

ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

Aurora Shields gave some background information on this committee.

Background: formed November 6, 2006 when TNI was formed. The reason for this committee to have some sort of group within that promotes the study lab accreditation growth internally as well as externally. First thing was what charter was to be. Decided that our purpose is to advocate for a national program for lab accreditation.

Objective strategic plan for the Advocacy Committee. We need to develop a plan of action to obtain TNI mission. We need to develop relationships with other organizations that have an interest in accreditation issues. We also need to develop relationship with the EPS program offices & other federal agencies and known NELAC states. We also need to continue the effort started by INELA with the Speakers Bureau which provided individuals to go to different meetings and give presentations about laboratory accreditation. We would also like to develop papers to promote the NELAC Institute itself. We would also like to develop presentation of papers to promote national accreditation, and to provide outreach to national and local meetings. We would also like to address which is to work within the TNI structure and committees to facilitate communication about concerns and needs and requirements of communities that are interested in the issues having to do with accreditation. We need to be able to understand the need of the community outside TNI and be able to bring back this message to TNI committees to let them know what the community really needs so they can be responsive. Would also like to assist with publication of member newsletter. The way we are planning to measure how successful we are with what we do is by initiating the dialog with other organizations. We would also like to increase the number of NELAC recognized accrediting bodies & increase the number of TNI members and to obtain a wider acceptance by EPA programs and other programs. Also provide other publications to the membership and presentations to the outside world.

Activities by the committee to date:

Marlene Moore – PRESS RELEASES, ANNOUNCEMENTS, ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS.

One thing is how we do press releases, publications, and articles and mostly where to place press releases on accreditation process and other announcements. If anyone has any suggestions or ideas about where articles need to be placed to let people know about what is going on national accreditation or anything that let to the accreditation process. We have identified the info already – Environmental Laboratory, Washington Report, Environmental Science and Technology. There is also the Safe Drinking Water New website, etc. Have newsletter for members on TNI news. Articles on committee activities. Deadline is March 1 and publication on March 30 and will be quarterly. Jerry Parr –Could specifics of the newsletter be discussed by conference call. Since the next conference is not until later in the month, Marlene suggested discussion by e-mail for a while. As suggested it could be discussed by e-mail. It brought about publishing in

other publications. Copyright issues can be a problem about publishing other places. No problem with multiple publications. Need to be aware of placement.

Lara Autry - SPEAKERS BUREAU AND PRESENTATIONS

Have been trying to make a compiled listing of all the conferences and opportunities to speak at conferences. Presentations now give a connection or history as to where we were and where we are today.

Jerry asked where the next APHL meeting – June in Florida. Do you need abstracts – already submitted? ACIL meeting in February. Lara speaking. DOD conf. in late March. May 1-3 at Austin Tradefair.

Kevin Coats – INITIATE CONTACT TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH EPA, OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES, AND NON-NELAC STATE AGENCIES

Special committee that was created by the NELAC Board to develop a report on national accreditation and a report card which evolved into a report to be sent with a letter to be sent to EPA Office of Water and then followed up with a meeting. Activities to-date for the Advocacy Committee in terms of contacting and working with EPA programs and other functions have been in the form of introductory letters and a more specific invitation to participate and to establish future contact with some meetings. E-mail letter to EPA Science and Policy Council with a hard copy of the letter to follow – no hard copies sent. Also have a letter in terms of introducing TNI and requesting support sent to the EPA Regional Directors. We are close to a final draft of a letter going to EPA Office of Water building on that relationship with department and establishing a NELAC Special Committee. Has already been sent. Future plans to link up with other EPA offices that had previously been participated in the NELAC effort or had dropped off. Special Committee thought that was an essential element to building a true national accreditation program. The other element of this outreach is other Federal Agencies - the Department of Defense, a component which representing the Army and the Army Core of Engineers, and have also had participation in the past through a group called the Environmental Data Quality work group which is chaired by the Navy (this relationship is solid), we also have a program that we have developed within DOD which is based on NELAC accreditation and the NELAC Standards, the Department of Energy has also been participating in these meetings; the homeland security (assignment is to establish a contact there, and finally the inclusion and outreach to other state agencies, again there is a letter writing campaign there to state representatives that are already participating in NELAC process and further states that have not been participating or have dropped off. There has been a problem getting a POC list with points of contact and appropriate information from state environmental agencies throughout the 50 United States. Believe that through ECOS organization we may have opportunity to bring in some representatives of these non-participating states. All this serves to feed the true national accreditation program.

