

## TNI Board of Directors Meeting Summary December 14, 2011

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### 1. Roll Call and Approval of November Minutes

Directors	Present
Joe Aiello	
Aaren Alger	X
Steve Arms	X
Susan Boutros	
Judith Duncan	X
Robert DiRienzo	X
Zonetta English	X
Jack Farrell	X
Keith Greenaway	
Sharon Mertens	X
Judy Morgan	X
Patsy Root	X
Matt Sica	
Alfredo Sotomayor	X
Dave Speis	X
Elizabeth Turner	X
Curtis Wood	Late?
Ex-Officio Directors	
Brenda Bettencourt	
Brooke Connor	X
George Detsis	X
Jordan Adelson	X
Staff	
Lynn Bradley	X
Carol Batteredton	
Ken Jackson	X
Jerry Parr	X
Ilona Taunton	X
Janice Wlodarski	X

Guest: Michelle Wade -- Kansas Division of Health and Environmental Labs

**Motion to Approve November 2011 Minutes:**

Changes: None

**Motion to Approve:** George Detsis

**Second:** Judy Duncan

**Approved:** Unanimous

## 2. ACIL Article

In mid-November, Bill Hall forwarded an excerpt from the ACIL's fall newsletter to the NELAP Accreditation Council that contained the following language:

*“Dave Speis (Accutest) reviewed progress made on the nongovernment accreditation initiative in NJ and its expansion to other states with Cabot Earle (Microbac) chairing a separate task group to lead the expansion. The group targeted states with easily modifiable programs, severe budget problems or governors in favor of externalized testing with an ACIL coordinator assigned for each one. States and coordinators are: Judy Morgan (ESS), NC; Steve Vanderboom (Pace) and Judy Morgan, MN; Bruce Godfrey (Curtis & Thompkins), CA; Jack Farrell (Analytical Excellence), FL; Doug Leonard (L-A-B), KS; and Milt Bush and David Friedman in VA. Coordinators are to identify the current accreditation structure and the decision makers in each state's government. Dave Speis is developing materials to describe how states might implement a nongovernment- based accreditation system. The ELAB Laboratory Management Workgroup is developing recommendations to EPA on improving the laboratory accreditation process, using the ACIL Nongovernmental Accreditation White Paper as a source of information.”*

This triggered a discussion at the NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) that resulted in a request for the TNI Board to discuss this topic at its next call. (See Appendix, p. 5)

Various background documents related to this issue were provided by email on December 6.

- The Conflict of Interest policy, which had been distributed with the background documents, was briefly discussed. Steve Arms said that to his knowledge, there have been no direct violations and that he had not received any disclosure of an existing conflict of interest. He asked if there were any questions about the policy. No one expressed any concerns regarding conflict of interest.
- Judy Morgan provided background on the ACIL article and white paper. She said that the ACIL article was drafted from notes from the ESS meeting. The article went out without any review and editing by the ESS or people that were involved in the meeting. A clarification to that article was sent out on 12/5/11, and no one has heard any question or comments about that clarification. ACIL has an interest in promoting for the lab industry. There is a white paper which is out on the website. While ACIL efforts are consistent with the white paper, they have not yet established a primary goal.
- Judy Duncan recently attended an APHL meeting during which governments' role in accreditation was discussed. She briefed the board on some of the discussion, which focused on positive aspects of governmental involvement that could be lost if state accreditation programs were taken over by the private sector.
- The TNI Board's possible response was considered. There is no formal or informal relationship between the TNI board and ACIL. It is important to recognize that ACIL is a trade association for commercial laboratories. Their membership may want different things than a group like TNI and they are executing their charter. While the TNI Board has been aware of the ACIL white paper, there was no reason to take any action on this opinion paper. While some TNI Board members are also active in ACIL, all board members have varying affiliations and we value this diversity. The Chair reminded the directors that all of these affiliations, however, should be “left at the door” when discussing or making decisions on TNI business.

