

National Board Report

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Membership Changes

The NBVME is structured so that its 13 members serve three-year terms, with a maximum of three terms. Terms are staggered for the most part, but variations in appointments by the appointing organizations result in some years (like 2011-12), when there are no new members on the board, and in other years, when multiple members are up for reappointment and/or reach the limit for service. This latter situation is happening this year, and letters to the constituent organizations went out this week.

At the end of the July 2012 meeting, three members will complete a term but are eligible for reappointment (Drs. Feinberg and Jensen, and Ms. Fick, the public member). Three other members will reach the nine year limit in July, and successors will need to be appointed. These members are Dr. Ben Franklin, appointed by the American Association of Equine Practitioners; Dr. Lila Miller, appointed by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards; and Dr. Sylvie Latour, appointed by the Canadian National Examining Board. These three individuals have a wealth of knowledge and experience, and the board and I will miss them a great deal. New NBVME members say it takes a year to begin to get up to speed on what the board does (some say it takes that long to learn all of the acronyms). That being said, change is supposed to be good, and we look forward to new members bringing new ideas to the table. In addition, former members continue to be of service to the board on examination review teams and in other capacities, so all that experience isn't lost.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

January 2012 NBVME Meeting

The NBVME met in Hilton Head, South Carolina on January 27-28. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Rick Tubbs.

NBME Collaboration

For the past two years, NBVME members and staff have met with leaders of the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), to discuss possible future collaborative relationships between the two organizations. The NBVME's team working on the collaboration includes Drs. Dennis Feinberg, Gary Gackstetter, Meg Glattly, and John Boyce. The goal of these efforts is to move beyond a vendor-client relationship, which the two groups have had since 1998, to a relationship where the groups collaborate on specific projects, with each party sharing risks and benefits. Last fall, the working group drafted two documents that outline in general terms how a collaborative relationship centered on the NAVLE might be structured. The NBME's Executive Board reviewed and approved the draft documents at its meeting in Philadelphia in mid-January, which Drs. Gackstetter and Feinberg attended. NBME Senior Vice President Dr. Peter Scoles and former NBME Chair and current board member Dr.

W.T. Williams attended the NBVME meeting in Hilton Head, and NBME President Dr. Donald Melnick offered comments by speaker phone. Following a discussion with the NBME representatives in executive session, the board voted to approve the concept of

an NBVME-NBME collaboration, to continue constructing draft documents of collaboration for review and comment, and to begin to draft an implementation plan with timelines. Drs.



Drs. W.T. Williams, Rick Tubbs, and Peter Scoles

Feinberg, Gackstetter,

and Glattly are scheduled to meet with NBME representatives in Philadelphia in late February and again in April to continue these discussions.

NAVLE®

- The board approved a \$10 increase in the NAVLE fee for the 2012-13 testing cycle, to \$560.
- Zoom capability will be implemented for images associated with NAVLE items. This will allow candidates to enlarge images and also to adjust image contrast.
- The board approved a policy covering NAVLE candidates who choose to end a block of items before answering all of the items in the block. Two candidates inadvertently did this during the fall 2011 NAVLE. The policy gives

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Services to Specialty Boards

Over the past several years, the NBVME worked with an outside vendor to provide test development services to two veterinary specialty boards, and cooperated with the NBME to provide item writer training to representatives from two other specialty boards. These efforts were initiated by the NBVME in keeping with its vision to "remain the recognized leader providing valid and reliable examinations for veterinary medicine." Last year, the board agreed to end its relationship with the other vendor, and work only with the NBME to provide services to specialty boards. A Statement of Work to guide these efforts is near completion. NBVME members Drs. Gary Gackstetter, Linda Blythe and Rick Tubbs were named in January to an NBVME specialty board working group to look for ways to assist specialty boards with testing activities.

Initial efforts will focus on item writer training. The NBME can accommodate a limited number of item writers from veterinary specialty boards at the annual NAVLE item writing workshop in Philadelphia in February. NBME staff can also provide item writer training at other sites, upon request. Other services that can be offered include test development, job analysis, standard setting, and psychometric consultation. Specialty boards interested in exploring these options should contact the NBVME office.

NAVLE Retake Policy Implementation Poses Challenges

The NAVLE retake policy, implemented by the NBVME in 2007, recommends to licensing boards that candidates be allowed to take the NAVLE a total of no more than five times in a five year period from the initial attempt, with at least a year between each of the two final attempts. Some boards have adopted the policy, some have not, and a few have their own policy on retakes. In addition, some of the boards that have adopted the policy will accept NAVLE scores from candidates who pass the examination in another jurisdiction, under circumstances not in keeping with the policy. The NBVME's website contains a table listing what boards have told us re-

garding their adoption of the retake policy.

The policy took effect beginning with the November-December 2007 NAVLE administration, and candidates are now encountering not only the five attempt limit but also the five year limit. Some candidates who encounter the limit in the jurisdiction where they made their initial applications are now applying for further attempts through boards that have not adopted the policy. The NBVME is working on ways to track these candidates, so boards have information on all of a candidate's prior attempts at the NAVLE when they review applications.

NBVME Meeting (continued from page 1)

candidates the option of not having the examination scored, taking the examination again (for an additional fee), or having it scored with the unanswered items counted as incorrect.