Comments – Lynn Bradley stated that she has a contact at Homeland Security – can get you name.

Andy Eaton - INITIATE CONTACTS TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE AN INTEREST IN ACCREDITATION ISSUES

Through conference calls have brainstormed a list of contacts with other organizations that do not have a vested interest but would like to have a vested interest and have identified those organizations. Need to start setting up meetings with these groups to see what issues they may have. Know what hot issues are and our challenge will be the need to start to address these issues to come up with answers to the objections to a national accreditation program starting with small groups to create advocates within those groups. Will start with AWWA and their stakeholders and has already made contact.

Have all NELAC accredited labs been notified and know what is going on? Provided announcements through TNI website, but also need to be more proactive and ask EPA to inform accredited labs as to where state stands as far as national accreditation and what the future of those labs is going to be with responsibility for letting their labs know. Do not have listing for accredited labs. We do have phone numbers but no addresses or e-mails so the logistics for being able to send out mailings to all those labs was just not possible. Some states are not asking questions about progress about national accreditation. A few labs have stated that we are misguided as far as national accreditation. Probably need to be more proactive in contacting all labs that are going to be accredited. Should be able to get information from state accrediting authorities. There is grant funding from EPA to accomplish this so could hire someone to obtain. Not limited only to AB but also certification. Not limited to NELAP labs but all accredited labs. Database only has name and phone numbers and what accredited for but no contact information. Need to think about how broad you want to be. Information needs to come from states but needs follow-up. Try contacting drinking water programs since these are most accredited labs.

Carol Batterton – In November when Jerry, Tom McAninch and myself did were in Houston doing a national lab accreditation workshop, Ying Wei (who was in the workshop), after hearing about what we are doing in the US she approached me and said she really wants us to go to China and give some presentation and meet with Chinese EPA personnel. TNI needs to go to China and the visit is to occur at the conference in Beijing. She already has itinerary already set, Day 1 – arrive at night in Beijing. Day 2- meet with China EPA foreign minister and the group. Do presentation and discussion. All the drinking water facility representative, Lab representative and the Tsinghua University personnel will be there. Day 3 – the visit lab (called institute of environmental ecology) in the morning and after lunch we will go to the Forbitten City to visit. Day 4 – visit the university and the Drinking Water plant. Afternoon will visit the great wall. Day 5 – shopping and visit the Imperial Palace Park. Day 6 – morning to airport and back. For those willing to go to Xian there will be either plane or the fast underground train to Xian and return. Day 7 – return to US. Will pay airfare, lodging and meals for one person and lodging and meals for 2 people. We have recommended 8 people. Jerry said that if we decide to go will have some problem with who gets a free ride. There was considerable discussion on whether we really need to do this and what are the benefits. There is already lab accreditation being done in China. Also is this the right thing to do? Extensive discussion on good reasons and not so good reasons to go to China.

STRATEGIC PLANNING – facilitated by Carol Batterton. Will use worksheet from a book on Strategic Planning for Non-Profits.

Introduction to Strategic Planning.

Strategic planning is a systematic process through which an organization agrees on and builds commitment among key stakeholders to priorities which are essential to its mission and responsiveness to its operating environment.

Strategies are broad, overall priorities or directions adopted by an organization: strategies are choices about how best to accomplish an organizations' mission.

Strategic planning and operational planning involve two different types of thinking. Strategic decisions are fundamental, directional, and future oriented. Operational decisions, on the other hand, primarily affect the day to day implementation of strategic decisions.

Strategic planning and long range planning differ in their emphasis on the assumed environment. Long-range planning is generally considered to assume that current knowledge about future conditions is sufficiently reliable to ensure the plan's reliability over the duration of its implementation.

Strategic planning stresses the importance of making decisions which position an organization to successfully respond to changes in the environment.

Worksheet 1 – See attached

Worksheet 8 – See attached

Worksheet 9 - See attached

Worksheet 13

Form a subcommittee to work on this: Barbara Finazzo , Susan Wyatt, Jerry Parr, Rosemary Gaffney and Kathy Irminger