TNI's focus, right now, is on the impending work of the AB Task Force (ABTF). These recommendations will be our organization's proposal for addressing the needs of a national program. The ABTF has not yet arrived on a solution or a recommended solution to this issue. Nor has TNI yet arrived on a platform as to how we view a non-governmental assistance.

- Aaren Alger related the AC's concerns, which the board discussed. There is a perception that the TNI Board was supportive of the ACIL position because no formal opposition was raised. The TNI Board does not think it can support or oppose the positions of other organizations such as ACIL. Remaining silent on another organization's position does not constitute support. However, TNI does support the efforts of NELAP, and national accreditation in general. There is also a feeling expressed that the Board may not appreciate the efforts of the NELAP AC. While the creation of the ABTF is a good indication of TNI Board support of the NELAP AC, it has not acknowledged nor expressed appreciation of the improvements the AC has made and needs to do that. Since the AC has raised these concerns, the board understands that they need to be addressed, so the Chair asked what the AC would like the Board to do. The Board would like feedback on what appropriate action (AC opinion) by the Board would be. One suggestion is to provide feedback to the AC on the things that they have been doing to improve their own operations. The Executive Committee agreed to develop a straw man for a position paper in support of the NELAP AC after receiving additional details of its needs.

The AC has requested a meeting with ACIL ESS in Sarasota. Lynn is working on this. The AC meets next week. The Board asked NELAP AC members to get more information from the AC members for the Board to consider before providing a formal response.

Judy Morgan apologized for the ACIL blunder. If anyone has not seen the clarification from the ACIL newsletter, and/or wants to discuss further or has more questions, please contact her.

### **3. Program Reports**

See Attachment 1.

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## Attachment 1 PROGRAM REPORTS

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### CONSENSUS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT

- The four volumes of the 2009 Environmental Laboratory standard have been submitted to ANSI for their designation as "American National Standards". Currently the volumes have been made available for public review, and if any comments or objections are received by the end of the review period (January 16, 2012) they must be resolved. After successful completion of the process, the standards will bear the ANSI logo, giving them credibility as the definitive standard for accreditation of environmental laboratories.
- The Quality Systems Committee has responded to 6 recent Standards Interpretation Requests.
- The Environmental Measurement Methods Expert Committee passed a key motion on a recent call, stating "Include only things in the standard that are known to address issues that lead to inaccuracies and that are practical for implementation on a routine basis." This was important since some members of the committee had a broader vision that might have led to a more controversial standard. The Committee is now examining areas that meet the criterion above, and they hope to have some draft language to present for input at the Sarasota meeting.
- The Stationary Source Audit Sample (SSAS) Committee continues to work on an audit sample calculation tool that is intended to assist Facilities and Stationary Source Testers determine the appropriate concentration of audit samples they plan to order from Providers. This tool is expected to be completed and approved by committee voting members by the end of January 2012. One SSAS Provider is expected to be approved by A2LA by the end of this month.

### NEFAP Executive Committee

- The committee is continuing work on the update of a number of SOPs: Evaluation, Voting, Nomination and SIRs. The Nomination SOP is about complete and Ilona forwarded the information to William so that he can ensure we have the mechanism in place to vote. A DRAFT of the Evaluation SOP update will be presented in Sarasota.
- The Accreditation Body Recognition contract has been completed and is being voted on by e-mail.
- Marlene noted that she is hearing from FSMOs that are interested in applying for accreditation and she will work with the ABs to ensure that they are hearing from these FSMOs. Once applications come in, the technical evaluation can be performed to complete the AB accreditations.
- The committee has updated and approved its charter. The update has been forwarded.

### Field Activities Expert Committee (FAC)

- Committee members are now working with all the suggestions received on the standard. The sections of the standard have been split up among the different committee members and sections are now being updated for committee review and discussion.
- The committee has updated and finalized its charter. It has been forwarded.
- There is no report yet on the subcommittee that was developed to look at the best way to accredit mobile labs and stand alone analytical instruments used in the field. Overlap with NELAP will be considered.

