

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting
June 2, 2016

1. Call to order

Steve Arms called the meeting to order at 12:00 Noon CDT, June 2, 2016. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1. Since Carol Batterton was unable to attend, Lynn Bradley agreed to prepare minutes for this meeting.

2. Approval of minutes

Minutes from April 7 and May 5, 2016, were approved and will be posted to the website.

3. Newsletter update

Jerry checked on receipt of the newsletter, and learned that delivery problems are not yet fully resolved. Steve praised the interview and member highlight article that Stephanie wrote about him. Lara asked that deadline dates be verified for future newsletters, noting that she spent considerable time declining applicants for ELAB, since the deadline passed before the newsletter was published. Robin Cook is the editor of the next newsletter and topics will be decided during the committee meeting at conference.

4. Outreach to EPA as follow-up to review of Strategic Plan assignments

Steve and Jerry discussed their conversation with Donna Ringel (EPA Liaison to NELAP AC) plus Dan Hautman and Carrie Miller (managers in the EPA drinking water Technical Support Center in Cincinnati) on Wednesday, June 1. This call grew out of a discussion at the May committee meeting about how to address two priority items from TNI's Strategic Plan:

1. Work with the EPA Office of Water to ensure that the TNI laboratory accreditation standard is deemed "equally effective" to the Drinking Water Certification Manual (DWCM).
 - Monitor changes to the DWCM.
2. Develop a document that summarizes the differences and similarities of the TNI and EPA Drinking Water programs. (Distill down from the crosswalk).

The two groups agreed to continue discussion of criteria for evaluating equal effectiveness of state certification programs and NELAP ABs. This is timely as EPA is reviewing its certification program in light of recent lead poisoning incidents and updating its Certification Manual, at the same time as TNI is updating its procedures for evaluating NELAP ABs.

TNI will pursue a face-to-face meeting at conference, on Tuesday morning, August 9, with these parties and including the NELAP and LASEC Chairs, to further consider this effort. The TNI Board has been advised of this on-going effort, which may result in the need for altering the wording of the Strategic Plan, eventually.

Jerry noted that he has held off on preparing a comparison of NELAP ABs with non-NELAP state certification programs, but thought it would be helpful to try this. NOTE: Within a few days after the June 2 meeting, he learned that not only are each state's requirements different, but the state regulations are all structured differently so that such a comparison would take near-endless amounts of time for small benefit, if any. Large commercial labs that deal with all states have repeatedly discussed the burden of tracking the various requirements of non-NELAP states.

5. Strategic Plan Advocacy Items – continued review

The remaining goals were discussed in sequence, beginning with Goal 2.2.

Goal 2.2 – participants began by taking the objectives one-by-one, but then determined that forming the Marketing and Outreach subcommittee would be the most useful initial effort, and then to have that group formulate a long range plan for addressing the lower priority action items in this goal. Zonetta, Sharon and Jerry agreed to work together to recruit additional people for this subcommittee, especially someone involved with marketing from a large lab, PT vendors, representatives from ABs (state and non-governmental, perhaps from the APHL State Assessor Group.) Depending on the success of their recruitment efforts, either the subcommittee membership will be announced at conference with an informal meet-and-greet, or else active recruitment will be underway at conference.

High priority items in this goal have been addressed:

- the “State of National Accreditation” report was completed and distributed as a seven-page letter to the EPA Forum on Environmental Measurements. Steve assigned himself, Jerry and Carol to update and re-distribute it once the change of administrations occurs at EPA, and also to share with the state assessor group through Donnell Ward;
- the TNI ambassador pilot program is underway and additional state ambassadors will be identified (Jerry has provided an expanded list of candidates for consideration at the July meeting);
- the webinar was produced and presented and is available on the website. This will be turned into a handout version for easy use by ambassadors, and provided for review at the July call;
- the free non-voting membership needs to be reconsidered in light of current state memberships and likely regulations about accepting gifts; and
- work with EPA’s office of water continues (see item 4 above for current activity.)

