

# National Board Report

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## Cycles

In most offices, cycles of activity are quite evident. In the NBVME office, testing dates, with their associated application deadlines, have the greatest impact on the workload cycle. Meeting dates also follow annual cycles, as does the publication of a quarterly newsletter.

The fall NAVLE testing window is now underway. Over the past three months, our office processed 3,545 applications for the fall NAVLE, the most in the six year history of the examination. We also approved over 700 NAVLE applicants on behalf of six state licensing boards, up from one state last fall. The Qualifying Examination (QE), with its three annual administrations, has more candidates each year. The new Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA) will have its own administration cycle once it is up and running beginning in January. Each examination program also has its own cycle of annual meetings, where item writers are trained and test items and forms are reviewed.

Until now, the above work was handled by two capable employees, Anita Casey-Reed and Debbie Larson. I am pleased to announce that Tonee VanderVliet has recently rejoined the NBVME staff. Tonee was the NBVME's first employee (besides me), and worked for the board until June 2003, when she left to have a child. Tonee has agreed to come back on a part-time basis to assist with the VCSA administrations, and to help Anita and Debbie with other office work when those cycles get a little hard to keep under control, usually right around the deadlines. Welcome back, Tonee.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD  
Executive Director

## VCSA Pilot Test Successfully Completed

On October 15-16, the NBVME conducted a pilot test of the new Veterinary Clinical Skills Assessment (VCSA). The pilot test was one of the final steps in the development of the new examination, a process that began in 2001. The test was conducted at Cedar Valley College in Dallas, Texas, under the direction of Dr. Michael Paul, the NBVME's VCSA Coordinator. The VCSA is a hands-on clinical skills examination developed by the NBVME for use in the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE) of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards (AAVSB).

The pilot test involved 21 examiners (15 veterinarians and six veterinary technicians) who evaluated candidates at testing stations addressing physical examination, laboratory, radiology, anesthesia, surgery, necropsy, and miscellaneous clinical skills. Skills were assessed using live animals (dogs, horses, and beef cows), cadavers, models, simulations, and clinical and laboratory equipment.

Unique to the VCSA are multiple clinical encounters stations, designed to assess clinical communication skills. For each encounter, the candidate is given background information on the specific case, and then required to interact with a person trained to portray a client. Each encounter is evaluated by an examiner using a checklist to record how the

candidate performs various tasks, including initiating the interview, gathering information, and explaining the management of the case. The clinical encounters are developed under the guidance of Dr. Cindy Adams of the University of Guelph.

A total of 16 candidates participated in the pilot test, including six PAVE candidates (who were graduates of six different foreign non-accredited veterinary schools), five senior students from two US veterinary schools, and five 2005 graduates of two US veterinary schools. The PAVE candidates traveled to Dallas at their own expense, but took the VCSA at no charge, with the understanding that if they achieved a passing score, that score would count toward a PAVE certificate. The senior students and recent graduates formed the reference group for evaluation and standard setting purposes. The examiners did not know the identity of the individual candidates while they were taking the examination.

Also present at the pilot test were two testing consultants from Michigan State University's Office of Medical Education Research and Development. Dr. John Pascoe, a member of the PAVE Committee, observed the examination.

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Cedar Valley College Veterinary Technology Facilities  
(Left) Large animal barn. (Right) Main classroom building.

## NAVLE New Item Review

Each fall, NAVLE item writers meet at the National Board of Medical Examiners in Philadelphia to review new NAVLE items. Items that survive the review process are added to the item bank for use on future examination forms. This year's meeting was November 1-2, and involved 19 of the 28 item writers.

NAVLE item writers for 2005 included: Drs. Trevor Bechuk (Winnipeg, MB), Cate Dewey (Guelph, ON), Patricia Dunn (State College, PA), Julie Fixman (Holmes, NY), Kevan Flaming (Ames, IA), Robert Froehlich (Grand Lake, CO), Gary Gackstetter (Fairfax, VA), Ned Gentz (Albuquerque, NM), Robert Hardy (St. Paul, MN), Ken Harkin (Manhattan, KS), Mark Hilton (West Lafayette, IN), Veronika Kiklevich (Boerne, TX), Michelle Kopcha (East Lansing, MI), Isabelle Langlois (St-Hyacinthe, QU), Manon Lécuyer (St-Hyacinthe, QU), Jeanne Lofstedt (Charlottetown, PEI), Clayton MacKay (Mississauga, ON), Margo MacPherson (Gainesville, FL), Dianne Mawby (Knoxville, TN), Jeffrey Musser (College Station, TX), Astrid Nielssen (Surrey, BC), Elizabeth Pluhar (St. Paul, MN), Darryl Ragland (West Lafayette, IN), David Reeves (Athens, GA), Margie Scherk (Vancouver, BC), Joel Schrader (Ashland, NE), Loren Schultz (Columbia, MO), Saralyn Smith-Carr (Auburn, AL), Dennis Villani (Greensburg, IN), Keith Wilson (Worthington, MN), and Alice Wolf (Bryan, TX).

