

## TNI Policy Committee Meeting Summary Friday, May 17, 2013

### 1. Welcome, Roll Call and Announcements

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 11 am Eastern. Attendance is recorded in Appendix A. Alfredo noted that comments on the May 3 minutes are due within a week, and that he had sent committee members an FYI copy of the form transmitting comments on SOP 4-107, FoPT Table Management, and that the information was also sent to Stacie Metzler, Chair of the PT Executive Committee. Alfredo also noted that the Board approved SOP 1-119, Travel procedures, after some minor discussion.

### 2. Issue from the TNI Board – Stakeholder Representation

At its May 8 meeting, the TNI Board of Directors asked Policy Committee to explore whether our current documents need revision to adequately address the concept of balance among stakeholder representatives, given the expanded activities of TNI since its formation.

The initial categories of laboratory, accreditation body and “other” were created and codified in the Bylaws by INELA and then TNI to address balance and representation when TNI sought ANSI accreditation as a Consensus Standards Development Organization, and have generally served satisfactorily with the decision to include FSMOs as laboratories. Recently, a few exceptional issues have arisen where an individual’s job function does not match up with the category of the individual’s employer.

For instance, on the Chemistry Expert Committee, one member has been considered an AB ~~representative~~ because ~~the member is employed by of employment by the same agency as a state NELAP AB although not by the accreditation section of the AB. -is organizationally part of, even though that individual’s job function currently relates totally to the proficiency testing provider part of the parent organization. While this has generally been a serviceable policy, in~~ In this particular case, ~~there was a total absence of the~~ perspective ~~from the of the~~ AB stakeholder group, ~~the accreditor, which may have created additional work in addressing comments on the voting draft standard, as well as the perception that AB considerations were was~~ not ~~directly represented~~ addressed. A similar issue arose in the PT Executive Committee. The Board had previously authorized the Consensus Standards Development Program’s Expert Committees some limited flexibility in determining exactly what constituted “balance” for the particular committees in terms of additional groups that needed to be represented for appropriate balance of interests, while still within the general framework of the Bylaws.

Alfredo articulated ~~that~~ there ~~are were~~ actually two separate issues for the Policy Committee to address. First, ~~are were~~ there sufficient categories identified to address the diversity of TNI as an organization, and second, how should we resolve instances where a committee member could rightly be placed in more than one stakeholder category, or rather, where should the responsibility for making consistent decisions about stakeholder categories lie? In the example above, that individual was employed by an organization designated as an AB but performed the functions of a PT Provider (PTP,) and PTP is considered “other,” in ~~the existing framework our stakeholder definition~~. Self-identification, in this instance, was not adequate, so there may be some validation or verification of the categories needed, at least in cases where there is more than one possible categorization for an individual.

Participants discussed whether examples of job titles within categories might be helpful, what might have been the rationales behind these current problems, and whether guidance to the committee chairs or a tweak to the SOPs would suffice instead of changing the Bylaws.

Consensus was not to revise the Bylaws for this [butand](#) to leave the [3three](#) categories as they are written. Participants also agreed that the Executive Director would be the appropriate [roleperson](#) to verify the stakeholder category selected whenever an individual submits an application for committee membership, by reviewing the attached resume and through his knowledge of the stakeholder community, and if a [change](#)s to the self-selected category seems warranted, to then notify the applicant and make the change. If the applicant objects, s/he could use the Complaint Resolution Form which has designated processes for resolving such conflicts.

Participants also noted that, if a person's job function or employer changes during the committee year (January 1 to December 31), that person should self-declare the change. For the Board, this typically happens immediately, and if such a change produces an imbalance, the individual's resignation would be accepted, but if the change does not alter the overall balance of the group, then the individual is generally invited to remain. Participants agreed that responsibility for maintaining balance should fall to the committee level, through guidance to the committee chairs, and be added to the list of chair responsibilities in the relevant SOPs. (both the SOP for Expert Committees and the Committee Operations SOP need review and potential modification.)

Lynn was assigned to draft a short policy document addressing verification of stakeholder classification at the time a committee application is submitted, based on job functions rather than the classification of the employer, plus the rationale and process for addressing a change in stakeholder classification of an existing committee member.

Alfredo offered to review the two committee operation SOPs by the next meeting, to see whether changes need to be made there (SOP 1-101, Operation of TNI Committees, and SOP 2-101, Procedures for Expert Committee Operations.)

### **3. Establishing a TNI Code of Conduct**

Several different committee interactions in recent weeks have become "incidents," including submission of one formal complaint that was later withdrawn upon commitment of the Policy Committee Chair to craft some formal documentation addressing acceptable behavior for committee interactions.

Participants noted that in NELAC and INELA, all committee meetings opened with the chair stating a standard set of ground rules (circulated by Jerry during the meeting,) but that this seems to have fallen away as the TNI community progressed in its efforts and presumably became more comfortable with the variety of perspectives brought to our interactions. All agreed that the TNI Code of Ethics addresses personal ethical behaviors, primarily about financial transactions and conflicts of interest, but does not address interactions with other members, and that while an ethical breach may warrant immediate and irrevocable eviction from the membership, a difficult interaction with another member ought not result immediately in such a harsh step, but rather for extreme cases, a reprimand with eventual lack of reappointment to the committee.

Jerry had provided a draft Code of Conduct, based upon a similar document from the National Fire Protection Association, NFPA. NFPA's documents were successful models for many of TNI's fundamental organizational documents and procedures. The issue at hand is about individual committee members feeling that aggressive actions were taken towards them to force their support of particular committee decisions, before they became comfortable with those positions.