- The “NEFAP Training Oversight Subcommittee” is still working on written procedures on how to determine training needs and review training proposals submitted for review. Updates have been made and a new DRAFT is being reviewed.
- Recommendations for new committee members will be presented at the next meeting so that new members will be able to participate in Sarasota.

## **NELAP**

### **Accreditation Council**

- 3 Evaluations are complete. Renewal Recommendations for NY and PA are approved, and UT will be voted upon on December 5. A fourth recommendation is expected soon. A 10th evaluation will begin later this month.
- The AC has requested that the TNI Board make available the archived webinar of evaluator training to any who wish to take it. Previously the training was available only to state and federal personnel expected to perform evaluations. This is a first step towards using third party evaluators in the future, once the current round is complete. This decision was the result of the AC's discussion about a request (from a non-governmental party) to observe one state's evaluation. While the AC recognized that a state AB could invite anyone it chose to "observe" the evaluation process, there was considerable concern that if third party evaluators do need to be used in the future, this individual would have an inherent competitive advantage, having taken the training and been through an evaluation already. The AC asked that the Lead Evaluator discuss the AC's concerns with the individual making this request, and seek to have that request withdrawn, and the individual agreed.
- The NELAP QAO, Paul Ellingson, has presented some well thought out recommendations for streamlining the evaluation process, and the AC favors revising the process per his suggestions. The TNI Standard does not require all the cumbersome steps that were mandated by the NELAC standard, so Paul and Lynn will work together, and with the NELAP evaluators, to revise the SOP and checklist documents in preparation for the next round of evaluations, and to accomplish those draft revisions in time to permit consideration and approval by the LAB Expert Committee, the LAS Executive Committee, the Accreditation Council and the Policy Committee.
- The AC has asked the Board to please consider ramifications of an article in the ACIL newsletter (Nov/Dec 2011) about its Environmental Sciences Section's (ESS's) efforts to expand its “nongovernment accreditation initiative” from NJ into NC, MN, CA, FL, KS and VA. That article identifies coordinators and an approach for promoting a “non-government-based accreditation system.” Five of the six identified “target” states (plus NJ) are NELAP ABs, and 3 of the individuals named in the article are TNI Board members, so the AC is concerned that this activity could undermine the NELAP program. Numerous offline discussions, as well as discussions in AC meetings, are on-going and partly as a result, the AC will seek to provide stronger input to the ELAB effort to strengthen national accreditation as well as contribute more to the AB Assistance Task Force's subcommittees working on the TF's Recommendation 8 (third party ABs). The AC also hopes to hold a public meeting with representatives of ACIL's ESS at conference in Sarasota.

### Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee

- Standards Interpretation Request (SIR) process:
  - 5 requests were received in November. Three were not considered SIRs, one was sent to QS Expert, and the other to PT Expert.
  - Kirstin has been added as a new contact for initial SIRs. A follow-up on older SIRs will be completed in December.
- Work continues on the AB Task Force action items. LAS EC provided the NELAP AC some assistance on #5 and this being written up and forwarded for the NELAP ACs use. The work needed from LAS EC for Item #7 has been completed and this is now being written up by a small workgroup that is completing the work. A small workgroup has been formed to finish up #6 and they are looking closely at State needs.

### Technical Assistance Committee

- The subcommittee formed to work on the AB Task Force item has met and prepared a spreadsheet based on the training survey given in Savannah (and that posted on-line).
  - The spreadsheet will be expanded to make it clear which courses have been developed and given in the past and then the trainers will be contacted to find out if they would like to continue giving the course. A course outline will be requested for the committee to review to ensure needed elements are included.
  - The committee will prioritize the potential curriculum of courses.

