

National Board Report

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Values

The NBVME's strategic plan lists seven values. We covered **transparency** and **service** in previous issues of the *National Board Report*.

Confidentiality is clearly an important value for an organization like the NBVME. Our office collects and processes applications and reports scores for nearly 5,000 NAVLE candidates each year. Two examples of how we work to protect candidate confidentiality include the fact that we do not collect or store credit card information, and, while we do request Social Security numbers from candidates to use for identification purposes, we use a unique number (the NAVID) instead of the SSN in all communications with candidates. In addition, it is the NBVME's policy not to discuss with any third party a candidate's application, test accommodation, fee payment, registration, or score reporting information, unless the candidate specifically authorizes us in writing to do so.

Reliability is also very important, particularly when transmitting candidate score information. Thanks to the hard work of many people in the NBME office, and the efforts of the staff in our office, there have been only two or three cases over the past 13 years in which a NAVLE candidate has received incorrect score information. In each case, the error involved mailing a score report to the wrong person, not reporting an incorrect score to a candidate. Given that over 50,000 people have taken the NAVLE, that's a pretty good record. Reliability also includes accuracy in recording and transmitting candidate data. We are continually working with our database and website consultants on ways to ensure accurate collection of data during the application process, because such errors can have adverse consequences.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

January 2013 NBVME Meeting

The NBVME met in Atlanta January 25-26. The meeting was chaired by Dr. Dennis Feinberg.

NBME Collaboration

The board reviewed an update on the planned collaboration between the NBVME and the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME). NBVME legal counsel Claire Topp reviewed a draft collaboration agreement between the two organizations, and solicited comments from NBVME members. A revised draft of the agreement was subsequently sent to the NBME for review. The parties have scheduled another face-to-face meeting in Philadelphia on April 16, after which the collaboration agreement should be in near-final form. Information on the new Collaboration Strategic Planning Group is on page 2.

NAVLE®

- The board approved a \$10 increase in the NAVLE fee for the 2013-14 testing cycle, to \$570.
- The board modified one of the eligibility requirements for NAVLE candidates. Previously, candidates who had not yet graduated had to have an expected graduation date no later than 8 months after the last day of the testing window. While this policy allowed students at North American veterinary schools to have two attempts at the NAVLE prior to graduation, stu-

dents at some schools outside North America did not have the same opportunity. To address this situation, the NBVME agreed to change the requirement from 8 months to 10 months. This change will allow all students the opportunity to take the NAVLE two times prior to graduation, but will not allow a student more than two attempts.

Bylaws Amendment

The board approved an amendment to the NBVME bylaws that allows a member whose term has expired to continue to serve on the board for up to six months until the member is reappointed, or until a successor is appointed by the constituent organization.

Finance Committee

Dr. Feinberg appointed Drs. Jay Hedrick and Jack Wilson to serve with Secretary-Treasurer Joyceanne Fick on the NBVME Finance Committee for the coming year. The Finance Committee subsequently met at the NBVME office in Bismarck February 22-23 to work on the 2013-14 budget.

Next Meetings

The board will meet in Philadelphia April 17-18 for the annual NAVLE form review, in Minneapolis on May 10 for a strategic planning retreat, and July 26-27 in Asheville, North Carolina.



Collaboration Strategic Planning Group Looks at Future of NAVLE

The format of the NAVLE has not changed appreciably since it was first administered in 2000. Refinements in the test development process have increased the number of questions that are based on clinical vignettes, and the test blueprint has been modified to address content areas identified in the NAVLE job analysis, but the NAVLE remains a single-step knowledge-based multiple choice examination.

The NBME's US Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) is a three-step examination. In addition to several multiple-choice components, the USMLE includes a computerized case simulation portion, and an examination that assesses clinical communications skills using standardized patients. The NBME is in the process of revising the USMLE program to implement recommendations developed during a comprehensive review of the USMLE conducted over the past several years. Additional information on the comprehensive review is available at www.usmle.org. Another feature of the licensing examination process in human medicine is that

all candidates, whether they are graduates of US medical schools or medical schools in other countries, take the same set of examinations (the multi-step USMLE). There are no separate examinations for graduates of non-accredited schools.

As an initial step toward the planned collaboration with the NBME regarding the NAVLE, the NBVME appointed a Collaboration Strategic Planning Group (called Co-Strat) to develop and recommend some rapid enhancements to the NAVLE, and also to take a look at some longer-term changes to the NAVLE to ensure that it remains a high-quality licensing examination system. The first meeting of the 14-member Co-Strat, chaired by Dr. Christopher Brown, took place at the NBME of-

ice in Philadelphia on December 14. At that meeting, the group discussed a variety of possible enhancements to the NAVLE, and considered some of the approaches that the NBME is using on the USMLE. These include test questions that integrate basic and clinical sciences, questions that incorporate video or audio segments, questions that require the candidate to evaluate a scientific abstract or a pharmaceutical advertisement, and questions that require creation of a medical record. Longer-term NAVLE enhancements could include computerized case simulations, and examinations that evaluate clinical communication skills. The Co-Strat agreed that the proposed NAVLE enhancements should address the core competencies outlined by the North American Veterinary Medical

Education Consortium (NAVMEC), including the one health concept. The Co-Strat formed three subgroups to look at some of these topics in more detail, and those subgroups have been working independently for the past two months. The Co-Strat plans to meet again this spring to develop a series of recommendations to the NBVME.



