



The VTNE - Moving Into the Future

AAVSB provides programs and services to its Member Boards to assist them in carrying out their statutory mandates of regulation of the profession in the interest of public protection. Therefore, continuous quality assurance for all AAVSB programs is one of the organization’s top strategic focus areas.

One of AAVSB’s key programs is the Veterinary Technician National Examination (VTNE), a high stakes licensing and credentialing examination given in both the United States and Canada. AAVSB owns and oversees the administration of the VTNE with ongoing assistance from volunteer content experts, stakeholders and service providers. The exam is constructed to assess the professional competence of the practitioner in terms of minimal qualifications essential to enter practice.

In addition to assessing minimum competency, the VTNE also aims to contribute to the development of an improved relationship between knowledge and professional practice. This shall in turn provide a common standard in the evaluation of candidates that will be comparable from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, thereby facilitating inter-jurisdictional licensing reciprocity for practitioners in the field.

AAVSB’s Veterinary Technician Testing Committee (V TTC) is charged by the AAVSB Board of Directors with the responsibility of continuous review and upkeep of the VTNE. Its membership includes fourteen content experts from various areas of practice in the United States and Canada. These veterinary professionals represent a wide range of practice areas, organizations involved in this fast growing profession and educators from both countries.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics lists veterinary technologists and technicians as one of the top five fastest growing

occupations in the country. “We receive five to six job opportunities for every graduate of our program,” states Dr. Pete Bill, Director of the Veterinary Technology program and Professor of Veterinary Pharmacology at Purdue University School of Veterinary Medicine. “We have a 100% placement rate.” Within the next ten years, the number of jobs is expected to grow 41 percent. Dr. Bill adds, “It’s a wonderful opportunity to work in a rapidly growing field.”

Moving into the future, work is currently underway to transition the VTNE from the current paper and pencil form to a Computer Based Test (CBT), scheduled to go into effect in the summer of 2010. To accomplish this goal, a great deal of work has been performed on the bank of items used to create each form (or version) of the exam.

A major step forward in the transition to CBT occurred during the first weekend of June this year when AAVSB hosted an exceedingly productive Item Writers Retreat and Workshop in Kansas City. Staff from AAVSB and Professional Examination Service (PES) worked with a group of 25 dedicated content experts, veterinary technicians and veterinarians from all over the United States and Canada, to write and review questions to be used in upcoming versions of the VTNE.

AAVSB is very grateful to Maple Woods Community College’s Veterinary Technology Program Director Chris Morrow, DVM, for the hospitality extended during this intense 3 day workshop.

Stay tuned as we will be providing updates throughout this important transition to CBT.



Item Writers Retreat and Workshop Attendees at Maple Woods Community College, Kansas City, MO



Chris Morrow, DVM, Veterinary Technology Program Director at Maple Woods Community College in Kansas City, MO

Inside this issue:	
The Legal Corner	2-3
AAVSB Programs-In a Flash	4
Annual Meeting	5
We’ve Moved!	5

The Legal Corner *with Dale Atkinson*

What's in a Word? The Importance of Language Continued

As reported in a previous AAVSB Newsletter article (*The Importance of Language*, AAVSB Veterinary Regulation News, Volume 15 Issue 1), the language used in statutes and regulations provides the basis for creating and empowering boards of veterinary medicine to regulate the profession in the interest of public protection. The previous newsletter article cited numerous questions for readers to ponder in interpreting each

board's relevant regulatory scheme. This issue will attempt to answer some of the lingering questions, most of which are related to terminology.

Language used by licensees, applicants, and others who perform services to the public's animals may also impact the consuming public and, at times, may implicate regulatory issues within the purview of the veterinary board. The legislative scheme (both statutes and/or regulations) should adequately empower the veterinary board to act, where deemed necessary, to modify or prohibit infringing use of terminology.