## **PROFICIENCY TESTING**

- The Chemistry FoPT Subcommittee is continuing to review NPW analytes.
- The committee discussed different ways to post the FoPT tables to make them available earlier and to get the word out that an update has been made. They will be talking to William to make a few changes to the website to allow for the current and new table to be posted at the same time. They are also looking at providing an e-mail to people who sign-up to get information on updates.
- Steve Gibson will be chairing the Oversight Database Subcommittee. A2LA has offered to provide the current Neptune database to TNI to act as a single database and eliminate the need for a third oversight database. It would be TNI's responsibility to operate the database and work with Neptune on any updates or needs. This subcommittee will begin work late December.
- The PT EC charter has been updated and forwarded.
- Work is continuing on the FoPT Table Management SOP. Comments are still being reviewed and a final DRAFT will be discussed in Sarasota.
- Nicole Cairns and Patrick Brumfield have been added to the committee starting in January 2012.
- An issue was raised by Michella from EPA that some labs are accepting identical results for multiple methods in Drinking Water. The group concluded that this was not a PT Provider issue and that EPA would take a look at how to work with labs regarding this issue and equivalent methods.
- Dan Hickman contacted the PT EC to determine whether separate method codes should be established for SIM methods. They concluded separate codes are not needed.

## **ADMINISTRATION**

### **Advocacy Committee**

- The Advocacy Committee has added Martina Mc Garvey, PA DEQ, as a new member.
- W. Virginia state agency staff have contacted Jerry Parr expressing an interest in participating in TNI meetings and activities. As a result, the Advocacy Committee is discussing developing an outreach package for non-NELAP states. The committee discussed looking for states to target that may have participated in NELAC early on, but have not participated in recent years.
- The committee agreed on a list of articles and updates to submit to WEF Lab Solutions. The following were agreed upon:
  - January: Small Lab Handbook
  - March: Elizabeth will collaborate with Nan Thomey on an article "The benefits of a quality system"
  - May: Changes in the PT program – Eric Smith
  - July: TNI training opportunities
- Jack Farrell participated in the last Advocacy Committee call on behalf of ELAB. Jack solicited responses from the committee to ELAB's matrix on the health of national laboratory accreditation. Advocacy Committee members were particularly interested in having ELAB pursue the idea of a policy statement encouraging laboratory accreditation in all EPA programs.

### **Forum on Laboratory Accreditation – Sarasota, FL, February 2012**

- Registration has opened.
- Brochure has been mailed.

### **Environmental Measurement Symposium – Washington, DC, August 2012**

- The new website is up and abstracts have started coming in.
- The Call for Papers has been mailed out and is included on the website.
- The Session Chair Responsibilities summary has been updated and due dates for abstracts, bios, papers and presentations have been finalized and included.
- Updates to the website have been requested and should be up soon.
- Work on the 2012 Exhibition Prospectus will begin in December, but won't be distributed until the Sarasota meeting is complete.

### **FEM Cooperative Agreement**

- As recommended during a recent Advocacy Committee call, an abstract is being prepared for submission of a poster presentation at next year's APHL Annual Meeting. If accepted, the poster will stress the more rigorous quality system in the TNI standard compared with the EPA drinking water certification requirements. It is hoped to persuade more state laboratories to become NELAP accredited, or at least to support ELAB's recommendation that EPA adopt the TNI QS standard in its DW primacy laboratory certification program.

### **Educational Delivery System**

- LOD/LOQ training is being re-evaluated. Jerry and Jack did a training recently that was split up a little differently and it may be a better option.
- A contract has been established with Marlene Moore to help support her efforts in Assessor training. TNI will be helping with registration and marketing.
- Updates to the website have been reviewed and should be up soon. Clear pricing for trainers will be included.
- A few certificates were issued for completed training. There a number that are being verified this week and all certificates should be up to date by next week.

### **Consistency Improvement Task Force**

- The CITF will have their final report at the Sarasota meeting.

### **Accreditation Body Assistance Task Force**

- Liaisons have been assigned to monitor progress on all recommendations. Reports are due December 31.
- Presentations on implementation of each recommendation will be given at the Sarasota meeting.

### **Membership Report**

- Active Members: 826