MEMORANDUM

DATE: January 31, 2020

TO: Diane Bosse, Chair
    Barry Currier, Managing Director
    Members of the Council
    Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar

FROM: Judith A. Gundersen, President
      Hon. Cynthia Martin, Chair
      National Conference of Bar Examiners

RE: Report from NCBE

Thank you for inviting NCBE to attend your meeting. Regretfully, Judge Martin cannot attend.

The Uniform Bar Exam
The Uniform Bar Exam (UBE) is composed of the Multistate Essay Exam (MEE), the Multistate Performance Test (MPT), and the Multistate Bar Exam (MBE). The UBE is uniformly administered and graded, producing a portable score that can be transferred to other UBE jurisdictions. Thirty-six jurisdictions have adopted the UBE, and 33 administered it in July 2019, including Maryland and Illinois for the first time. Arkansas will administer the UBE for the first time in February 2020, and Ohio in July 2020. Nearly 136,000 examinees have earned UBE scores, and more than 20,500 have transferred UBE scores to date. More UBE information is available on our website.

The Indiana Supreme Court created the Study Commission on the Future of the Indiana Bar Examination in December 2018. That Commission, co-chaired by Chief Justice Randall Shepard (ret.) and Indiana Court of Appeals Chief Judge Nancy Vaidik, has released its report, recommending adoption of the UBE. In September 2019, the Oklahoma Supreme Court created the Oklahoma Bar Examination Advisory Committee to study the Oklahoma bar exam. One of the charges for the Committee is to study whether to recommend adoption of the UBE. Neither Supreme Court has released a decision on UBE adoption.
The Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam
NCBE staff members have been planning for our 2020 conversion of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE) from a paper-based test (PBT) to a computer-based test (CBT) to be administered at Pearson VUE centers. After two successful limited-run CBT administrations in 2019, we are ready to test all examinees on computers at Pearson VUE centers beginning with the March 2020 MPRE. The exam will remain an “event-based” test—three administrations in spring, summer, and fall; each exam event will be administered over a two-day period. Find more information about MPRE registration on our website. Information about the accommodations application process is also available on the website. We have sent information about this MPRE transition to law school deans, academic support personnel, and career services offices.

The February 2020 Bar Exam
As you know, the February bar exam will be held on February 25-26, 2020. Exam materials orders are down about nine percent from February 2019.

Testing Task Force
ACS Ventures LLC (ACS), an independent research consulting firm, successfully completed our nationwide practice analysis survey for NCBE’s Testing Task Force. ACS and the Task Force have been working closely to analyze and interpret the survey results. A detailed Phase 2 report is in development and will be published shortly. The Task Force has also been busy finalizing the plan for Phase 3, which will consist of developing a test blueprint (what will be tested) and test design (how it will be tested).

Please visit the Testing Task Force website to subscribe for updates on Task Force progress.

UBE Jurisdictions Forum
On January 16–19, 2020, NCBE held the UBE Jurisdictions Forum, a program devoted to administrative and policy issues. NCBE sponsored three representatives from each UBE jurisdiction to attend this forum; all UBE jurisdictions had representatives in attendance at the San Diego event.

NCBE Annual Bar Admissions Conference
As many of you know, NCBE hosts its annual educational conference each spring. This year, the conference will be held in New Orleans from April 30 to May 3. Barry Currier, Diane Bosse, Hon. Scott Bales (ret.), David Byers, and Judge Phyllis Thompson are among the speakers and moderators.
NCBE/CLEO Collaboration
In late 2018, NCBE began collaborating with the Council on Legal Education Opportunity Inc. (CLEO) to support our shared goal of increasing diversity and inclusion in the legal profession. To date, 120 current and former law students have enrolled in the NCBE-funded CLEO Bar Passage Program, and multiple webinars and mentoring sessions have been completed. Program evaluation is ongoing; results have been positive so far. We are excited to continue the CLEO partnership into 2020.

MPRE Score Reporting
In 2019, NCBE worked with three (which then became four) pilot law schools to provide aggregated MPRE score data. We plan to expand this program in 2020 to all law schools that are interested. In the longer run, for those law schools that want individual score data on their students, we are exploring feasibility, privacy, and legal issues. In December 2019, with the new MPRE registration system, we began requesting consent from MPRE candidates to provide individual score information to law schools, which would, for the first time, give NCBE the capability to share this information.

Additional Information
The Bar Examine website is the online version of our print magazine. Visit the website (https://thebarexaminer.org/) or subscribe here: https://thebarexaminer.org/subscribe/.

NCBE is now on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram. Please follow us!