, and in London, England. Scores were reported to the AAVSB on February 19. The passing rate for the 119 PAVE first time takers was 69.7%, which is similar to the passing rate for previous administrations. The next QE administration is May 14.

A total of 120 third year students at Iowa State University and 81 third year students at the University of Minnesota also took the QE on January 15. Western University and Tuskegee University will administer the QE to their students in May. Additional accredited schools interested in using the QE should contact the NBVME office.