

NBCE Embraces Change

Editorial Staff

SEATTLE, WA - An intense atmosphere pervaded the annual meeting of the National Board of Chiropractic Examiners (NBCE) on May 5. The meeting seemed to be a continuation of the call for change first voiced by the NBCE delegates a year ago at the annual meeting in Philadelphia.¹ Since then, the delegates' concerns had been bolstered by position statements from the ICA,² ACA,³ the Federation of Chiropractic Licensing Boards (FCLB),⁴ and the Student ACA and Student ICA.⁵

At this year's meeting, elections were held for district directors in two of the five NBCE districts: District 3 (Northeast) and District 5 (Southeast). District 3 was an open race, with Vernon Temple,DC (Vermont Board of Chiropractic) running as a "reform candidate" against Kevin Moriarty,DC (New Hampshire Board of Chiropractic Examiners), who was supported by a number of NBCE directors. In District 5, incumbent John Tierney,DC (North Carolina), the NBCE treasurer, was defending his seat against Rick Murphree,DC (Mississippi), another reform candidate.

The electoral process provides for the district directors to be nominated in caucuses by a majority of the delegates in their district, then confirmed by a vote of all the delegates. The caucuses for the two districts were held in private rooms. When the delegates returned to the general meeting, both "reform candidates" had won. Drs. Temple and Murphree were then confirmed by the entire body of delegates as the new district directors.

The next hot item on the agenda was the bylaws changes recommended by the directors. The delegates had requested "meaningful changes" from the NBCE directors at the last annual meeting. When the bylaws amendments were presented by the district directors, many delegates did not believe there were "meaningful enough."⁶ This motivated some of the delegates to draft their own bylaw amendments and give much greater authority to the delegates. (A copy of both amendments can be found on line at <http://www.chiroweb.com/nbce>, along with your opportunity to voice an opinion on which bylaw amendments you prefer.)

After almost two hours of debate, discussion, and a number of complicated motions the director-proposed bylaw amendments passed by a narrow margin. This was quickly followed by a motion from the delegates that requested that the bylaws committee review the issues presented in the delegate-proposed bylaws and other bylaw issues for possible additional amendments at next year's meeting. Throughout the entire process, the debate was extremely passionate but also professional and well mannered.

The NBCE has announced an 11,000 square foot expansion of its corporate headquarters in Greeley, Colorado, to include office space, storage and an auditorium. The expected cost is \$2.25 million.

The first meeting of the new NBCE Board of Directors was held immediately following the business meeting of the FCLB the next day. Typically a brief, privately held meeting, this is when the at-large directors and the new officers are elected. At this year's meeting, there were three at-large director seats up for election. The directors elected were:

Peter Ferguson,DC - three-year term
D. Brent Owens,DC - two- year term
Lawrence Gerstein,DC - one-year term
Titus Plomaritis,DC, is the fourth at-large director. He has one year remaining in his present term.

The directors also elected the following officers:

Board Chairman - Frank Hideg,DC
President - Peter Ferguson,DC*
Vice President - James Badge,DC*
Secretary - Vernon Temple,DC*
Treasurer - Jerry Blanchard,DC*

(* Also members of the NBCE Executive Committee.)

Even with three new directors all talking reform, most of the controversial issues are still waiting to be addressed by the new NBCE Board:

- Excessive Net Income - With a 1999 net income of \$1,440,698, this equates to almost 23% of all income from operations. This could easily be reduced to 10% net income (\$634,217), which would still provide funding for all projects and save students \$806,481, or almost 13% of all income from test fees.
- Excessive Director Travel Expenses - At \$521,157 plus travel to test sites (budgeted at an additional \$160,000), this is lower than 1998, but still almost 9% of the total general and administrative expenses. This should be reduced to 5% of expenses, saving students another \$225,294, or another 3.5% savings in test fees.
- Electronic Testing - Formal proposals from large electronic testing organizations are still lacking. Even if electronic testing is more expensive (which has yet to be shown), this could reduce licensure delays by as much as six months.
- Combining Tests - The Association of Chiropractic Colleges (ACC) called for combining Parts II and III.⁷ If this could be accomplished, it could save students both time and money.
- Delegate Authority - Many of the NBCE delegates still believe they should have the right to amend the bylaws, elect the at-large directors, and serve on board committees.
- Delegate Access to Information - This year's meeting of the NBCE delegates was similar to prior meetings in that the delegates still didn't have access to the meeting minutes of the board and the executive committee meeting minutes, nor to the proposed budgets and other financial reports. As it now stands, the delegates usually find out about decisions made by the NBCE directors when the profession does.

References:

1. Nat'l Board delegates seek greater authority. *Dynamic Chiropractic*; May 31, 1999.

2. ICA calls for "immediate, profound reforms" of the NBCE. *Dynamic Chiropractic*; February 7, 2000. <http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/18/04/09.html>
3. ACA weighs in on Nat'l Board debate. *Dynamic Chiropractic*; February 21, 2000.
4. What does the FCLB have to do with the NBCE? *Dynamic Chiropractic*; March 20, 2000.
5. Chiropractic students weigh in on NBCE controversy. *Dynamic Chiropractic*; April 3, 2000.
6. NBCE bylaws: directors vs. delegates. *Dynamic Chiropractic*; May 1, 2000.
7. College presidents call for "consolidation of NBCE Parts II and III". *Dynamic Chiropractic*; April 17, 2000. <http://www.chiroweb.com/archives/18/09/01.html>

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