

**The NELAC-Institute**  
Board of Directors  
February 14, 2007

**1. Roll Call**

Co-chair Judy Duncan called the meeting to order at approximately 12 pm (Central). Directors in attendance were: Eddie Clemons, Brooke Connor, Judith Duncan, Ken Jackson, Tom McAninch, Dave Mendenhall, Sharon Mertens, Aurora Shields, Alfredo Sotomayor, and Dave Speis. Also participating were Program Administrators Carol Batterton, Jane Wilson, and Executive Director Jerry Parr.

**2. Changes to By-Laws – Judy Duncan**

Judy reviewed three proposed changes to the TNI By-Laws

- Item 4, section 1
- Item 6, section 1
- Item 7, section 3

Dave Speis motioned to accept the changes, seconded by Sharon Mertens. The changes were accepted unanimously.

**3. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with EPA**

Judy reviewed the goals of establishing a MOU with EPA – 1) demonstrate EPA's continued commitment and involvement in national accreditation, 2) open door for additional long-term funding. It was agreed this is a Board level issue, rather than Advocacy committee activity. The directors discussed what objectives TNI has in creating the MOU and who at EPA should they work with? Jerry had a draft for review that is a broad statement of the potential MOU with EPA. The group agreed that a MOU with a smaller scope should be established first, e.g., EPA Office of Water recognition that NELAC accreditation meets drinking water requirements and to formalize the involvement of EPA regional evaluators in the process.

The group discussed the appropriate entity to move the issue forward. The issue affects the NELAP Board and Advocacy committee. Ad hoc group to move this forward will consist of Aurora Shields, Ken Jackson, Carol Batterton, and Judy Duncan as well as Jerry Parr.

**4. Strategic Planning in San Antonio – Jerry Parr**

Jerry distributed the draft planning document prepared by Susan Johns. It was agreed to proceed with strategic planning using the guidance of *Strategic Planning for Non-Profit Organizations*. The timing of the strategic planning session in early April (2-4) will coincide with the completion of the election of the new TNI Board. Jerry is making arrangements at the Hyatt in San Antonio on the Riverwalk. NFSTC has been approached for \$20K in travel funding.

Suggestions on the strategic planning session:

- Have an opening session devoted to orientation of the new Board – Robert’s Rules review, David Epstein’s Cambridge presentation, bylaws/organizational structure review
- Invite interim Board members who may not transition to new Board to attend (but not fund travel?)
- Invite an Office of Water representative as a liaison to the new Board
- Open meeting – potential attendees will be given a heads up as soon as possible and an announcement will follow on the TNI website.

Eddie motioned for the Board to support Jerry proceeding with the arrangements as presented; Aurora seconded. All members were in favor.

#### **5. Program Administrator reports**

- LAC - Formed a subcommittee to address standards interpretations and a subcommittee to work with Sharon (Accreditation Body) and Alfredo (On Site Assessment) on policies to implement their modules of the TNI standard.
- NELAP Board - Pushing forth with the process for reaccrediting the current NELAP AAs.
- TAC – Nothing substantive to report. Brooke has some background on the email from Bennett’s email as forwarded by Steve Arms that will be discussed later.
- Website – Trying to get pilot for document collaboration software going and presentations from the Denver Forum should be posted soon.
- CSDB – Proposed balloting schedule for Final standard vote and Draft Interim Standard vote has been determined. Forming Uniformity of Standards Committee to review definitions issues – Carl Kircher to chair.

#### **6. Board “To Do” List**

- Formalize EPA relationships
- System to track committee activities
- Items still to be transitioned from NELAC Board
- Functional org chart
- ISO document access – secure viewing on website, licensing agreement updates with ANSI, ASTM
- Review committee charters (targeted for San Antonio)
- Standardize committee terminology (Policy committee?)

#### **7. Scalability subcommittee**

Dave Speis framed the issue of scalability for the accreditation of smaller labs. Most AAs have had to accredit smaller labs and have done it successfully. A Technical Assistance Committee subcommittee could look at what models have been used for accrediting small labs and to highlight some successes from the ABs. Ken noted there have been suggestions for a separate standard for small labs to address unique issues.

Aurora noted that TNI may have both an image problem and the issue of some of the relevant stakeholders not being knowledgeable about the NELAC standard (e.g. WEF at

Denver Forum). TNI can change the image, change the product, or work towards both. Brooke provided background on the concerns from some individuals on the role of the Laboratory Support committee. Over the years and changing organizations, the TAC focus on small labs has been lost. This focus keeps getting bumped as a dedicated committee.

The following suggestions came from the Board discussion:

- Request info from the small labs – is it a product or image problem; tackle the real issue.
- Has the standard become too proscriptive – need to get back to QS basics, get a handle on Chapter 5.
- Look at AB models for how accreditation of small labs has been successful.
- Did INELA/TNI get all the information needed to develop the new standards adequately?
- Is it possible to do some kind of special comment collection on the WDS modules within the context of the current process?
- Having two standards is not desirable, but a “one size fits all” approach has not worked well for labs and states either.

The directors discussed a focus on how the standard has been implemented for small labs, and what issues are still being encountered.