The NBVME appreciates these item writers and the NBME editorial staff who work to ensure the continuing quality of the examination.

## From the Past: State Board Questions

### Number 18 in a Series

Here are some items from the Materia Medica chapter of the book, *Veterinary State Board Questions and Answers*, published in 1917 by V. G. Kimball.

#### Questions

1. What is meant by synergistic remedial agents?
2. Into what classes are cathartics divided? Name one cathartic of each class and state how it acts.
3. Give the therapeutic uses of aconite.
4. Name the drugs that exert the greatest effect on glandular structures.
5. Give the treatment of tetanus.
6. Describe the treatment of influenza in its simple form.

#### Answers

1. Agents which assist or intensify the action of others. Belladonna promotes the action of nux vomica, mercury and the iodides favor the action of silver as a waste producer, the alkalies favor the action of sulphur compounds, both chemically and physiologically.
2. Laxatives: olive oil acts mechanically and slightly stimulates peristalsis. Simple purgatives: calomel stimulates secretion and peristaltic action. Drastic purgatives: croton oil greatly increases peristaltic action and secretions. Hydragogue purgatives: magnesium sulphate abstracts water from the blood by stimulating secretion. Cholagogue purgatives: sodium phosphate increases the flow of bile, which stimulates peristalsis.
3. It is indicated in all affections characterized by a high resisting pulse and an elevated temperature; is useful in acute pharyngitis, laryngitis, pleurisy, peritonitis, encephalitis, laminitis, en-

teritis, and mammitis; also used in acute muscular or articular rheumatism, and as a sedative in cardiac disturbance.

4. Pilocarpine, arecoline, belladonna, calomel, potassium iodide, alcohol, ammonia, antimony and potassium tartrate, aloes, apomorphine, ipecac, camphor, opium, spirits nitrous ether, potassium nitrate, etc.

5. Surgically remove tissue surrounding the point of infection or thoroughly cauterize same and treat daily with strong disinfectants. Phenol is best for this purpose. Keep the patient in a quiet place. The use of antitoxin as a therapeutic agent is still *sub judice*. By most authorities it is considered valueless in this connection. Attempts to control spasms may be made with potassium bromide, given in four ounce doses every four hours. Morphine, chloral, or lobelia may assist. Rectal or nasal feeding may help in nourishing the patient. Saline laxatives to secure free elimination.

6. A laxative condition of the bowels should be secured by feeding bran-mashes and administering calomel. Stimulants such as liquor ammonium acetatis or ammonium carbonate are valuable. If the fever is high, quinine, acetanilide and antipyrine are important antipyretics which can be used. In oedema of the extremities, potassium nitrate is indicated. Support a weak heart with digitalis, camphor, or strychnine. Counterirritants on the chest and throat may be useful. Treat complications symptomatically. [wow! -ed]

Next issue: more Materia Medica

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# Qualifying Examination Update

## September Testing Date

A total of 135 candidates took the NBVME's Qualifying Examination on September 15. The QE is a 300-item multiple choice basic science examination developed for use by the PAVE program in assessing the educational equivalence of graduates of foreign non-accredited veterinary schools.

In September, candidates took the QE at two sites in the Caribbean (St. Kitts and Grenada), and at seven locations in the US. The NBVME Executive Committee met via conference call on October 11 to review examination statistics and approve a passing standard for the September QE. The resulting failure rate for the total group was 21.5%.

The QE is administered three times per year via the internet at proctored testing centers. The next administrations are scheduled for January 19 and May 11, 2006. Candidates apply for the QE through the AAVSB office, [www.aavsb.org](http://www.aavsb.org).

## Use By Accredited Schools

Several accredited veterinary schools have expressed interest in offering the QE to their students, as a method of assessing competence in basic science content areas. Western University's College of Veterinary Medicine required its second year students to take the QE in May 2005, and plans to do so again next May. The QE will be discussed at the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges meeting in March.

