

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting
August 9, 2019

1. Call to order

Steve Arms called the meeting to order at 9:00 am EDT, August 9, 2019, in Jacksonville, Florida. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1.

2. Approval of minutes

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

3. Small Lab Advocate

Steve opened the meeting by introducing the members of the Advocacy Committee and outlining the role and responsibilities of the committee.

He noted that the committee had recently recommended Robin Cook to take the position of Small Lab Advocate (SLA) and he reviewed the proposed language regarding the SLA for amending the Advocacy Committee's charter. Steve asked Robin to share her ideas on what is needed to help small labs implement the TNI standard. Robin's key points included:

- The issue with small labs is typically not about understanding the TNI standard, but with implementation. How can a small lab do this?
- She believes that a forum on TNI's website would be useful for small labs to submit questions. She wants to hear about what the small labs need.
- She sees her role as being a devil's advocate for small labs.

Steve then asked the committee and audience for their input on how to make the best use of the SLA. Comments included:

- Remember that Robin has a full-time job and the scope needs to be realistic for her.
- We could use a message board and others could help answer questions.
- The key will be making sure someone is monitoring and the questions get answered.
- Robin will need to delegate some answers.
- The assessors may be able to get information out to the small labs about SLA groups.
- The challenge is how to let small labs know about the resources that are available.
- Jerry could do a mailout to all labs letting them know about the SLA and promoting the use of the TNI standard.
- We could use a small lab handbook just for municipal labs and a QM template. Municipal labs need more simplification. We need a road map with a focus on drinking water and wastewater.
- We should provide implementation tips. There are LASEC implementation guidance documents with recommendations for best practices. Paul would be willing to add a "how to do this" section. Contact Paul, Ilona or Silky for help.
- We need more short webinars, perhaps a series with each webinar no longer than 30 minutes.
- All SLA resources need to be together in one place on the TNI website.

- We should seek out other contacts like ambassadors and state lab associations to help get the word out. WEF Lab Practices Committee produces a newsletter that could reach wastewater labs.
- California is starting a state lab association. Socorro Baldonado can be an advocate and point of contact.

Steve then asked Robin what resources she thought she might need. Robin's comments included:

- Do you need a committee? Maybe.
- She would like to have a page on the TNI website.
- A LinkedIn group would be useful as well.
- We should dedicate some time at each Advocacy Committee meeting for a report from the SLA.
- A scroller on the website would call attention to the SLA page.
- We need to investigate utilizing other social media. It would foster more engagement, but it may be a problem for public employees. They would have to use their personal phones.

4. Highlights from the Jacksonville meeting

Steve asked for members to note the highlights of this meeting that might require action by the Advocacy Committee. Comments included:

- Adrian from the University of Tennessee accredited lab would like to be a mentor.
- Curtis Wood's presentation on PT data supporting the value of accreditation showed clear trends that accredited labs in NELAP states perform better. We should get with Curtis and do a deeper analysis of his data.
- The EPA OW agreed to meet with us at every meeting.
- Met with EPA and partners to review final edits to the method validation study plan. Hope to have data collection begin in October but will need to solve some IT issues first.
- Meeting with the non-NELAP states went well. They want to have to have a meeting every time, perhaps with a selected topic.
- The FSEA session went well. CA may try to start an association.
- Good quotes from the mentor session about CA's mentoring program. CA ELAP already has articles that they can share for TNI's newsletter.
- Jerry wants to create a mentor program, but we need to be careful not impinge on consultants.
- The EPA speakers need to be a stand-alone program with no competing sessions. Should consider having it on Thursday to keep people at the conference.

5. Value of Accreditation White Paper

Steve presented the current draft of the value of accreditation white paper. He asked for comments and suggestions and next steps. Comments included:

- Change title to "How Does Accreditation Based on the TNI Standard Improve Environmental Laboratory Performance?"
- Delete the metrics in the Conclusions section regarding ABs, but introduce the idea that when ABs improve, labs improve. That can spark another white paper.

- Delete reference to PT data. That might not be a good indicator.
- What do we mean by “data quality”? Can we measure precision?
- What are performance indicators that we can gather from states? Could we survey states like a focus group? Sam Houston State has noted much improved lab performance after accreditation. Can we look at simple, secondary indicators like sample preservation, temperature measurement, etc. Secondary data has a direct impact on laboratory performance, but we will need to explain.
- Trust and credibility can be assessed as well as data defensibility. May be difficult to measure before and after.
- Identify a way to measure benefits. To claim a benefit, need to be able to measure it.
- Maybe we should start measure at the time of accreditation. For example, flagged data was initially high, then got lower.
- Nan Thomey is a good resource.
- HRSD has the data. Could write a paper to cite this data.
- PA saw increased trust in labs.
- We could have 8-12 labs write a paper or do presentations. Maybe this would be a good session in Newport. Labs can pick the metric of their choice to show improvement.

6. Newsletter

The editor for the next newsletter is Sharon Mertens. Suggested articles included:

Article & Description	Authors	Email for Authors
Summary of the Jacksonville meeting	jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org	
Newport meeting	jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org	
Call for abstracts NEMC Minneapolis		
Implementation of 2016 standard		
CA mentor program article	Jacob Oaxaca	
Small lab article -standing article	Robin Cook	
Update on Method 600 series validation project		
New NGAB		
Strategic planning		
SSAS program		
What to do in Newport		
Recipe		
Musings from the Chair		

Authors, additional articles, and timelines will be discussed at the September meeting. The spring editor will be Zonetta English. Fall 2020 will be Trinity O’Neal.

7. Conference planning

Jerry reviewed the conference at a glance and noted he would add a session on “How accreditation improved my lab”.

8. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, September 5, 2019, at 12 Noon CDT.

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	Present
7.	Marlene Moore	Other and NEFAP	Absent
8.	Janice Willey	Federal	Absent
9.	Trinity O'Neal	Lab	Present
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	Present
	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