Members Present:
Richard “Mick” Markuson, Chair (ID); Lori A. Bassinger (MA); Larry Froelich (KS); Calvin Helmick (MI); Kendall M. Lynch (TN); Carol Peterson (MN); Herbert E. VonGoerres (DE); C. Eugene White (VA).

Others Present:
Dyke F. Anderson, Executive Committee Liaison; Carmen A. Catizone, NABP Executive Director/Secretary; Mary Jo Hunst and Lawana R. Lyons, NABP Staff.

Introduction:
The Task Force on the Test of Spoken English (TFTSE) met October 19, 1996, at NABP headquarters in Park Ridge, Illinois.

Review of the Task Force Charge:
The 1996-97 Task Force on the Test of Spoken English was established pursuant to the resolution and the recommendations resulting from the January 1993 meeting of the 1992-93 Task Force on the Test of Spoken English (TSE) for Foreign Pharmacy Graduate Examination Committee (FPGEC) Certification.

The Test of Spoken English measures the ability of non-native speakers of English to communicate orally in English. TSE is delivered in a semi-direct format that maintains reliability and validity while controlling for the subjective variables associated with direct interviewing. Because it is a test of general oral language ability, TSE is appropriate for examinees regardless of native language, type of educational training, or field of employment.

TSE has broad applicability because performance on the test indicates how oral language ability might affect the examinee’s ability to communicate successfully in either academic or profession environments. Although some demonstration of English proficiency is already required by the FPGEC Certification process, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) and TSE appear to measure different abilities and complement the assessment of written and spoken English language skills.

TOEFL measures “receptive language skills,” such as listening comprehension, reading comprehension, and grammar. TSE assess such “productive language skills” as speaking ability. At least 1- state boards of pharmacy currently require TSE of foreign graduates applying for licensure in their states.
TFTSE Recommendation #1
The Task Force on the Test of Spoken English recommends that a score of 55 be adopted as a standard passing score on the Test of Spoken English for all FPGEC applicants.

Background:
The Education Testing Service’s (ETS) *TSE Standard Setting Manual* was used as a guide in setting the Task Force agenda and procedure for recommending the standard passing score. Task Force members viewed a videotape provided by ETS, discussing the purpose of the test and background material concerning test development and format.

The Task Force also listened to the TSE Benchmark Tape, an audiotape of 12 examinees’ responses to TSE sample test questions. The Benchmark Tape responses represented various score levels from the TSE Rating Scale ranging from 20 to 60, the Task Force listened to the responses at each level to determine the level at which a pharmacist should perform when communicating with patients and other health professionals. After listening to all 12 examinees, each Task Force member was asked to make an initial recommendation of the lowest performance score for a candidate who would be considered to possess minimal level communication skills as a pharmacist.

Noting that most states require pharmacists to interact directly with patients, the Task Force engaged in a lengthy discussion which resulted in the final recommendation for a passing score of 55. The Task Force emphasized the importance of a uniform standard that could be used by all states and noted the adoption of the standard passing score for the TSE would serve to further protect the public health, safety, and welfare.

TFTSE Recommendation #2
The Task Force on the Test Spoken English recommends the standard passing score of 55 be forwarded to the advisory Committee on Examinations for review and then to the Executive Committee for final approval.

Background:
The Advisory Committee on Examinations was established by Article IV, Section 5 of the NABP Constitution and is charged to review all matters affecting the Association’s competency assessment programs. After reviewing the information presented, ACE develops a recommendation which is then referred to the NABP Executive Committee for final approval.

TFTSE Recommendation #3
The Task Force on the Test of Spoken English recommends the TSE passing score be required of all FPGEC candidates, regardless of residency, and that there be no exceptions to the requirement.

Background:
The Task Force recognized that although English may be the primary language in some countries outside of the United States, there are no mechanisms to test the ability to communicate in English. The FPGEC would have to rely on the information provided on the application, which may not be an objective indication of the candidate’s English language proficiencies. The Task
Force was further concerned that exceptions to the requirement could result in a dual standard of evaluation. Therefore, the Task Force recommended no exceptions be allowed.