Participants at the December 14 Co-Strat meeting: Mike Chaddock, Peter Scoles, Dennis Feinberg, Stacy Lankford, Darcy Shaw, Jason Coe, Jane Shaw, Sanjay Kapil, Cheryl Dhein, Jon Betts, Joan Norton, Erica Barron, Janine Hawley, Chris Brown, Gary Gackstetter, and Bob Chersonson. Dr. Scoles is NBME Senior Vice President and Dr. Feinberg is NBVME Chair; the others are Co-Strat members.

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Scaled Scores Explained

NAVLE and Qualifying Examination (QE) scores are reported to boards and candidates as scaled scores. In the case of the NAVLE, the scale runs from 200 to 800, with the passing standard expressed as a score of 425. For some licensing boards, the score is also reported on a scale where the passing standard is expressed as 70 or 75. A scaled score is neither a raw score nor a percentage correct. For the QE, the passing standard is expressed as a scaled score of 203.

There are multiple forms of the NAVLE administered during each testing window. Although the forms are balanced with respect to content and item performance statistics, there are minor differences in difficulty between the forms. After each test administration, equating procedures are performed to account for these differences in difficulty, and to enable the same passing standard to be used from one administration to the next. After the equating process is done, and after any flawed items are deleted

from the scoring key as a result of a key validation step (which might result in a form having slightly fewer than 300 scored items), the scores are calculated and reported.

Candidates who do not pass the NAVLE often want to know how far they were away from passing. Since there is not a direct comparison between the scaled score and a candidate's raw score, it is not possible to answer this question with certainty, other than to say that a candidate who scored 424 almost certainly missed the passing standard by one question. For the 2011-2012 NAVLE, the mean score for criterion candidates was about 520 and the standard deviation was about 67, so a score of 453 was one standard deviation below the mean, and a score of 386 was two standard deviations below the mean. A scaled score of 200 is the lowest score possible, and each NAVLE administration finds some candidates scoring 200. Similarly, 800 is the highest possible score (though not necessarily a perfect score). In the

history of over 50,000 NAVLE candidates, seven have scored over 780, (all of them were senior students at seven different accredited schools) with three achieving a score of 800.

Because they are equated, NAVLE scaled scores allow score comparisons between administrations. This is important to candidates who repeat the examination, because they know that if they scored 400 on one administration and 420 on a subsequent administration, their performance improved, not that the second examination was easier. An examination is a measurement, and if it is repeated several times and the same result is obtained, the reliability of the examination as an assessment of a candidate's ability is high. Most candidates who repeat the NAVLE see an increase in their score. However, a candidate who has taken the examination several times and has scored about the same each time needs take steps to improve their knowledge of the test content before taking the examination again.

New NBVME Member: Dr. Jon Betts

Dr. Jon Betts is the third of three new members appointed to the NBVME last year. Dr. Betts is one of four NBVME members appointed by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB), and succeeded Dr. Lila Miller.

Dr. Betts graduated from veterinary school at the University of California Davis in 1978, and began working at a mixed animal practice in Woodburn, Oregon that year. He became a partner at the Woodburn Veterinary Clinic in 1980 until he sold his interest in 2009. He still works there part time.

Dr. Betts was appointed to the Oregon Veterinary Medical Examining Board in 1998 and served two four-year terms, plus one additional year.

Through his service on the Oregon Board, he became involved with the AAVSB, where he served on the Board of Directors, as Secretary-Treasurer, and as President in 2008.

Dr. Betts served as a member of the Board of Directors of the North American Veterinary Medical Education Consortium (NAVMEC), and was chosen by the Oregon Veterinary Medical Association as veterinarian of the Year in 2007.

Dr. Betts stays active in his community through Kiwanis, FFA Alumni, and serving on the Board of Directors of the local food bank. Dr. Betts and his wife Debbie have three children. Their oldest son and his wife are veterinarians practicing in California.



2013-14 NAVLE AGREEMENTS

Letters of Agreement between the NBVME and individual licensing boards covering the 2013-2014 NAVLE testing cycle were mailed to boards on February 1.

The candidate fee will be \$570, an increase of \$10. The testing windows will be November 18 - December 14, 2013 and April 14-26, 2014. 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 2012-2013 testing cycle, the NBVME office approved 2,825 candidates applying through 25 boards. Three more boards have opted to become direct approval states for 2013-14.

Examination Statistics

NAVLE

A total of 3,978 candidates took the NAVLE during the November 12-December 8, 2012 testing window, an increase of 211 from fall 2011. Scores were reported to licensing boards on January 14. There were 3,410 criterion candidates, 255 non-criterion candidates, and 313 candidates from non-accredited schools. Criterion candidates are senior students at AVMA accredited schools taking the examination for the first time.

The passing rate for criterion candidates was 92%, compared to 93%, 95% and 96% for the same group in fall 2011, 2010 and 2009, respectively.

The NBVME office has submitted eligibility files to the NBME for 562 new candidates and 441 repeating candidates for the April 8-20, 2013 NAVLE administration.

Qualifying Examination

The most recent web-based Qualifying Examination (QE) was administered to 31 PAVE candidates on January 17, 2013. The examination was offered in Grand Cayman and at 10 sites in the US. Scores were reported to the AAVSB in late February. The passing rate for the 30 PAVE candidates (not including one who tested with accommodations) was 46.7%. The next QE administration is May 16.

A total of 146 third-year students at Iowa State University also took the QE on January 17. 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.