

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting  
May 7, 2015

1. Call to order

Steve Arms called the meeting to order at 12 Noon CDT, May 7, 2015. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1.

2. Approval of minutes

Minutes of the April 2, 2015, meeting were reviewed and presented for approval. Lynn Bradley moved to approve and Zonetta English seconded. All present voted in favor.

3. MUR comments

Jerry reported that during the Board's discussion of the MUR comments, they agreed that TNI should comment on all issues in the proposal, not just those directly related to TNI and its standards. The Board felt this approach was appropriate if TNI is to be recognized as the "go to" source on environmental testing. Jerry noted that some of the comments related to problems that have been in the methods for a long time. In particular, Method 608 is a significant concern to the lab community.

Aurora Shields asked if it would be all right to share the TNI comments with ELAB. The answer is "yes" and Jerry noted that the comments will be posted on the TNI website for anyone else to review and use. If anyone has specific comments to add, please notify Jerry as soon as possible. Comments are due to EPA on May 20.

4. Exploring the Future of National Accreditation Report

This report has been finalized and posted on the TNI website. The committee agreed that this report should be transmitted to EPA, specifically to the FEM and Office of Water. In line with the strategic plan, Advocacy will revise the 2013 letter to the FEM on the status of accreditation and include this report as an attachment. After the letter is finalized, it can become the basis for presentations and webinars to other groups. Jerry, Carol, and Sharon will work on this and have a draft for the next meeting.

5. High Priority Objectives for Advocacy from the Strategic Plan

The first objective on the HIGH priority list, ***Develop a "State of National Accreditation" report every two years and offer briefings to EPA Regional Science and Technology Directors and Forum on Environmental Measurement***, will be covered by actions in item #4 above.

The second objective, ***Expand outreach to non-NELAP states***, involves assigning a TNI ambassador to non-NELAP states and offering some free memberships to non-NELAP states. Members agreed that it was important to identify ambassadors who were active in

TNI as well as other groups such as state advisory groups or state lab associations. It is important that the ambassador be an advocate for lab accreditation.

It is also important to identify upfront exactly what the ambassador's job description will be. Some suggested activities include:

- Keeping state accreditation/certification programs informed about TNI activities
- Being a conduit for information to TNI about state program developments
- Finding out what the state program's needs are and asking how TNI can help (resource issues, training, technical information, database, etc)
- Clearing up misconceptions about how national accreditation works

Advocacy members agreed that it might be a good idea to start this effort with a small group of 10-12 states. We will work through the state assessors group to get information about state lab associations and on how to set this up so that it will be helpful to the states. Donnell Ward –LA DHH is the current chair of the state assessors group. Steve will ask her for time on the next agenda (July).

Carol will prepare a qualifications and job description for the TNI ambassadors for review at the next meeting. Jerry will write a script on what we would want a state to know about TNI and national accreditation.

The next activity under this objective is to offer one free non-voting membership to non-NELAP states. Jerry indicated that we needed to take this slowly and offer the membership only to targeted states not currently participating. Others suggested that the membership should not be open-ended, but have a term, like 3 years. It was noted that some state employees may not be able to accept a "free" membership since it could be viewed as a gift. We should consider naming it a "complimentary" or "introductory" membership. We could also develop a rationale on why it is acceptable for a state employee to accept this offer. Steve offered to research this concept in Florida.

## 6. Handbook

Aurora requested help with her chapter of the handbook. Carol will send Trinity background information on the handbook project.

## 6. Next meeting

The next meeting will be on Thursday, June 4, 2015 at 12 Noon Central Daylight Time.

Attachment 1

	Name	Stakeholder Group	Present/Absent
1.	Lara Phelps	EPA (Other)	Present
2.	Steve Arms	AB	Present
3.	Lynn Bradley	Other	Present
4.	Stephanie Drier	Lab	Absent
5.	Martina McGarvey	AB	Absent
6.	Stacie Metzler	Lab	Absent
7.	Zonetta English	Lab	Present
8.	Marlene Moore	Other and NEFAP	Absent
9.	Elizabeth Turner	Small Lab Advocate	Absent
10.	Gary Ward	AB	Absent
11.	Michael Wichman	Lab	Present
12.	Janice Willey	Federal	Present
13.	Trinity O'Neal	Lab	Present
14.	Robin Cook	Lab	Present
	<b>Associate Members</b>		
	Kirstin Daigle	Lab	Absent
	Judy Morgan	Lab	Absent
	Aurora Shields	Lab	Present
	JoAnn Boyd	Lab and FAC	Absent
	Judy Duncan	Other	Absent
	Kenneth Jackson	Other	Absent
	Keith Chapman	Other	Absent
	Sharon Mertens	TNI Board Chair	Present
	<b>Staff</b>		
	Jerry Parr	TNI ED	Present
	Carol Batterton	TNI PA	Present