Turning our attention to the previous article, the first question asked for the definition of "veterinarian" and the significance of graduation from a veterinary program. *Does graduation from a veterinary program qualify or allow*

individuals to refer to themselves as veterinarians? Article I, section 107 (u) of the AAVSB Practice Act Model defines veterinarian as a person "who is duly licensed to practice veterinary medicine under the provisions of this Act." Further, Article III, section 301(b) mandates that "no person shall use the designation Veterinarian, Licensed Veterinarian, or any other designation indicating licensure status, ... unless duly licensed as

The AAVSB Practice Act Model does not use the term accredited, as it is subjective, confusing to the public, and virtually any entity can implement and operate an accrediting program.

such." Under the AAVSB Practice Act Model, persons are not permitted to refer to themselves as "veterinarians" until duly licensed by the board. The rationale behind such a limitation is related to public perception. The consuming public likely understands a veterinarian as an individual able to legally provide medical services to animals. While graduates of veterinary programs can refer to themselves as a DVM, the use of the term veterinarian is restricted to licensees.

The previous article next queried as to what is an "accredited" school/program of veterinary medicine and who decides what accredited means. The AAVSB Practice Act Model does not use the term accredited, as it is subjective, confusing to the public, and virtually any entity can implement and operate an accrediting program. For

veterinary boards which wish to rely upon an accreditation process in determining educational qualifications toward licensure, it is recommended that the term "accredited" be defined, referencing specific standards and criteria. Such an approach ensures that the veterinary boards as governmental agencies are empowered to ultimately make these important determinations, rather than an outside private entity over which the board has no authority.

To legislatively require graduation from an accredited school/program, without placing parameters over what signifies the accreditation standards/criteria, empowers private sector accrediting entities and may call into question the legal bases for ultimate enforcement. Article III, section 302(4) requires applicants for licensure by examination to, among other criteria, be graduates from an Approved Veterinary Medical Program. Article I, section 107(d) defines an Approved Veterinary Medical Program to be one approved by the veterinary board and Article II, section 213(5) empowers the board to determine standards for the recognition and approval of degree programs relied upon in the licensure process. To the extent that the board is comfortable with the standards, criteria, and administrative processes of a private accrediting entity, the board can, through

What's in a Word?, cont'd from page 2

regulations, recognize such an accrediting entity.

The previous article next referenced differing terminology which may (or may not) signify board authority to practice. As readers contemplate the variety of terminology used in the numerous regulated professions, and with the growth of technicians and other paraprofessionals to assist veterinarians with duties which can be lawfully delegated, recognition terminology may increase in significance. Licensure, certification, and registration are a few terms to be considered, again taking into account the public perception of such designations. The promotion of uniformity is, in large part, why AAVSB exists and the Practice Act Model uses the term **"license"** and **"licensure"** as the basis for board recognition of lawful practitioners. Licensure applies to veterinarians and technicians to aid the consuming public in understanding who are governmentally recognized professionals.

Of particular significance is the development and potential proliferation of specialized or recognized designations. In several professions, licensees use varying identifiers indicating specialty knowledge or recognition. Terms and phrases such as **"certified," "board certified," "specialist,"** and others have surfaced as a way for professionals to distinguish themselves from other

professionals. Legislatures may consider enacting statutory restrictions or prohibitions on the use of certain terminology. As noted above, any private sector entity can develop a program and certify completion. Some such programs may be legitimate and some may not. But, the temptation to use the phrase **"board certified"** creates some interesting issues and questions when applied to the public and its understanding of such a phrase. Based upon the likelihood of confusion to the consumers and the potential for associating board certified with the regulatory board, legislatures and veterinary boards are encouraged to be aware of this potential.

One particular example is California statutes proscribing false and misleading advertising by health professionals licensed by the state. Specifically related to physicians and surgeons licensed by the Medical Board of California, the statutes allow licensees to indicate fields of specialization, but prohibit them from representing that they are **"board certified"** unless the certifying organization is approved or recognized by the medical board under certain criteria established by such medical board. Such a statutory requirement empowers the medical board with the authority to oversee and ensure that these private sector certifying entities comply with stated criteria promulgated via a governmental

But, the temptation to use the phrase "board certified" creates some interesting issues and questions when applied to the public and its understanding of such a phrase.