Alfredo noted that he and the Board Chair have committed to developing and presenting a training webinar for committee chairs, since TNI's adoption of the SOP 1-101 concerning Committee Operations, and stated that he would like to streamline the draft Code of Conduct and incorporate that into the training, [and if necessary](#), including a reminder for the chairs to open meetings with a reminder of the conduct expected from participants.

Alfredo and Susan committed to using material in the draft provided by Jerry (which also includes some ethical material that will be stripped out) to create a draft guidance document. They will work together via email and bring a proposed guidance document back at the next policy Committee meeting on June 7.

#### **4. Possible New Committee Member**

Alfredo inquired whether the Policy Committee needs to replace the “at large” member. Gary Dechant filled that role but with his demise, it is now vacant. Jerry offered to check the existing applications for committee membership to see if any specified “any committee” and Alfredo asked that committee members consider possible nominations. ~~Mandi Edwards’ name was mentioned as a possibility.~~ No deadline was established for nominations.

#### **5. Action Items**

See Attachment B.

#### **6. Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Policy Committee will be Friday, June 7, 2013, at 11 am Eastern. After reviewing work products from this meeting, we will pick up with the NEFAP items next in the queue, unless the revisions to the first Position Statement are returned by Advocacy Committee.

Action Items are included in Attachment B and Attachment C includes a listing of reminders.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:25 pm Eastern.

**Attachment A**

Name/Affiliation	Representing	Present
Alfredo Sotomayor, Chair Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, Madison, WI <a href="mailto:alfredo.sotomayor@Wisconsin.gov">alfredo.sotomayor@Wisconsin.gov</a>	TNI Board	Yes
JoAnn Boyd Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, TX <a href="mailto:jboyd@swri.org">jboyd@swri.org</a>	Lab and FSMO	Yes
Patrick Brumfield Sigma-Aldrich RTC, Laramie, WY <a href="mailto:patrick.brumfield@sial.com">patrick.brumfield@sial.com</a>	PT Executive Committee	Yes
Silky Labie Env. Lab. Consulting & Technology, LLC Tallahassee, FL <a href="mailto:elcatllc@centurylink.net">elcatllc@centurylink.net</a>		Yes
John Moorman South Florida Water Management District West Palm Beach, FL <a href="mailto:jmoorma@sfwmd.gov">jmoorma@sfwmd.gov</a>	NEFAP Executive Committee	No
Mei Beth Shepherd <a href="mailto:mbshep@sheptechserv.com">mbshep@sheptechserv.com</a>		Yes
Susan Wyatt, Vice Chair Minnesota DOH, St. Paul, MN <a href="mailto:susan.wyatt@state.mn.us">susan.wyatt@state.mn.us</a>	NELAP AC	Yes
Bob Wyeth Pace Analytical Services, Inc., West Seneca, NY <a href="mailto:bob.wyeth@pacelabs.com">bob.wyeth@pacelabs.com</a>	CSD Executive Committee	No
Jerry Parr (ex-officio) Executive Director, TNI <a href="mailto:Jerry.Parr@nelac-institute.org">Jerry.Parr@nelac-institute.org</a>		Yes
Lynn Bradley, Program Administrator The NELAC Institute (Staunton, VA) <a href="mailto:lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org">lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org</a>		Yes

**Attachment B**

**Action Items – TNI Policy Committee**

	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Expected Completion</b>	<b>Comments/ Completion</b>
34	Review NELAC chapter 6 for needed policies and SOPs, applicable to the AC	Susan	3/15/13	
39	Contact Board Chair for additional concerns about Bylaws and relay to Bob	Jerry	ASAP	
43	Wordsmith language from SOP 2-100 concerning interest/stakeholder groups for inclusion into revised Bylaws XI § 5	Jerry	4/19/13	replaced by Items 47&48, 5/17/13
44	Revise SOP 1-119 per discussion and prepare spreadsheet versions of forms	Lynn	5/2/13	5/4/13
45	Prepare form to return Position Statement 1204 to Advocacy Committee	Lynn/Alfredo	4/30/13	4/29/13
46	Prepare form to return SOP 4-107 to PT Executive Committee	Lynn/Alfredo	5/6/13	5/17/13
47	Prepare draft policy concerning stakeholder category verifications at time of committee member application and changes during committee service	Lynn	6/5/13	
48	Review SOPs 1-101 and 2-101 for possible edits to assign responsibility to chairs for addressing committee member changes in stakeholder categories	Alfredo	6/5/13	
49	Prepare draft guidance concerning committee member conduct	Alfredo/Susan	6/5/13	
50				

**Attachment C**

**Backburner / Reminders – TNI Policy Committee**

	<b>Item</b>	<b>Meeting Reference</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1.	Look into need to include something about review schedule in all SOPs.	3/20/12	
2	Include mention of abstentions in SOP 1-102 revision (or elsewhere,) to ensure that intentional choice of appropriate wording is made in committee decision making choices	10/5/12	
3	In SOP 1-101, "Committee Operations," or else SOP 1-102, "Decision Making...", some mention of "default" decision making rules would be beneficial, since most committees do not have documentation of their decision processes.	10/22/12	SOP 1-102 discusses various options and situations where one might work better than others, but SOP 1-101 refers to 1-102 as if it sets a default.
6	--- (placeholder, 4&5 were completed)		