

National Board Report

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Considering the Options

As reported in the story to the right, the NBVME has begun to consider the idea of a two-step NAVLE. In order to put this in perspective, some historical information may be helpful.

When the first National Board Examination (NBE) was offered in 1954, it was a comprehensive multiple choice examination covering both basic science and clinical science content areas. In 1979, the NBE began to follow a new test blueprint focusing on clinical practice, and basic science content was no longer addressed specifically. Also in 1979, the Clinical Competency Test (CCT) was introduced, and over the next 10 years or so, most licensing boards made the CCT a requirement for licensure in addition to the NBE. The CCT was designed to test the ability of candidates to work through clinical cases. Beginning in 1992, all questions on the NBE were required to be relevant to entry-level private clinical practice, a standard that was also applied to the NAVLE when it replaced both the NBE and CCT in 2000. When the PAVE program was created in 2001, the NBVME developed the Qualifying Examination (QE) to address basic science content areas, in the context of educational equivalence.

Clearly, any change to the present format of the NAVLE will not be made without full involvement by all stakeholders. There are several advantages to a two-step licensing examination, and the time may be right to give the idea serious consideration. The NBVME welcomes input from all interested parties as these discussions continue.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

January NBVME Meeting Considers Ideas for a Two-Step NAVLE

The NBVME met in Key West, Florida on January 22-23. Following are some highlights from that meeting.

NBME Presentation

Dr. Peter Scoles, Senior Vice President at the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME), shared some thoughts about the NAVLE and the US Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE), the equivalent examination in human medicine. The session included invited guests from four other organizations: the American Association



of Veterinary State Boards Dr. Scoles visits with Drs. Pappaioanou and Leininger

(Robyn Kendrick and Dr. Bruce Loud-erback), the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (Drs. Marguerite Pappaioanou and Mike Chaddock), the AVMA Council on Education (Dr. David Granstrom), and the North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium (NAVMEC) (Dr. Mary Beth Leininger). The NBVME is a participating organization in NAVMEC, and Dr. Mike Thomas is vice-chair of the NAVMEC Board of Directors.

Dr. Scoles described the present three-step USMLE program. The USMLE is jointly owned and sponsored by the

NBME and the Federation of State Medical Boards. A recent review of the USMLE will lead to a revamping of the examinations to allow them to focus on two decision points: competence for supervised practice and competence for unsupervised practice. Drawing from this experience in human medicine, Dr. Scoles outlined a possible approach to changes in the veterinary medical licensing examination process, including a two-step examination. The first step would focus on fundamentals of basic veteri-

nary medical sciences, and the second on knowledge necessary for competent clinical practice. Each step could be four hours. [The present NAVLE is 7.5 hours.] NAVLE Step 1 could be taken at the end of the pre-clinical portion of the curriculum, and Step 2 at the end of the general clinical education. Candidates who passed Step 2 prior to graduation could then devote the rest of their education to electives designed to prepare them for specific areas of practice.

Dr. Scoles stressed that changes of this kind would require multiple meetings with key constituents, gathering input to refine the proposals before imple-
(Continued on page 2)

JANUARY 2010 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 9-10, 2010, the VCSA was administered for the sixth time. Ten PAVE candidates took the examination. These candidates were graduates of nine different non-accredited veterinary schools; nine of the candidates 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.

On February 1, the NBVME Executive Committee reviewed a report on the results of the January examination, and voted to pass five of the ten candidates.

The NBVME will give the VCSA again as soon as there are enough candidates to warrant doing so.

Licensing Board Outreach Visits

In July 2008, the NBVME approved a plan for NBVME members to visit individual licensing boards, as part of an outreach effort to constituents. By the July 2009 NBVME meeting, 21 visits were completed. 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.

Since July, 13 more visits have been completed (KY, CA, NH, NE, NY, WY, CO, AK, NM, SC, UT, AR, and OK). Seven more visits are scheduled through the end of July 2010.

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

January NBVME Meeting (continued from page 1)

mentation. He offered continuing assistance from the NBVME during the process as new examinations are planned and developed.

on the NBVME's web site. The new test specifications will guide development of NAVLE forms administered beginning in fall 2011.

Strategic Plan

The board established a working group on the strategic plan, consisting of Drs. Feinberg, Gackstetter, Miller, and Thomas. The group will report to the board in April, with the goal of having a new three-year plan approved at the July 2010 meeting.

Audit Accepted

The board accepted the audit for the 2008-09 fiscal year, prepared by Brady Martz & Associates. The audit shows revenue of \$2,916,376, expenses of \$2,365,464, and unrestricted net assets as of June 30, 2008 of \$3,872,235. Copies of the audit were sent to the NBVME's constituent organizations in January.

Job Analysis

The board reviewed a report on the 2009 NAVLE job analysis project prepared by Applied Measurement Professionals, and approved new NAVLE test specifications based on the job analysis. An edited version of the report was mailed to NBVME constituent organizations and accredited veterinary schools in early March, and copies of the report are also available

Next Meeting Scheduled

The board decided to hold its summer meeting in Las Vegas on July 16-17, immediately following the third NAVMEC meeting. Persons interested in attending the meeting should contact the NBVME office for more information.

