

**Report of the  
Meeting of the California Dental Board's Examination Subcommittee  
June 15, 2006  
University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry  
San Francisco, California)**

**This report summarizes the significant activities of the Dental Board of California Examination Subcommittee during the meeting of June 15, 2007. More information may be obtained by calling Edmund Carolan in the Public Policy Division at (916) 554-4987 or sending an e-mail to [edmund.carolan@cda.org](mailto:edmund.carolan@cda.org).**

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Examination Subcommittee

Members present: Casagrande (chair), Baron, Dominicis, McCormick, Mito  
Members absent: Turchi

Meeting was called to order and a roll call taken.

*Discussion of Criteria Update and Result of Recent Examinations:* Material was provided that illustrated the 2005 pass rate on the California exam for each procedure tested. Data was also provided that highlighted the 2005 pass rate for procedures based on the location of where the exam was offered. There was also information provided on the rating/scoring process used by examiners to evaluate test procedures.

Staff reported only 25 people have signed up for the next exam at UCLA. Dr. Bob Christofferson reported that 60 of the 125 UOP candidates eligible to take the exam took the state exam. Staff later reported having a total of 308 applications from candidates to take the California exam and that the number is dropping daily as candidates change their minds (e.g., received positive WREB results). Committee members acknowledged that if the number of current exam applications continues to drop it will not be financially feasible for the board to continue administering an exam.

The Committee also discussed the grading criteria for the simulated prosthetic exam. Historically, this is the portion of the exam in which candidates score the lowest. Subcommittee members agreed changes were needed and formed a task force to gather information and make recommendations to the committee on this section of the exam.

Board staff gave the overall pass rate statistics for the Western Regional Examination (WREB) for 2005 and 2006 (to date). While there were speculative comments made toward the data, that showed an increased pass rate in the WREB during the last year,

the Board noted that the information was only being provided as information and was not being provided to argue in support or opposition of any position on the WREB.

Dr. Christoffersen, Associate Dean at UOP, stated that the dental students at UOP, who have taken or plan to take the WREB do not understand how to apply to take the law and ethics exam. Mr. Blake Robison, dental student at UOP, concurred with Dr. Christoffersen's comments and stated that some students, who have taken and passed the WREB, have signed up to take the California exam just for the opportunity to take the law and ethics exam. The Board's executive officer stated that the Board's website explains how students who have passed WREB can sign up for the law and ethics exam. Mr. Hedrick also stated that students who have passed the WREB can walk up and take the law and ethics exam when this exam is being offered as part of the California exam. He further stated that the walk-ups must provide a completed application. Dr. Christoffersen and Mr. Robison both stated that they were not aware of such a provision. Mr. Hedrick stated he notified the deans at UCSF dental school. Dr. Mito noted that students at UCLA were also aware of the walk-up policy and approximately 60 students took advantage of this "policy" recently. CDA asked if this was a formal (i.e., written) policy of the Board as CDA would like to notify all the dental schools of this process. Dr. Casagrande stated that this was a policy of the Board. In addition, Dr. Casagrande stated that the Board would no longer require passage of the WREB as a requirement to sit for the law and ethics exam.

Subcommittee members also had a discussion regarding why students prefer the WREB over the California exam. Mr. Blake Robison, dental student at UOP and recent WREB candidate, noted that while he was not speaking for all students, his observation was that most students were taking the WREB because they want their license to practice dentistry on the date they graduate. Since the WREB is offered during the school year rather than at the end of the school year, it is a more attractive exam for getting a license early. Mr. Robison also indicated that the WREB has a better reputation as "student friendly" exam with the examiners more likely to be encouraging success rather than looking for failure. Finally, Mr. Robison noted that he can pick up the phone and talk to a live person at WREB and have his questions answered which leads to knowing exactly how the exam process is going to work and what is expected of the candidate. Calling the Dental Board of California often only allows the student to leave a voicemail message that is often not returned. Finally, cost was discussed but Mr. Robison did not seem to think it was a large factor in deciding which exam to take. He also noted that most students from the California schools plan to practice in California and therefore the ability to use the WREB results in other states would not appear to be factor in exam selection. Dr. Savio, chief examiner for the Board, noted a recent exit survey of candidates of the California exam did not indicate problems between candidates and the Dental Board and examiners.

