

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting
January 30, 2019

1. Call to order

Steve Arms called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM CDT, January 30, 2019, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1.

2. Approval of minutes

Minutes from the previous meeting were not considered at this time.

3. NGAB Panel

Steve opened the meeting by introducing the members of the panel representing the Non-Governmental Accreditation Bodies (NGABs) that have been recognized by TNI to accredit environmental laboratories. Panelists included: Matt Sica, ANAB, Tracy Szerszen, PJLA, Mohan Sabaratnam, IAS, and Chris Gunning, A2LA. Jerry opened the discussion by noting that the effort by TNI to recognize NGABs was initially begun to try to reduce out of state travel for state NELAP accreditation bodies. He noted that there were a number of laboratories that appeared to be eligible to be accredited by NGABs, but they were retaining state accreditation. Steve then asked the panelists to respond to the following questions:

- Are you aware of which states will accept third party environmental laboratory accreditations to the TNI standard? How did you find this information?
- Do you think states understand the overall scheme of environmental laboratory accreditations from a third party versus accreditation from a NELAP AB?
- What are the next steps in finding ways to help more states accept third party accreditations? Is there a lack of understanding about what NGABs can do?
- Should we add/change anything on our website regarding use of NGABs?

Comments by panelists and the audience included:

- The effort to recognize NGABs to accredit environmental laboratories to the TNI standard seemed promising at first, but apparently states didn't really know if they could accept a third party accreditation or not.
- The real issue seems to be secondary accreditation or reciprocity.
- All state programs are different. Most require a state government to issue the accreditation, only a few do not.
- The NGABs would like help identifying states where they can work.
- With state reluctance to accept a third party, this is not a profitable market for NGABs at this time.
- NGABs should be marketing to non-NELAP states, however, NGABs don't know which ones will accept a third party, and then there is still the reciprocity issue with NELAP ABs.
- Accreditation requirements are not consistent from state to state which causes further complications. A big part of the problem is the convoluted regulatory structure.

- The drinking water program is driving some of the difficulty. DW certification has to be governmental. It is not always the same for other programs. How should the NGABS get agreements in place?
- TNI and the NGABS will need the support of the NELAP ABs to try to make any changes.
- The NGABS thought acceptance of secondary accreditation would be much easier. NGABS feel they are being treated as non-equivalent even though they have met the same standards for recognition as NELAP ABs.
- There are barriers, but it could be an opportunity for some organizations like ACIL to lobby Congress for a standardization of laboratory accreditation across the states.
- The goal should be consolidated, streamlined processes. Achieving that is beyond the resources of TNI.
- Right now, the NGABS cannot afford the expense of TNI recognition with so little work. It would be better for states just to use the resources of NGABS as contract assessors (assessor bodies) like Florida does. Recognition as an approved assessor body might be more productive.
- Does it make sense to continue? If the NELAP ABs won't accept NGABS, how can we expect other states to join in? TNI leadership needs to step up and support NGABS.
- NGABS need to look at other states besides NELAP states.
- Going to non-NELAP states still won't work if the NELAP states won't accept it as a secondary. Consistency in state programs is necessary. The NGABS need outreach help from TNI, not more marketing.
- Jerry noted that there are 310 labs accredited by NELAP ABs in non-NELAP states. Why can't NGABS do these accreditations? Part of the reason this effort was started was because NELAP states were having trouble getting the out of state accreditations done, particularly if the lab did not do business in accrediting state.
- The ideal solution for NGABS would be to have more states like Vermont and Georgia.
- Some states seem to be confused about what's in their regulations versus statute. Regulations are easier to change. However, when changing state statutes you have to be careful what you ask for. Others can influence the outcome.
- Before the program started, a number of NELAP ABs believed they could accept third party accreditations. That changed after they got official opinions.
- The NGABS would like for TNI to re-look at the whole situation before they undergo another round of evaluations.

Resolution of this issue will require a series of steps. The first step is to go back to the NELAP ABs and see what would work for them, if anything. Then, we may need to have a group effort with NGABS and states to modify regulations or federal laws so that it gets done right.

