

Summary of Advocacy Committee Meeting
November 5, 2020

1. Call to order

Steve Arms called the meeting to order at 12:00 Noon CDT, November 5, 2020. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1.

2. Approval of Minutes

Minutes from October 1 were reviewed. Sharon moved approval, and Stacie seconded. All present voted in favor. Lynn Bradley abstained.

3. Updates

- Newsletter: Jerry reported that Jan is almost finished with formatting and he plans to send it out on Tuesday. He noted that 3 articles were added – LAMS is now fully populated, announcement of Board elections, and nominations open for the Charlie Carter award.
- Mentoring subcommittee: The subcommittee has developed the outline of a process and is continuing to work out the details. They will present their final work product in January at the winter meeting.
- Conference planning: Registration for the winter meeting will be open next Tuesday. The conference will be held virtually during the week of January 25. Special sessions include:
 - How accreditation to the TNI standard improved my lab – need more speakers in this session
 - Assessment forum: Accreditation issues with emerging contaminants – Judy Morgan working on this session
 - Value of accreditation – Steve Arms leading this session
 - Wastewater epidemiology and COVID-19 – Sharon Mertens and Stacie Crandall working on this session
 - Operating a laboratory during a pandemic – Lab and vendor perspectives, need speakers
 - Success stories with remote assessments – already have four speakers
 - TNI's Change to QMS and other changes to 1.3
 - Mentor session: Implementing the New EPA MDL and TNI LD/LOQ Requirements, Implementing the New TNI Calibration Requirements for Chemistry, Effectively Managing Your PT Program – Dorothy Love and Michelle Wade working on this session

4. Strategic plan review

Steve introduced the TNI's 2020 strategic plan for review. He indicated that we should review and identify items that Advocacy should address in 2021. Items were reviewed in order as they occurred in the strategic plan.

Goal 1.1 Ensure that TNI accreditation standards are used universally and are developed or revised as needed in an efficient process.

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Educate all states on the benefits of the TNI standard and advocate for additional states to become ABs where appropriate.	Advocacy	Medium

Comments and suggestions for this goal and objective included:

- Preparation of the “State of National Accreditation” report that is called for under Goal 2.2 will be an excellent tool to use for carrying out this objective.
- The “data you can rely on” white paper will also be an effective tool to use in communicating with non-NELAP states.
- We should try to market to non-NELAP states through organizations such as ECOS, and ASTHO. These organizations are having virtual conferences also and we can look for opportunities to present.

Goal 1.2 Maintain and expand an effective national program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories.

Work with California to assist them with becoming a TNI AB.	Advocacy	Medium
Work with other states to assist them with becoming ABs.	Advocacy	Medium
Encourage NELAP ABs to accept an assessment conducted by a TNI-recognized third party assessor body and/or NGAB as appropriate.	Advocacy	Medium
Advocate key decisionmakers to establish a mandate for national accreditation based on the TNI standard for all media and all laboratories.	Advocacy	Medium
- Explore the feasibility of consolidating two-tier programs in NELAP states.	Advocacy	Medium
- Work with NELAP ABs to require accreditation for all laboratories.	Advocacy	Medium

Members noted that many of these objectives are tied together and they should be linked in the 2021 work plan. Members also noted that it will be difficult to consolidate two-tier programs in many states as well as requiring accreditation for all labs.

Goal 2.1 Enable and encourage stakeholders to participate in the activities of TNI.

Objectives	Assigned to	Priority
Provide routine communications/information to TNI members.	Advocacy, ED	On-going
Create and sustain a systematic approach for encouraging volunteers to become involved in TNI activities and ensure a pool of volunteers is available for all types of committees.	Advocacy and staff	High
Maintain and improve an orientation program for new members. Develop a webinar for new member orientation.	Advocacy	Medium

Comments and suggestions from members included:

- Delays in processing committee applications have been noted which could possibly result in volunteers becoming discouraged. Jerry reported that the application process and SOP have been revised since this issue was discussed at the Newport meeting. A new plan is in place, but it will require some database changes to fully implement.
- It was suggested that we should review applications periodically and recruit at certain times of the year. This might not work well for expert committees that are required to fill vacancies immediately.
- Jerry will follow up to determine the current status of application processing.
- An orientation program (webinar) for new members can be developed based on the new attendees’ program that we have used at annual conferences in the past. All members who have joined in the past year can be invited to view the webinar with a link provided when they join.
- Jerry and Sharon will begin working on an updated orientation presentation for new members.

Review of the strategic plan will be continued at the next meeting. Carol will begin putting together a work plan with related items grouped together to simplify the planning process.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be December 3, 2020, at 12 Noon Central time.

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	Absent
8.	Janice Willey	Federal	Absent
9.	Trinity O'Neal	Lab	Present
10.	Robin Cook	Lab	Absent
11.	Sharon Mertens	Lab	Present
12.	Teresa Coins	Lab	Present
13.	Josh Wyeth	PT provider	Present
	Associate Members		
	Kirstin Daigle	Lab	Absent
	Judy Morgan	Lab	Absent
	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	Present
	Paul Junio	TNI Ambassador	Present
	Lily Sanchez	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Silky Labie	Other	Absent
	Elizabeth Turner	Lab	Absent
	Stephanie Drier	AB	Absent
	Erin Consuegra	Lab	Absent
	Nan Thomey	Lab (other)	Absent
	Aurora Shields	TNI Ambassador	Absent
	Staff		
	Jerry Parr	TNI ED	Present
	Carol Batterton	TNI PA	Present