Meetings with EPA program offices should be delayed until the change of administrations nears completion. The Small Lab Advocacy Group now uses LinkedIn as its forum; Elizabeth Turner needs to become engaged with the Marketing and Outreach subcommittee to add support to the effort. The other two activities (promoting the lab competency policy and holding a seminar at NEMC) will become part of the Marketing and Outreach subcommittee’s planning activities.

With the hour expired, Steve asked if participants could remain a bit longer to finish the few remaining items assigned to Advocacy. (Apparently there is no Goal 2.3)

Goal 2.4 – the semi-annual Forum continues, and is the venue for the TNI annual meeting. With electronic communications becoming increasingly easy, TNI will eventually re-evaluate the need for two meetings per year, but not yet.

Cooperation with other organizations around regional conferences and workshops is underway, see the list in Attachment 2 of these minutes.

As Past-President, Sharon would like to gather and provide a status update for the Board about Strategic Plan assignments, maybe at the September Board meeting. Lynn will provide a plan annotated with the status of Advocacy Committee items, to become the starting point for that effort.

6. Other action items

Ambassador reports, updates on handbook chapters and review of the QS Position Paper will resume at the July meeting.

7. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Advocacy Committee will be July 7, 2016. The agenda will include items noted in these minutes as well as items delayed during review of the Strategic Plan.

Attachment 1

	Name	Stakeholder Group	Present/Absent
1.	Lara Phelps	EPA (Other)	Present
2.	Steve Arms	Other	Present
3.	Lynn Bradley	Other	Present
4.	Stephanie Drier	Lab	Absent
5.	Martina McGarvey	AB	Present
6.	Stacie Metzler	Lab	Absent
7.	Zonetta English	Lab	Present
8.	Marlene Moore	Other and NEFAP	Absent
9.	Elizabeth Turner	Small Lab Advocate	Absent
10.	Gary Ward	AB	Absent
11.	Michael Wichman	Lab	Absent
12.	Janice Willey	Federal	Present
13.	Trinity O'Neal	Lab	Absent
14.	Robin Cook	Lab	Present
	Associate Members		
	Kirstin Daigle	Lab	Absent
	Judy Morgan	Lab	Absent
	Aurora Shields	Lab	Absent
	JoAnn Boyd	Lab and FAC	Absent
	Judy Duncan	Other	Absent
	Kenneth Jackson	Other	Absent
	Keith Chapman	Other	Absent
	Sharon Mertens	TNI Board Chair	Present
	Teresa Coins	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Andrea Teal	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Devon Morgan	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Bob Pullano	TNI Ambassador	Present
	Lee Wolf	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Paul Junio	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Staff		
	Jerry Parr	TNI ED	Present
	Carol Batterton	TNI PA	Absent

Attachment 2

Regional Meetings

Event	Date	TNI Speaker
AIHA, Falls Church, Virginia Contact: Cheryl Morton	March 17, 2016	Marlene Moore
Texas Water, Fort Worth, Texas Contact: Elizabeth Turner	April 22, 2016	Jerry Parr and Carol Batterton
Kansas Laboratory Education Association, Manhattan, Kansas Contact:	May 3, 2016	Robin Cook
TCEQ Trade Fair, Austin, Texas Contact:	May 3-4, 2016	Jerry Parr
Oregon Environmental Laboratory Association, Salem, Oregon Contact:	May 11, 2016	Jerry Parr
Michigan WEA Lab Practices Seminar, East Lansing Michigan Contact:	May 18, 2016	Monitor for possible participation next year
Florida Society of Environmental Analysts, Sand Key, Florida Contact: Suzanne R.?	May 25-27, 2016	Steve Arms
NYAAEL/PaAAEL 2015 Environmental Laboratory Convention, State College, PA Contact:	July 17-19, 2016	Martina McGarvey
VA AWWA/VWEA Lab Practices Conference, Charlottesville, VA Contact: Peter DeLisle	July 25-26, 2016	Stacie Metzler
Georgia Association of Water Professionals (WEF MA) Contact: Jeff Fulton	Fall Meeting	Monitor/contact
Laboratory Section of ORWEF School Contact: Kristin Thomas and Chuck Lytle	March 2017	Monitor/contact