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Founded by: Association of Regulatory Boards of Optometry ♦ Association of Schools and Colleges of Optometry

NBEO PART III CLINICAL SKILLS EXAMINATION (CSE) CENTER TO OPEN IN AUGUST, 2011

September 9, 2010

Dear Optometry Student,

The NBEO Board of Directors is pleased to announce the conversion of the traditional, twice-yearly Part III Clinical Skills Examination (CSE) administered at each individual optometry school/college to a more contemporary, effective, standardized, and comprehensive examination to be given throughout the year in the NBEO's single-site **National Center of Clinical Testing in Optometry (NCCTO)**. The current trend among healthcare professions is to administer their clinical skills exam administrations in a single or a very few testing sites. This new testing design permits a more consistently administered, uniformly scored, stable exam.

The NCCTO will be located in Charlotte, North Carolina. In addition to the fact that Charlotte serves as the site of the NBEO corporate headquarters, this city performed well in an extensive analysis of many pertinent factors as they relate to the largest U.S. metropolitan areas. Charlotte ranked among the 5 MOST CENTRAL, sizeable cities in the United States, relative to the total optometric student population. Geographically, 16 schools/colleges (including the institutions in the U.S., Canada, and Puerto Rico) are located east of the U.S. midline; only 6 exist west of this line. Beyond the centrality issue, other parameters included in the testing facility placement study were motel costs within the cities under consideration; traffic congestion and costs as they relate to public roadway transportation; the violent crime rate; and the cost, convenience, and consumer satisfaction involved with air travel to and from the potential testing site cities. Charlotte's statistics performed well in the study. Of significant note, the Charlotte Douglas International Airport casts a broad net of 632 daily, reasonably priced, far-flung flights; scores near the top of the customer satisfaction chart; and is a short ride (15-20 minutes) from the uptown Charlotte area in which the CSE facility will be located.

The NBEO recognizes that Candidates will face yet another travel expense as they complete their optometric education. However, Candidate travel costs associated with CSE testing must be weighed against significant improvement in the resultant clinical skills exam process. It is assumed that Candidates will keep in mind that NBEO examination fees have not increased over the past 8 years while the costs of most other life necessities, including college tuition, have risen dramatically. Though exam-production costs constantly rise, NBEO will continue to strive to hold the line on exam fees.

The final MULTIPLE-SITE FORMAT CSE will be administered in April 2011. The new SINGLE-SITE FORMAT Clinical Skills Examination in Charlotte, NC will begin in August 2011. The NCCTO initially will have the capacity to assess 16 Candidates per day, throughout the year. This will permit great flexibility in the

timing of the evaluation of Candidates' clinical optometric skills. Students may take their CSEs as early within their fourth year as they are clinically comfortable. Unofficial scores will be available to Candidates within 8 weeks of their Part III exam so that they have the opportunity to re-test before graduation, if necessary.

One-site CSE administration at the NCCTO will afford Candidates a uniform, consistent CSE experience. The "home field advantage," in which some Candidates test at their home clinics while others are assigned to non-home clinics, will no longer exist. Once testing shifts to the new NCCTO, identical examination rooms will always be in the exact same configuration for all Candidates. NBEO will provide all Candidates the opportunity to preview the facility, rooms, and the CSE process through online video capabilities. Candidates will be able to familiarize themselves with NBEO equipment on-site during orientation, prior to their examinations.

The National Board will keep the optometry student community informed of its progress in establishing the new Center through appropriate informational postings on the NBEO website (www.optometry.org). Please check back often!

Warm regards,

Christina M. Sorenson, O.D.
President, NBEO Board of Directors

Jack E. Terry, O.D., Ph.D.
NBEO Executive Director