Direct Approval of NAVLE Candidates

Presently, NAVLE candidates must complete an NBVME NAVLE application, and also must be approved by a licensing board to take the examination. In an effort to simplify the process for candidates, the NBVME proposed in 2009 to eliminate the separate licensing board application and approval, and have all NAVLE candidates apply only to the NBVME. A candidate's score would

be reported to their licensing board at the time they applied for licensure. Most boards were supportive of the proposal, but a few expressed concerns. At the January meeting, the board agreed to move forward with a revised version of the proposal in an effort to involve as many boards as possible, realizing that some would choose not to participate. The NBVME plans to send a revised proposal to licensing boards in March for their consideration.

Next Meetings

The board will meet in Philadelphia April 18-19 for the annual NAVLE form review, and on July 20-21 in Boise, Idaho.

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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 Moving to New Office Space

Due largely to oil development in the northwest part of the state, North Dakota's economy is booming. This economic activity has resulted in a shortage of office space, even here in Bismarck. The NBVME has been looking for new downtown office space for nearly a year. A potential move to a building a few blocks south of where we are now was mentioned in the last issue of the *National Board Report*, but those arrangements did not work out.

A simple inquiry while Christmas shopping has resulted in the NBVME finding new space in Bismarck, and a lease was signed on February 15, with a planned move in May.

Schumacher Diamond Company is an established diamond cutting business in Bismarck. About four



years ago, they opened a retail jewelry showroom in their building. Last fall, they decided to close the showroom at the end of the year, and part of that space is presently being renovated for use by the NBVME.

The NBVME has been in its present location for four years, but has outgrown the space. The new space will provide more room for the present staff, and some room for future expansion. We will be leaving the old-

est office building in Bismarck (the building was built in the 1880's) for a building that is only eight years old. The new space has its own parking, and is about a mile south of downtown. Since the space has to be completely renovated, we are able to design it to suit our needs.

Schumacher Diamond will continue to operate its diamond cutting business in the building, and will offer custom jewelry to retail customers. The building also houses a law office, an engineering company, and several other tenants.

The NBVME's post office box mailing address will not change, nor will the main telephone number. More information on the new space will be available in the May issue of the newsletter.

Dr. Robert Marshak Visits the NBME

On December 12, the NBVME and the NBME were pleased to welcome Dr. Robert Marshak to the NBME office during the NAVLE standard setting exercise. Dr. Marshak served as Dean of the School of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania from 1973 to 1987, and still lives in the Philadelphia area. Last fall, Dr. Marshak published a commentary in the *Journal of the AVMA* which focused primarily on accreditation but also dealt with testing and licensure issues. After reading the commentary, Dr. Boyce decided to invite Dr. Marshak to visit the NBME during an NBVME meeting. Dr. Marshak had a chance to meet NBME staff and several NBVME

members and content experts who were participating in the standard setting exercise. Dr. Marshak noted that although his office at the Penn veterinary school was only a few blocks down 38th Street, he had never been to the NBME headquarters. When she met Dr. Marshak, Abigail Polek, an NBME staff member who is a graduate of the veterinary technology program at Harkum College in Philadelphia, noted that some of her clinical training took place at the Marshak Dairy on the New Bolton Center campus. Dr. Marshak is a former dairy practitioner, clinician, and researcher, and played a key role in developing New Bolton Center.



2012-13 NAVLE AGREEMENTS

Letters of Agreement between the NBVME and individual licensing boards covering the 2012-2013 NAVLE testing cycle were mailed to boards on February 1.

The candidate fee will be \$560, an increase of \$10 over the fee for the past two years. The testing windows will be November 12 - December 9, 2012 and April 8-20, 2013. The application receipt deadlines will remain August 1 and January 3.

The NBVME office has been approving NAVLE candidates on behalf of licensing boards since 2004. For the 2011-2012 testing cycle, the NBVME office approved 2,633 candidates for 23 boards. At least one more board has decided to join this group for 2012-13.

Examination Statistics

NAVLE

A total of 3,767 candidates took the NAVLE during the November 14-December 10, 2011 testing window, an increase of 25 from fall 2010. Scores were reported to licensing boards on January 12. There were 3,307 criterion candidates, 182 non-criterion candidates, and 278 candidates from non-accredited schools. Criterion candidates are senior students at AVMA accredited schools taking the examination for the first time.

The newly-approved NAVLE passing standard was applied to the fall 2011 examination, and the passing rate for criterion candidates was about 93%, compared to 95% and 96% for the same group in fall 2010 and 2009, respectively.

The NBVME office has submitted eligibility files to the NBME for 645 new candidates and 358 repeating candi-

dates for the April 9-21, 2012 NAVLE administration.

Qualifying Examination

The most recent web-based Qualifying Examination (QE) was administered to 19 PAVE candidates on January 19, 2012. The examination was offered in Grand Cayman and South Korea, and at seven sites in the US. Scores were reported to the AAVSB in late February. The passing rate for the 19 PAVE candidates was 47.4%. The next QE administration is May 12.

A total of 130 third-year students at Iowa State University and 55 third-year students at Tuskegee University also took the QE on January 19. Western University will administer the QE to their students in May. Additional accredited schools interested in using the QE as an outside assessment of basic science knowledge should contact the NBVME office.