



# NGAOM

National Guild of Acupuncture & Oriental Medicine

OPEIU Guild Local 62, AFL-CIO



Office & Professional Employees International Union, OPEIU Guild 62, AFL-CIO, CLC  
www.ngaom.org

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## INTERPRETING CALE RESULTS: 2000 THROUGH 2012

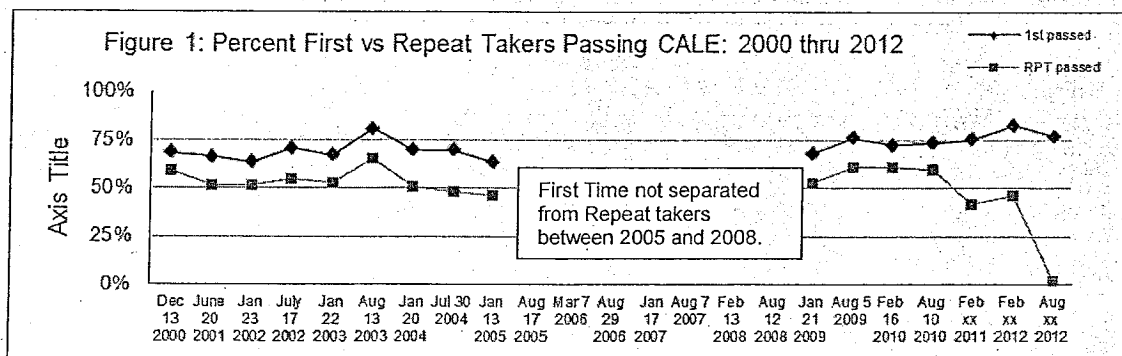
### IMPLICATIONS FOR AOM TRAINING REFORM

The August 2012 CALE Pass Rate controversy is a sentinel event. The overall pass rate for the August 2012 CALE was 39%. The cut score for that administration was 76%. Based on this partial information two *ad hoc* student groups retained attorneys to pursue the CAB with the goal of rescoring the CALE using “a traditional 70% cut score.” Such a practice is against current regulations that prohibit setting an arbitrary cut score.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of yielding to pressure from the programs and students the current EO and CAB has embarked on a campaign to educate its members. The EO undertook her own investigation and hired an independent investigator named by the Department of Consumer Affairs to find out what happened.

The complete CALE outcomes data from 2011 and 2012 are now available on the CAB website as required by law thanks to the hard work of Ms. Thorfinnson and her staff.

CALE Pass Rates differentiate between First Time takers and Repeat takers. Historically,<sup>2</sup> First Time takers have always scored better than Repeat takers by a margin of 15% to 20%. Since 2000 the average pass rate for First Time takers is 70.39%; for Repeat takers the average is 53.51%. In Aug 2012 the First Time takers pass rate was 77.1%; for Repeat takers it was 1.76%.



The current uproar concerning the “unusually” low pass rate on the Aug 2012 CALE can now be understood by examining Figure 1. The overall pass rate conceals the real story.

<sup>1</sup> B&P 1399.443(2)(b)

<sup>2</sup> The CAB website posts CALE outcomes by program and language since December 2000. Through Aug 2012 these comprise 23 separate CALE administrations.



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- The Aug 2012 Pass Rate for First Time takers - 77% - was actually the **third highest pass rate in 25 CALE administrations since 2000.**
- The Aug 2012 Pass Rate for Repeat takers **was less than 2% (two percent).**

The Repeat taker pass rate is so far below the 50% average pass rate for Repeat takers that it can only be viewed as a **red flag**. Keep in mind that First Time and Repeat takers complete the exact same CALE. Something unusual occurred in the Aug 2012 CALE administration.

The CALE has an unfortunate history. In 1988 a CAB member was arrested for selling answers and rigging the CALE to signal test takers who paid for the clues. That individual was sentenced to five years in prison. The current controversy is viewed by some as related to that shameful past. That view is incorrect.

This time the current CAB blew the whistle on the cheaters.

We believe the current investigations will demonstrate that the incredibly low Pass Rate for Repeat takers in Aug 2012 is tied to the discovery of "cheat books" being used by CALE Repeat takers. The August 2012 CALE was compromised by unscrupulous members of the training program community who collected CALE questions over many years, then published and sold "cheat books."

The scandal has shed light on another long-standing problem that constitutes a clear danger to the consumer public; the existence of schools on the CAB approved schools list that provide quasi-legal entry to the USA under student visas, and/or generate tuition revenue from naïve students.

These schools can be easily identified using CALE outcomes. The "visa schools" have the fewest graduates who take the CALE. The "tuition schools" have the highest number of repeat takers with the lowest pass rates. For every three Repeat takers there are two First Time takers. We believe this ratio is unprecedented in health professions education.<sup>3</sup> Schools that exist as tuition mills and visa portals should never have been approved by the CAB. Most of the current CAB approved schools are ACAOM accredited.

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS:** The CALE is a rich resource for evaluating overall performance of California approved acupuncture training programs. The information contained in the CALE database can and should be used to review the worthiness of acupuncture schools included on the CAB list of approved schools.

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<sup>3</sup> There is approximately 1 Repeat taker for every 4 First Time takers on the Physician Assistant exam.  
<http://www.thepalife.com/pance-failure-and-pass-rate-physician-assistant-certification-exam/>