

National Board Report

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Good Items

As I returned from the NAVLE item review meeting earlier this month (see page 3), I was once again impressed by how much work it takes to develop a good examination.

Before I started working for the NBVME, I thought the multiple-choice test questions I wrote for my veterinary students were pretty good. After I began working with editors and psychometricians, first with the Professional Examination Service and then with the National Board of Medical Examiners, I realized how naive I was. Sitting around a table with five or six content experts and hearing them analyze test questions one at a time in great detail is a fascinating experience. Each participant brings his or her unique perspective and expertise to the table. Only questions that are deemed acceptable by the reviewers are added to the item bank. All new NAVLE items are used first as pretest items. Only items with acceptable performance statistics can be used on subsequent test forms as scored items. Many times, this pretest process reveals flaws in items that may not have been evident to the reviewers. Some items might be too hard, some too easy, some may appear to have more than one possible answer, and some do not discriminate well between high and low ability candidates. The final step is form review, where each potential live item is reviewed again by another panel of content experts. The result of all this is that the items that will be used to derive a candidate's NAVLE score are, indeed, good items.

John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD
Executive Director

NBVME Employees Serve Constituents

The members of the NBVME and its executive director appreciate the excellent staff working in the office in Bismarck. These four dedicated individuals work mainly behind the scenes to provide important services to examination candidates, licensing boards, veterinary schools, NBVME constituent organizations, board and committee members, and others. In the 16 years since the NBVME office moved to Bismarck, a total of only six people have served on the staff, a remarkable record of stability.

Tonee VanderVliet was the NBVME's first support staff member. She was hired in 1998, one year after the office moved from Illinois to North Dakota. Tonee left in 2003 to start a family, and returned to the office on a part-time basis in 2005 as Examination Assistant. Tonee presently works with the NAVLE Self-Assessment program, and serves as secretary for the North Dakota Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners.

Anita Casey-Reed joined the staff in 2002 and serves as Administrative Assistant. She is the person who answers

the telephone most of the time, and corresponds with people through the mail@nbvme.org address. Anita works with the Qualifying Examination program, processes NAVLE candidate applications and requests for test accommodations, corresponds with licensing boards and veterinary schools, and is responsible for the species specific examination program.

Bridget Whittey is the NBVME's Executive Assistant and began working in the office in 2007. Bridget handles online NAVLE application and credit card processing, financial transactions, candidate database and web site updates, and assists with the NAVLE school score reports.

Laurie Holverson is the NBVME's newest employee, joining the staff in 2011 after Debbie Larson retired. As Office Manager, she has primary responsibility for planning and coordinating NBVME meetings. Laurie also receives and approves NAVLE candidate applications on behalf of 28 state licensing boards.



Bridget Whittey,
Laurie Holverson,
Anita Casey-Reed, and
Tonee VanderVliet

COLLABORATION MEMO SENT TO LICENSING BOARDS

On November 26, the NBVME office sent a detailed memo to each US state and territorial licensing board, outlining the planned collaboration between the NBVME and the National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) regarding the NAVLE program. The memo explains why the collaboration is being initiated and how the collaboration will benefit the examination program and the licensure process.

Key points in the memo include the following:

- The purpose of the collaboration is to facilitate NAVLE enhancements, including those recommended by licensing boards.
- The NBVME and the NBME are both not-for-profit organizations that devote their resources for the public good.
- The NBVME will continue to control the NAVLE program under the collaboration, including all decisions related to test content, candidate eligibility, standard setting, score reporting, and issues related to veterinary licensure.
- The cost of the NAVLE will not increase solely as a result of the collaboration. In fact, the research and development costs associated with NAVLE enhancements will be shared by both the NBVME and the NBME.
- Licensing boards will continue to have significant input into key decisions with regard to the NAVLE program.

January NBVME Meeting

The NBVME's next meeting will be in San Antonio January 24-25, 2014. The meeting will be chaired by Dr. Gary Gackstetter. Persons interested in attending the January meeting should contact the NBVME office for details.

NBME Collaboration

An important agenda item for the January meeting will be the planned collaborative relationship with the NBME. At the July 2013 meeting, the board unanimously approved all sections of the draft collaboration agreement, except for the section on finances. Following the meeting, the NBVME's accountant worked with the NBME's Chief Financial Officer to prepare illustrations of the financial aspects of the NAVLE program operated as a collaboration. That information was evaluated during a face-to-face meeting between NBVME and NBME representatives in Philadelphia on September 17. The full board will review the information with the accountant at the January meeting in San Antonio, with the goal of approving the financial section of the collaboration agreement at that time.

Examination R&D

The board will look at recommendations made last year by the Collabora-



tion Strategic Planning Group (Co-Strat) and prioritize work on NAVLE enhancements that can be initiated as the collaboration gets underway. The NBVME's appointees to the Collaboration Governance Committee, Drs. Meg Glattly, Rick Tubbs, and Leah Steinberg, will attend the January meeting.

New Member Orientation

NBVME legal counsel Claire Topp will present a new member orientation to the four new NBVME members who took office following the July meeting: Drs. Bob Chersonson, Karen Lehe, Bruce Loudereback, and Mark Russak.