Mr. Dale Atkinson
Atkinson & Atkinson
1466 Techny Road
Northbrook, IL 60062
847-714-0070
dale@atkinsonfirm.com

process. The mere fact that this article must be so specifically written to identify and, where appropriate, differentiate between the governmentally created and empowered veterinary board and any other private sector **"board certified"** program is illustrates the confusion and the need for veterinary board action in this arena.

To the extent empowered by the practice acts, it is recommended that veterinary boards promulgate regulations which address these important language issues. Without appropriate legislation protections via statutes or regulations, the consuming public will be subjected to confusing and potentially misleading designations or titles. AAVSB member boards are encouraged to examine their respective laws and attempt to answer the above-referenced questions.

AAVSB Programs - In a Flash

VTNE Program

The VTNE was administered to more candidates in 2009 than in any single year since the examination started over 30 years ago. The Veterinary Technician Testing Committee, AAVSB staff and a very hard working group of Item Writers have been making preparations for the next big change to Computer Based Testing (CBT) in the summer of 2010. The final paper/pencil VTNE is scheduled for January 15, 2010. Once the change to CBT is made, the exam will remain a four hour multiple choice examination and will be administered three times per year at Prometric testing centers all over the US and Canada. This change provides more flexibility for the candidates and allows the Member Boards to have access to the scores much more quickly, allowing for more efficient licensing. Effective with the summer 2010 administration, the VTNE application fee will be changed to \$300.00. For more information please contact Cate Daniels, VTNE Program Administrator, cdaniels@aavsb.org or 1-877-698-8482, ext. 226.

RACE Program

On behalf of the AAVSB Board of Directors, the RACE Committee and its consultants, we are pleased to announce an updated and revised RACE Standards document. The revised document is intended to provide a clear and concise set of policies related to the recognition of RACE providers and their programs. The goal was to clarify the definition of RACE-approvable continuing education, to strengthen the language pertaining to program approval and presenter qualifications and to more clearly articulate several policies related to the process. The new Standards document was constructed in a user-friendly report format complete with a searchable table of contents.

The revised Standards document is the result of many hours of hard work on the part of the AAVSB Board of Directors, RACE Committee members and consultants, and staff, all of whom remain committed to this program. Our intent is to provide quality and consistent review of CE programs and their providers the continuous quality improvement as a service to the Member Boards. The Committee looks forward to continuing to enhance and improve its services and we welcome the Member Board's input and feedback. A copy of the document is available on our website: www.aavsb.org/race or by contacting Karen Campbell, RACE Program Administrator, race@aavsb.org or 1-877-698-8482, ext. 224.

VIVA Program

VIVA is on the verge of releasing an updated score report. This report will combine examination, credential and discipline information into one easy-to-read format. Additional features will include a candidate's photo, if available, and the use of security paper. Look for the new report to debut in the fourth quarter. If you have any questions, please contact Jessica Haendler, VIVA Program Administrator, jhaendler@aavsb.org or 1-877-698-8482, ext. 221.

PAVE Program

2009 has been a busy year for PAVE. We have issued 146 Certificates of Completion to date. We recently redesigned the PAVE Certificate and sent a sample to all PAVE states so they know what to look for when PAVE candidates apply for licensure. PAVE representatives have attended several state board meetings this year. If you would like your board to hear more about PAVE *in person*, please let us know. We welcome the opportunity to give informational presentations and answer any questions and/or concerns. For more information, please contact Erin Jones, PAVE Program Administrator, ejones@aavsb.org or 1-877-698-8482, ext. 222.

