

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting
February 5, 2015

1. Call to order

Steve Arms called the meeting to order at 8:00 am EST, February 5, 2015, in Crystal City, VA. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1.

2. Approval of minutes

Minutes were not considered at this meeting.

3. PowerPoint presentation

Steve Arms delivered a PowerPoint presentation outlining accomplishments for the Advocacy Committee for 2014.

4. Highlights of the Crystal City Meeting

Steve Arms summarized highlights of the week and asked for attendees to contribute their impressions and potential areas of focus for Advocacy. Highlights of the discussion included:

- TNI needs to market to data users
- We should assign ambassadors to non-NELAP states
- CA is actively working to bring their program back into NELAP. There will be a meeting on March 14 and a report in November. TNI should monitor to see if there is anything we can do to help.
- OK is very close to having their application ready to submit. The rules are developed, but there was a management change and staff needed time to get the new management up to speed on the process. The rules are now at the legislature for approval and the application is 90% complete. OK is hoping to submit their application in March and have rules effective in January 2016.
- The 2016 winter meeting is in OK. Since they may be a new AB at that time, TNI needs to consider outreach and training for staff and labs in the state at that time.
- ACIL sidebar meeting- there was agreement to promote each other's conferences and cooperate on training.
- With the 2015 standard going forward, we need to talk about implementation and outreach training. We should explore opportunities to talk about the new standard at conferences and meetings.
- Advocacy (?) needs to develop a cross comparison of the old/new standards. This should include NEFAP also.
- Advocacy should keep a calendar of presentation opportunities.
- State/EPA coordination
- OPPT requires disinfection material to be registered with EPA. This requires lab testing. Jerry recommended 3rd party accreditation.

- Development of logos and branding needs to be coordinated.
- NEFAP discussed how to get stakeholders back to the meetings and participating. They suggested a new name for the Forum to recognize FSMOs as part of the meeting. Forum on Environmental Testing Organizations, Forum on Environmental Accreditation, etc.
- There needs to be website clean-up with updates committee member lists and committee charters.
- The Superbowl party was a good idea. We should think about a social event before other meetings to get new attendees involved.
- What can/should we do to engage young professionals? Specific outreach is needed. Stacie Metzler volunteered to look into this. Ideas included thanking companies for sending younger employees, workshops for technical and management skills, assign mentors to young professionals. Could target young analysts with a reduced registration to the mentor session or one day registration. Should build on partnerships like WEAT/TNI to get more YPs.
- Other outreach ideas included reaching out to sub-groups of ACS, reaching out to the local community where meetings are held (less travel cost associated with attending meeting), asking exhibitors to invite local customers to reception or afternoon meeting, a first timers lunch or breakfast.
- Need to think about how to incorporate NEFAP into the mentor session. May need to consider a separate mentor session.

5. Upcoming newsletters

The following volunteered to be editors for the upcoming newsletters:

Marlene Moore	Late March/April
Stacie Metzler	Late May, June
Lara Phelps	Fall

Due date for articles for the March/April newsletter will be March 15.

Suggested articles and authors:

TNI Newsletter Assignments		
Due March 15 to Marlene Moore, issue editor Publication date – April		
Conference name change	Jerry Parr and Lara Phelps	Jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org Phelps.lara@epa.gov
2014 NEFAP standard, implementation, comparison	Kim Watson	kwatson@stone-env.com
Strategic plan	Sharon Mertens	SMertens@mmsd.com
2015 standard and SOP 2-100, process for standards review	Bob Wyeth and	

	Ken Jackson	
Process to move the new standard forward. The Road forward	Judy Morgan and Aaren Alger	
Member profile (Mike Miller)	Stephanie Drier	
Summary of Future of National Accreditation Project	Carol Batterton	
Sidebar on PT position paper	Steve Arms	
Update on summer meeting	Lara Phelps	
Recap of Crystal City meeting	Jerry Parr	
Sidebar on board elections	Steve Arms	
Sidebar on ELAB topics of interest	Lara Phelps	
Article on MUR	Jerry Parr	
Update on website revisions and RSS feed	William Daystrom	
KY begins accreditation of FSMOs	Zonetta English	

The list of articles and authors will be refined and finalized at the next meeting.

6. Strategic Plan action items

Steve Arms presented the list of items identified in the draft strategic plan that may be assigned to the Advocacy Committee for implementation. He asked for discussion and suggestions on these items. Comments included:

Strategy 2 - Brand TNI as the resource for all activities related to generating environmental measurement data.

Goal 2.1 Enable and encourage stakeholders to participate in the activities of TNI by providing assistance and incentives.

Provide routine communications/information to TNI members.

- Provide information on how to use the RSS feed
- Increase use of social media (LinkedIn, Facebook, twitter, etc.)

Develop better systems to encourage members to vote on standards.