NAVLE® Pool Review

The day before the board meeting, most of the NBVME members will join members of the NBVME's Examination Development Advisory Board (EDAB) and some former board members in a review of several hundred items from the NAVLE item bank. These reviews, which are done at least once per year, ensure that items in the active item pool are suitable for continued use on NAVLE forms. Participants will work in teams, by content area, and will be assisted by editors from the NBME's test development department.

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Dennis A. Feinberg, DVM, *Past Chair*; Linda L. Blythe, DVM, PhD; Robert Chersonson, DVM; Joyceanne Fick, *Public Member and Secretary-Treasurer*; Gary D. Gackstetter, DVM, MPH, PhD, *Chair*; Jay Hedrick, DVM, *Chair-Elect*; Jayne Jensen, DVM; Karen E. Lehe, DVM, DACVPM; Bruce Loudereback, DVM; Patricia J. Provost, MS, VMD, DACVS; Mark Russak, DVM; Jack Wilson, DVM. John R. Boyce, DVM, PhD, *Executive Director*

Fall NAVLE Item Review Meeting

Twenty-five of the 28 NAVLE item writers for 2013 met at the NBME office in Philadelphia November 11-12 to review newly-written items. Nearly 800 new items were approved for addition to the NAVLE item bank.

Each form of the NAVLE includes 300 scored items and 60 pretest items, and all new items are pretested before they

are used as scored items. Pretesting ensures that items that count toward a candidate's score have acceptable performance statistics. New items approved at the November 2013 review meeting will appear for the first time as pretest items on examination forms developed for use during the 2014-2015 NAVLE testing cycle.

Most NAVLE item writers are appointed by the members of the NBVME's Examination Development Advisory Board, according to the main content areas of the examination. Work is now underway to finalize the list of item writers for 2014.

To date, a total of 135 veterinarians have served as NAVLE item writers.



Left to right: Drs. David Wilson, Jeff Ondrak, Allan Corber, Susan Gogolski, Maureen Wichtel, Lorraine Jarboe, Joie Watson, Margie Scherk, Ruthann Chun, Beth Boynton, Pat Wakenell, Chris Rumsey, Mike Gilsdorf, Rodney Auffet, Robyn Fleck, Lauren Kleine, Bob Chersonson, Susan Little, Julie Fixman, Emilio DeBess, Alice Johns, Sandra Mitchell, Christine Savidge, John Boyce, and Helen Tuzio. Not pictured: Drs. Erica Barron, Marion Desmarchelier, and Simon Peek.

New NBVME Member: Dr. Mark Russak

Dr. Mark Russak was named by the American Animal Hospital Association to succeed Dr. John Tait as one of the two NBVME members designated by that organization. Dr. Russak is immediate past president of AAHA. Dr. Russak took office at the close of the board's July 2013 meeting.

A native of Paterson, New Jersey, Dr. Russak earned his DVM degree from Colorado State University in 1976, and in 1998 received a certificate in veterinary practice administration from the Krannert Graduate School of Management at Purdue University.

Dr. Russak owned and operated a multi-doctor AAHA accredited small animal practice in Kensington, Connecticut for 25 years. In 2003, he joined



the faculty of the College of Veterinary Medicine at Mississippi State University, where he served as an assistant clinical professor and director of student affairs. At Mississippi State, Dr. Russak's teaching responsibilities included primary care, veterinary practice management, leadership, and communications. He received the Dean's Award for excellence in teaching in 2006.

In 2008, Dr. Russak was inducted into Phi Zeta, the honor society of veterinary medicine. Dr. Russak was recently credentialed as a Certified Veterinary Journalist. He has hosted a weekly television pet health show, authored a weekly newspaper pet care column, and has contributed to numerous other lay and professional publications.

NBVME Examination Updates

NAVLE®

The November-December 2013 testing window for the North American Veterinary Licensing Examination (NAVLE) opened Monday, November 18 and runs through Saturday, December 14. The NBVME office processed and submitted 4,373 candidate eligibility files for the fall examination; 344 more than fall 2012.

Applications for the April 14-26, 2014 testing window will be available beginning December 2, and the application receipt deadline for new candidates is January 3. Scores from the November-December testing window will be reported in late January. Candidates who do not pass will be able to reapply for the April 2014 testing window until February 15.

Qualifying Examination

The NBVME's Qualifying Examination (QE) is a web-based basic science examination used as the step three requirement of the Program for the Assessment of Veterinary Education Equivalence (PAVE). A total of 18 PAVE candidates took the QE at nine locations on September 12. Ten of the 18 candidates achieved a passing score, for an overall passing rate of 56%. The September QE was also administered to 116 third-year students in the College of Veterinary Medicine at the University of Missouri.

The NBVME has received eligibility files for 10 PAVE candidates for the January 16, 2014 QE administration. In addition, Iowa State University plans to administer the QE to 146 third year students in January.

Species Specific Examinations

Since 1997, the NBVME has offered species specific examinations in companion animal and equine medicine to licensing boards. There are two 100-item forms for each examination. The paper and pencil examinations are used by boards in disciplinary cases and for other purposes. The present test forms were last updated in 2007. Revisions to the examinations are now underway, and two review teams will meet in Minneapolis on December 16 to update the test forms. After the revisions are complete, the teams will work to establish a recommended minimum passing standard for each form. The revised examinations should be available for use by licensing boards in early 2014.