## QE Item Writers

QE item development follows a process similar to that used for the NAVLE. Item writers are selected to represent the various content areas of the examination. Newly written items are reviewed each fall for addition to the item bank. On September 27-28, eight of this year's 10 QE item writers participated in the item review meeting.

QE item writers for 2005 included: Drs. Sheila Grimes, Reynolds-

burg, OH (pathology); Aslam Hassan, Urbana, IL (physiology), Tomas Martin, Urbana, IL (pharmacology), Gina Michels, Augusta, MI (pharmacology); Ed Murphey, Galveston, TX (physiology and anatomy); Phillip Nelson, Pomona, CA (immunology); Bonnie Smith, Blacksburg, VA (anatomy); Robert Walker, Laurel, MD (bacteriology); Darren Wood, Guelph, ON (clinical pathology); and Anne Zajac, Blasckburg, VA (parasitology).

Item writer contracts for 2006 were prepared this month. New item writers will meet in Philadelphia on February 28 for an item writing workshop, and the following day to review QE forms to be administered in the 2006-07 testing cycle.

## More Information

To date, the QE has been administered to a total of 590 PAVE candidates. Additional information on the QE can be found at [www.nbvme.org/examinations.html](http://www.nbvme.org/examinations.html).

## NBVME Member Profile: Dr. Linda L. Blythe

Dr. Linda L. Blythe, the NBVME's newest member, was appointed to the board by the Association of American Veterinary Medical Colleges (AAVMC) for a term beginning in July 2005. Dr. Blythe succeeded Dr. Jan Krehbiel, who served as the AAVMC's appointee for six years.

A native of California, Dr. Blythe received her DVM from the University of California Davis in 1974. After graduation, she completed an internship in equine surgery, and worked briefly in private equine practice before completing a PhD degree in neurology and comparative medicine at UC Davis. In 1978, Dr. Blythe joined the faculty of the new college of veterinary medicine at Oregon State University. She completed ten years of service as Associate Dean of Students in the summer of 2005.

Dr. Blythe's research interests include equine neurological diseases, toxic plants, and athletic medicine. She teaches neuroscience courses for

first year students, and an elective course in canine sports medicine for senior students. In 1994, Dr. Blythe co-authored *Care of the Racing Greyhound, A Guide for Trainers, Breeders, and Veterinarians*, and is presently working on the second edition of the book.

Dr. Blythe is the recipient of numerous awards, including the university's Burlington Award for Excellence in Teaching. She was twice honored with the Norden Distinguished Teaching Award, and has also received the Pfizer Award for Research Excellence.

Dr. Blythe has three children, and in her spare time enjoys hiking, traveling to foreign countries (such as Australia, as pictured), and enjoying her family and her pets.

As the AAVMC's appointee to the NBVME, Dr. Blythe brings to the board's deliberations an academic perspective, and an understanding of the demands faced by today's veterinary students.



## January Meetings

NBVME Chair Dr. Mike Thomas will preside over a series of meetings in Orlando in January. On Thursday afternoon, January 19, the NBVME will hold a joint meeting with members of the AAVSB's Executive Committee. On Friday, the board will convene for an all-day strategic planning session, using an outside facilitator. Saturday morning, the board will meet in Executive Session, and a General Session will follow on Saturday afternoon. Persons interested in attending the General Session should contact the NBVME office for more information.



Dr. Mike Thomas, NBVME Chair

## VCSA Pilot Test (continued from page 1)

Following the pilot test, the MSU consultants prepared a report for the NBVME Executive Committee to use in establishing a passing standard for the examination. Three of the four Executive Committee members (Drs. Mike Thomas, Meg Glattly, and Jim Dalley) served as examiners during the pilot test, and also constitute the NBVME's VCSA subcommittee. The approved minimum passing standard resulted in three of the six PAVE candidates passing the VCSA. These three individuals have now met the requirements for a PAVE certificate and they are eligible for licensure in the 17 states that accept PAVE certification.

Information gained from the pilot test is being used to structure the actual VCSA administrations. The first VCSA will be held at Cedar Valley College on January 7-8, 2006, when up to six candidates will take the examination. Future administrations, which can accommodate up to 12 candidates each, are planned for April 22-23 and July 22-23. Candidates apply for the VCSA through the AAVSB office, and may take the examination only after meeting English proficiency requirements, passing the Qualifying Examination, and graduating from veterinary school.

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Mailing Label