- Continue offering webinars
- Provide opportunities to discuss proposed standards
- Rotating pictures on website could emphasize upcoming votes
- Provide more information on how to vote, importance of vote
- Members need to understand purpose of their vote, we want an educated vote. Could do this on social media.
- Webinar needs to be available, or summary of changes on website. Currently, summary document only goes to LAS, Needs to be public.
- Pros and cons document would be helpful, too.

Develop and implement an orientation program for new committee members.

- List committee openings on bulletin board.

Goal 2.2 Promote the benefits of accreditation to stakeholders, advocate for stronger support of accreditation from data users, and persuade data users to make accreditation mandatory.

Develop a long range plan for promoting and marketing accreditation to data users.

- Talk to states that have done this to get ideas
- Have meetings with EPA, state programs, trade associations

Form Marketing and Outreach subcommittee under the Advocacy Committee to identify opportunities to promote TNI.

- Need to think about hiring a professional marketer
- See if marketing firm will do pro bono work for a non-profit
- May need to have several subcommittees, e.g. newsletter, conferences, outreach to non-NELAP states, marketing
- Subcommittee could be assigned specific bullets

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.

Expand outreach to non-NELAP states

- Share the “State of National Accreditation” briefing noted above to assessors
- Assign a TNI ambassador to every non-NELAP state, identify current barriers. Offer one free, non-voting membership to the certification manager or his/her designee of every non-NELAP state. Develop and offer a free webinar to introduce TNI and highlight the benefits of recognition, to expand communication on the TNI standard as the ‘gold standard’, and to explain what NELAP is today.
- TNI ambassadors should live in the state
- Encourage accredited labs in non-NELAP states to work together
- Reach out to young professionals
- Take the approach “What can we do to help them?”
- Just because not all 50 states participate doesn’t mean we don’t have a national program. Economics and politics have changed.
- Need to identify states whose programs are close to being ABs and actively court those states. Give them ideas about how to set up a program using NGABs, EPA competency policy, etc.

Work with the EPA Office of Water to ensure that the TNI laboratory accreditation standard is deemed “equally effective” to the Drinking Water Certification Manual (DWCM).

- Monitor changes to the DWCM.

Develop a document that summarizes the differences and similarities of the TNI and EPA Drinking Water programs. (Distill down from the crosswalk).

- Have regular conversations with Dan Hautman and provide follow up letter
- Have agreement with Office of Water to check in at least every 3 years
- Communicate more with EPA Regional DW staff

Meet periodically with EPA program offices (e.g., Air, Solid Waste, and Wastewater), other federal agencies, state agencies, trade associations, other data users, and FSMOs to promote TNI and to better understand their needs for reliable environmental data and work to ensure the TNI program meets the needs of all data users.

- Add OECA and OPPT to this list

Promote EPA laboratory competency policy required for grants, EPA cooperative agreements, and contracts and show how TNI's accreditation programs are an effective way to demonstrate compliance with this policy.

- Have success story articles in newsletter (Lara and Trinity have ideas)
- Develop a position statement: How accreditation meets the goals of EPA's competency policy
- Share with RST directors
- Need to clarify what is meant by "data user"
- Have a presentation at the summer meeting
- Also need to reach out to researchers, universities doing fracking related work. May be in litigation and need accredited labs.
- Offer speakers to other groups.
- Need to display policy on the website, use this as part of outreach

Effectively use the Small Laboratory Advocacy Group (SLAG) to engage small laboratories and to disseminate information to small laboratories.

- Need a report from Elizabeth Turner first before determining approach

Consistently have a seminar at NEMC to introduce newly accredited laboratories to TNI.

- Could do this during lunch or evening reception
- Could turn into a webinar
- Need to include university labs and FSMOs

Goal 2.4 Provide conferences that are beneficial to the environmental community, enhance TNI's mission and contribute resources to support TNI's programs.

Continue to hold a semi-annual Forum on Laboratory Accreditation.

Explore opportunities for working cooperatively with other organizations to hold other regional conferences and workshops.

There was not time to discuss Goal 2.4.

7. Next meeting

The next meeting will be March 5, 2015, at 12 Noon Central 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	Present
6.	Stacie Metzler	Lab	Present
7.	Zonetta English	Lab	Present
8.	Marlene Moore	Other and NEFAP	Present
9..	Elizabeth Turner	Small Lab Advocate	Absent
10.	Gary Ward	AB	Absent
11.	Michael Wichman	Lab	Absent
12.	Janice Willey	Federal	Absent
	Associate Members		
	Kirstin Daigle	Lab	Absent
	Judy Morgan	Lab	Present
	Aurora Shields	Lab	Absent
	JoAnn Boyd	Lab and FAC	Absent
	Judy Duncan	Other	Absent
	Kenneth Jackson	Other	Absent
	Keith Chapman	Other	Absent
	Sharon Mertens	TNI Board Chair	Present
	Staff		
	Jerry Parr	TNI ED	Present
	Carol Batterton	TNI PA	Present