Dr. Terlet stated that now that the Dental Board is an official member of WREB, she was curious what privileges are afforded to the Board by this membership. Board staff replied that the membership gives the Board one seat on the WREB Board and thus one vote on issue before the WREB Board. The state is only paying for one representative to go to WREB meetings, and approvals must be given for out-of-state travel. Dr. Steve Casagrande acknowledged that there is still much to be learned about

how WREB operates and the extent to which California can participate in WREB's deliberations. It was also noted that the WREB is also considering re-instituting the crown prep on its exam.

*Discussion of Proposed Structural Changes to the Licensure Examination, Including Possible Segmentation and Tentative Schedules for 2007, 2008, and 2009:* With the acceptance of WREB in California, the number of students who are choosing to take the exam administered by the Dental Board is very limited. So limited, that several scheduled exams had to be cancelled this year. Therefore, the Dental Board is proposing to develop a new exam process that hopefully will attract students. The Board staff stated that unless the exams administered by the Board attract enough candidates, the Board will be fiscally incapable of continuing to offer exams.

The Board's plan for a segmented exam would break the exam into three segments (simulated fixed prosthetics, written, clinical). The exam for the Class of 2007 would be administered over a 5-month period, a 10-month period for the Class of 2008 and for the Class of 2009 the exam would begin between the second and third year of dental school when the students would take the simulated fixed prosthetics exam.

The Board stated that the proposal they are putting forward would have the Class of 2007 take an exam on simulated fixed prosthetics in February 2007. During March 2007, a traditional clinical exam would be offered. During April 2007, a written exam on all subject matters (perio, endo, and removable) would be offered. The law and ethics exam should be available on-line by this time, according to the Board. Also during April, two RT exams (one at UOP, one at USC) will be offered and students from the class of 2007 would be allowed to retake the simulated fixed prosthetics portion of the exam during the RT exam.

During the month of May/June, another clinical exam will be offered.

For the Classes of 2008 and 2009, a simulated fixed prosthetic exam would be offered in August/September 2007 at all five dental schools. A clinical exam would be offered to all qualified candidates in November.

In 2008, a traditional clinical exam would be offered in March. Two RT exams would be offered in April where students could retake the simulated fixed prosthetics exam. During April/May, a clinical exam would be offered. During August/September 2008, a simulated fixed prosthetics exam would be offered for the class of 2009 at all five dental schools. During October, a traditional exam would be offered and in November an RT exam and retakes on the simulated fixed prosthetics exam would be offered.

The Board did not address the potential need to modify existing regulations or statutes (that may be required) related to this new exam process.

CDA raised the issue of making certain that any exam process would deal with the issue of "patient trafficking" and providing care to a patient when the patient has not been diagnosed for a complete treatment plan. CDA also asked how non-California

dental school students would be offered the proposed segmented exam. The Board replied that initially the exam would only be offered to students of the California dental schools. Mr. Robison echoed CDA's concerns voiced at the committee meeting regarding the use of patients during the traditional exam.

Dr. Mito also noted that WREB is considering marketing a segmented licensure process.

The Board did not discuss the work that the previous Board members, CDA, and the dental schools had done on developing a segmented exam pilot project.

*Discussion of Results of the Restorative Technique Examination and Proposed Changes to Title 16 California Code of Regulations Section 1041:* The Board provided data on the overall pass rate for the last two RT exams which were 36 percent at USC and 47 percent at UOP.

The Board presented draft regulatory language that proposes to change requirements related to the examination requirements for the RT exam. Proposed changes include eliminating the option of a 7/8 crown preparation for cast restorations, further defining exam instructions and further specifying the type of typodont that can be used on the RT exam. In addition, after some discussion, the subcommittee agreed that the composite portion of the exam would be eliminated.

CDA noted that the legislative intent, in restoring the RT exam, was to keep the RT exam as it existed before the exam was sunsetted. However, Mr. Hedrick indicated that the Board has already modified the exam in an earlier rulemaking file. CDA also noted that by modifying the exam, the Board would be open to criticism in the event that not all students pass the exam. CDA wanted to ensure the record reflected that CDA had commented previously to the Board that the environment around the RT exam could be quite unstable and that changes to the exam should be avoided. Dr. Casagrande acknowledged that CDA's opposition to changes on the RT exam will be noted.

With numerous RT candidates in the meetings, many conversations took place regarding policies and processes related to the existing RT exam to include, but not limited to, appeals process, application process, equipment needed and how many exams will be offered in the upcoming year. While Board staff indicated that four RT exams will be offered next year, Dr. Mito stated that the Board will work to add a fifth exam.

The Meeting adjourned at approximately 4:00 PM.