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Snow Does Not Stop QE Form Review

A predicted snow storm did not prevent 12 Qualifying Examination item writers from meeting at the NBME office in Philadelphia on February 25 for the annual form review. At this meeting, forms of the QE to be administered in September 2010 and January and May 2011 were reviewed and approved. Although it snowed all day, there was no accumulation, so the review was completed as planned, and most participants made it home that evening.

The previous day, seven new QE and NAVLE item writers met for an item writing workshop. During the workshop, participants received training from NBME staff in how to write good multiple choice items suitable for use on NBVME examinations.

Because of a backlog of new items needing to be pretested, the NBVME reduced the number of NAVLE item writers this year. Dr. Rodney Auffet, a bovine practitioner from Nebraska, is the only new NAVLE item writer for 2010. He will join 19 returning NAVLE item writers to write and review questions to be used for the first time on examinations administered during the 2011-12 testing cycle.

New QE item writers for 2010 include Drs. Terri Clark (anatomy), John Dodam (physiology), Dawn Boothe (pharmacology), M. M. Chengappa (bacteriology), Sagar Goyal (virology), and Elizabeth Mauldin (pathology). These individuals will work with returning QE

item writers Drs. Eric Rowe (anatomy), Hari Goyal (histology), Murli Manohar (physiology), Lora Ballweber (parasitology), Fred Tippett (pathology) and Karen Russell (clinical pathology) to write and review new QE items.

Each year, the NBVME invites content experts to serve as item writers for the NAVLE and QE. 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. Item writers are welcome to serve more than one year if they are interested in doing so.

NBVME Award: Dr. James B. Dalley

Dr. James B. Dalley was recognized by his colleagues with the 2010 NBVME Award, presented at the meeting in Key West, Florida on January 22.

Dr. Dalley served as a member of the NBVME from 1999 through 2008, chairing the board from 2004-2005. Since leaving the board, he has continued to serve the organization as an examiner for the VCSA and as an active participant in NBVME outreach visits to licensing boards.

A 1959 graduate of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Michigan State University, Dr. Dalley served on the faculty at Michigan State for 39 years. He and his wife Lois Brennan, who attended the award presentation, live in East Lansing.

Dr. Dalley was appointed to the Michigan State Board of Veterinary Medicine in 1987 and subsequently became active in the AAVSB, serving as president from 1997-1999.



During his membership on the NBVME, the board administered the NAVLE for the first time, and developed the QE and the VCSA. Presenting the award to Dr. Dalley, NBVME Chair Dr. Linda Blythe cited his steady leadership, his willingness to volunteer for extra tasks, his ability to see and understand all sides of controversial issues, his commitment to providing excellent service to licensing boards and examination candidates, his remarkable memory, and his keen sense of humor.

Three of Dr. Dalley's former students, Drs. Marguerite Pappaioanou, Mike Chaddock, and John Boyce, offered their own comments on Dr. Dalley as an educator, colleague, and friend.

The award was a set of gourmet kitchen knives in a wooden block. A plaque on the block reads, "Dr. James B. Dalley, NBVME Award, January 2010. A cut above the rest."

2010-11 NAVLE AGREEMENTS

Letters of Agreement between the NBVME and individual licensing boards covering the 2010-2011 NAVLE testing cycle were mailed to boards on February 1.

The NAVLE candidate fee will increase from \$525 to \$550. The testing windows will be November 15-December 11, 2010 and April 11-23, 2011. The application receipt deadlines will remain August 1 and January 3, and will apply to both the national NAVLE application and the application for state approval.

For the 2009-10 testing cycle, the NBVME office handled approvals on behalf of 15 licensing boards. Five additional boards have requested that our office perform this service for them in 2010-2011, and discussions with a sixth state are underway.

Examination Statistics

NAVLE

A total of 3,632 candidates took the NAVLE during the November 16-December 12, 2009 testing window. Scores were reported to licensing boards on January 15. There were 2,939 criterion candidates, 184 non-criterion candidates, and 509 foreign-trained candidates. Criterion candidates are senior students at AVMA accredited schools taking the examination for the first time.

The passing rate for fall 2009 criterion candidates was about 96%, compared to 93% and 92% for the same group in fall 2008 and 2007, respectively. The NBVME office has submitted 781 candidate eligibility records for the April 13-25, 2010 NAVLE administration.

Qualifying Examination

The most recent web-based Qualifying Examination (QE) was administered to 171 PAVE candidates on January 21, 2010. The examination was offered in St. Kitts, Grenada, and Grand Cayman, at 13 sites in the US, and in South Korea, Australia, and Ireland. Scores were reported to the AAVSB on March 1. The passing rate for the 132 PAVE first time test takers was 82.6%. The next QE administration is May 13.

A total of 144 third year students at Iowa State University and 58 third year students at Tuskegee University also took the QE on January 21. Western University will administer the QE to their students in May. Additional accredited schools interested in using the QE should contact the NBVME office.