4. Highlights from the Milwaukee meeting

A lunch meeting with first time state attendees was held on Monday. States represented included W. Virginia, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Questions and discussion centered on best systems for states to manage laboratory accreditations, and how to fill needs in technical expertise for lab accreditations, such as asbestos and radiochemistry. Kristin Brown shared information and demonstrated the LAMS that Paul Ellingson had designed for several of the ABs. Wisconsin indicated a desire to become more active in TNI. W. Virginia stated that they use the TNI standard for PT in their accreditation program.

Comments and discussion from other meetings included:

- Jerry introduced Bob Wyeth as the new program administrator for CSDB and the Chemistry expert committee. Paul Junio will chair the CSDB executive committee.
- The NELAP AC would like to have an ex officio seat on the CSDB executive committee.
- There was a special meeting with representatives of California ELAP to discuss ways to maximize their mentor program for vulnerable labs.
- The NELAP AC set January 2020 as their implementation date for the 2016 standard.
- All but two states have implemented the latest MUR.
- Plan to talk about understanding the requirements at a future Advocacy conference call. It could be useful for California labs to have posting or periodic emails.
- The WET PT issue is still being discussed.
- The Quality Systems Committee needs more input on the technical director qualifications discussion, especially from the NELAP AC.
- Jerry will do an email blast when LAB Committee has their working draft ready.

5. Conference Planning

Jerry gave an overview of the arrangements for the summer conference in Jacksonville, FL. He noted there were some direct flights to Jacksonville. There are some issues with ceiling height in the exhibitor space, but Jerry will look at options on his site visit. Hotel registration should be open in the next two weeks. Conference registration will open in April. Steve noted there was a possible excursion to Saint Augustine on Saturday before the conference.

Jerry also reviewed the plans for the 2020 winter meeting in Newport Beach. The room rate and food and beverage minimums are a little higher than we usually see. Jerry also noted that a fourth day had been added to the conference for California labs and perhaps other small labs that wanted to participate. This extra day may help off-set some of the additional cost of this meeting. One idea suggested was for “topic tables” where labs can go to get information/advice on certain topics. Jerry also noted that there are a lot of places within walking distance of the hotel.

6. Newsletter

The editor for the next newsletter is Martina McGarvey. The article due date was set at March 15 with a target publication date of April 1. Suggested articles and authors included:

Article & Description	Authors	Email for Authors
2016 standards implementation date	Lynn Bradley	lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org
MUR implementation	Lynn Bradley	lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org
Resources for implementation	Jerry Parr	jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org
Milwaukee re-cap	Jerry Parr	jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org
Jacksonville meeting	Lara Phelps and Jerry Parr	phelps.lara@epa.gov jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org
Committee chair and staff changes	Jerry Parr	jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org
Member highlight – Ken Jackson in	Carol Batterton	carbat@beecreek.net

memoriam		
What to do in Jacksonville	Steve Arms	Arms.steve@comcast.net
Recipe	Cathy Katsikis	catherinekatsikis@gmail.com
Musings from the Chair	Alfredo Sotomayor	ASotomayor@mmsd.com 5

The fall editor will be Sharon Mertens.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, February 7, 2019, at 12 Noon CST.

Attachment 1

	Name	Stakeholder Group	Present/Absent
1.	Lara Phelps	EPA (Other)	Absent
2.	Steve Arms	Other	Present
3.	Lynn Bradley	Other	Present
4.	Martina McGarvey	AB	Present
5.	Stacie Crandall	Lab	Present
6.	Zonetta English	Lab	Absent
7.	Marlene Moore	Other and NEFAP	Present
8.	Janice Willey	Federal	Absent
9.	Trinity O'Neal	Lab	Absent
10.	Robin Cook	Lab	Present
11.	Sharon Mertens	Lab	Present
12.	Teresa Coins	Lab	Absent
13.	Ron Coss	Lab	Absent
	Associate Members		
	Kirstin Daigle	Lab	Absent
	Judy Morgan	Lab	Present
	JoAnn Boyd	Lab and FAC	Absent
	Celeste Crowley	AB	Absent
	Keith Chapman	Other	Absent
	Andrea Teal	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Devon Morgan	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Bob Pullano	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Lee Wolf	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Paul Junio	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Lily Sanchez	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Silky Labie	Other	Present
	Elizabeth Turner	Small Lab Advocate	Absent
	Stephanie Drier	AB	Absent
	Staff		
	Jerry Parr	TNI ED	Present

	Carol Batterton	TNI PA	Present
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