Member Services

AAVSB released a new version of its website on July 10. The new site introduced a new look and feel, enhanced navigation and will feature the ability to create a secure user account. Please note that the user account feature and member forums are still being developed and should be available before the end of the year. We are continually looking to enhance our website features, so please send us any feedback and we will do our best to accommodate those suggestions. Please send any feedback to Daphne Tabbytite, Assistant Director, dtabbytite@aavsb.org or 1-877-698-8482, ext. 223.

See You in Minneapolis!



The 2009 AAVSB Annual Meeting and Conference is just weeks away. We hope to see many of you this year in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

SPEAKERS - Speakers this year include Mr. Steve Hudson who will be talking about VetVIPPS and the National Association of Boards of Pharmacy and Dr. Jim Humphries who will be presenting a workshop entitled

Dealing with the Media.

FREE GIFTS - This year we will hold drawings for several gifts to be given throughout the conference.

MUSIC AND FUN - Join us for the networking event on the rooftop at Seven where a live DJ will be providing the night's entertainment. Enjoy food and beverages under the stars, catch up with fellow regulatory professionals and enjoy the downtown cityscape.

WHAT TO DO - While in Minneapolis, check out the popular NPR show, "A Prairie Home Companion," with Garrison Keillor which will be broadcasting live from the Fitzgerald Theatre in

For up-to-date information on this year's conference, please visit our website at www.aavsb.org.

downtown St. Paul on Saturday evening. On Sunday, September 27th the Minneapolis Vikings will be hosting the San Francisco 49ers. Check out our website for other fun things to do: www.aavsb.org.

If you have not registered for the conference yet, it is not too late. But hurry, the deadline to register is **September 15!** Registrations made after this date are subject to availability.

The registration form is available at www.aavsb.org.

Forms may be faxed to 1-816-931-1604 or mailed to: AAVSB, 380 West 22nd Street, Suite 101, Kansas City, MO 64108.



The AAVSB Office Has Moved



AAVSB Board of Directors in front of the new office building (from left to right)

Becky Malphus, DVM; Stephen Colquhoun, DVM; Helen Tuzio, DVM; David Ylander, DVM; John Lawrence, DVM; C. Bruce Louderback, DVM; and Jonathan Betts, DVM



Jay Hedrick, DVM



C. Bruce Louderback, DVM and David Ylander, DVM touring the new office building during the June 2009 Board of Directors Meeting

Our new contact information is:

**AAVSB
380 West 22nd Street
Suite 101
Kansas City, MO 64108**

1-816-931-1504 - Phone
1-877-698-8482 - Toll Free
1-816-931-1604 - Fax

Please note that we no longer have PO Box 413183.

If you need a new W-9 or other documentation to update your records, please contact Amy White at awhite@aavsb.org or at 1-877-698-8482, ext. 227.



Veterinary Regulation News
380 West 22nd Street, Suite 101
Kansas City, MO 64108

www.aavsb.org

AAVSB MISSION

To reliably provide quality resources and accurate information for veterinary regulatory agencies and professionals and allied groups in the interest of public protection.

AAVSB VISION

To inspire active participation of all veterinary regulatory agencies in North America and to be their collective voice.

AAVSB VALUES

Responsive, resourceful service while striving for continuous quality improvement.

AAVSB Board of Directors

President

Jonathan Betts, DVM
Oregon

President-Elect

C. Bruce Louderback, DVM
Colorado

Secretary-Treasurer

Helen Tuzio, DVM
New York

Past-President

Jay Hedrick, DVM
Kansas

Directors

Stephen Colquhoun, DVM
South Carolina

John Lawrence, DVM
Minnesota

David Ylander, DVM
Nebraska

Beckey Malphus, DVM
Georgia

Executive Director

Robyn Kendrick

AAVSB News is a publication of the American Association of Veterinary State Boards, 380 West 22nd Street, Suite 101, Kansas City, MO 64108. The opinions and views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the official views, opinions, or policies of AAVSB or any member board unless expressly so stated. Copyright by the American Association of Veterinary State Boards. All rights reserved.