

TNI Board of Directors Meeting Summary January 28, 2014

1. Roll Call

Directors	Present
Joe Aiello	
Aaren Alger, Vice Chair	
Steve Arms	x
Judith Duncan	
Zonetta English	x
Jack Farrell	
Keith Greenaway	
Sharon Mertens, Chair	x
Judy Morgan	x
Patsy Root	
Scott Siders	
Alfredo Sotomayor	x
Dave Speis	x
Elizabeth Turner	
Susan Wyatt	
Ex-Officio Directors	
Brenda Bettencourt, EPA	
Brooke Connor, USGS	
George Detsis, DOE	
Jordan Adelson, DoD	
Staff	
Lynn Bradley	x
Carol Batterton	
Ken Jackson	x
Jerry Parr	x
Ilona Taunton	x
Janice Wlodarski	
Committee Chairs Present	
Richard Burrows, Chemistry	
Robin Cook, Microbiology	
Maria Freidman, SSAS	
Paul Junio, Quality Systems	
Shawn Kassner, PT Expert	
Chris Gunning for LAB	
Bob Wyeth, CSD EC	

Sharon opened the meeting by thanking everyone for a great conference, and noting that this meeting was entirely for the Board to receive summary reports from the various committee sessions of the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation. She asked that the presenter for each committee give the highlights of that session and also indicate how much time the group will need for conference in Washington, DC, in August. Reports are presented in the order given, below.

Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board – Jack Farrell, TNI representative (as relayed by Sharon)

ELAB has sent several letters to the US EPA with its recommendations on the helium shortage, comments on the Drinking Water Update Five, harmonizing methods across EPA regions, the MDL policy, and about the upcoming Methods Update Rule with suggestions for clarifying §136.7. Sharon noted that TNI will need to a new appointee to replace Jack as our representative, since he is due to rotate off of ELAB later this year.

Assessment Forum – Jack Farrell (in absentia)

DC – full day

There were at least a dozen first time attendees, and the “root cause” session was both lively and crowded. The microbiology session was well presented and the session on the new SIR process included a demonstration with yarn that was memorialized in several good photographs. Barbara Escobar is transitioning into leadership of the Forum but was unable to attend this conference.

NELAP Accreditation Council – Steve Arms

DC – ¼ day

The regular poll regarding implementation status of the 2009 TNI Standard showed that all ABs accept the new standard and are assessing against it either formally or informally even though not all have been able to adopt the new standard into regulations. The “old” evaluation cycle is phasing out as a new cycle begins. As a result of its evaluation, California decided to withdraw from NELAP and TNI will shortly issue an expanded statement with additional information about the follow-up activities and consequences of that withdrawal. The AC received a briefing on the database development plan for the generic application.

Laboratory Accreditation Systems Executive Committee – Judy Morgan

DC – ½ day

The committee briefed attendees on the improvements to the SIR backlog as well as the new SIR process, and explained that a number of Frequently Asked Questions are being compiled, with answers, for posting on the TNI website for those items that don't actually qualify as interpretation requests. Draft revisions to the Standards Review SOP 3-103 were reviewed in detail, and should be finalized at the committee meeting in February. The LAS received a briefing on the database development plan for the generic application and discussed some benefits of using this for both ABs as well as labs.

NEFAP Executive Committee – Kim Watson

DC – ¼ day

NEFAP will apply to the Policy Committee for approval of a Scope of Accreditation guidance document for ABs, and has also revised its Evaluation SOP 5-105. Accreditation of mobile labs overlaps NEFAP and NELAP and multiple issues need to be discussed with states to resolve a few difficult dilemmas.

Field Activities Expert Committee – Justin Brown

DC – no session but perhaps lunch meeting for stakeholder conversation with AC and DoD to discuss mobile labs

Feedback from the Standards Review Council was discussed, and overall, it was a valuable process. The revised standard goes next to Kim and the Executive Committee.

Non-Governmental Accreditation Body Workgroup – Alfredo Sotomayor

DC – ¼-½ day

This session reviewed the draft SOP for evaluating NGABs. That will be finalized and accompanying policies developed in time for the summer meeting in DC.

Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee – Bob Wyeth

DC – no meeting anticipated

An updated Standards Development SOP 2-100 is in use and awaiting final Board approval. The committee is developing guidance for format and version control of standards revisions, and that will

be coordinated with the existing document control SOP 1-104. Renewed charters from all Expert Committees are in development; Jerry asked to review those, in light of the 2014 budget, before posting. CSD will request that the Board approve a new expert committee for whole effluent toxicity (WET); a chair is needed for this. Jerry noted that he has received a request to form an Information Technology Expert Committee to support informatics for laboratory data.

Microbiology Expert Committee -- Robin Cook

DC – ½ day

There were too few ABs in the audience to completely address all desired issues, but they got good feedback and are moving to improve the standard.

Quality Systems Expert Committee – Paul Junio

DC – ½ day

QS reviewed the revised Small Lab Handbook.

Proficiency Testing Expert Committee – Shawn Kassner

DC – full day

The revised Volume 3 will be posted soon and there should be a Working Draft Standard for DC. The committee is beginning to revise Volume 4, and hoping that it will be non-controversial to remove the TNI requirements and put them into policies rather than the standard. There were a few minor cleanup items to Volumes 1 and 2. PT should have four volumes for comment at the DC meeting and hopefully a Voting Draft Standard by the end of 2014.

Radiation Expert Committee – Ilona Taunton

DC – full day

The committee will address comments on the Working Draft Standard in DC. Much progress was been made in Louisville.

Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee – Chris Gunning

DC – ¼ day

LAB received a full briefing on the draft Database Development Plan for the generic application, and will address this once more at its February teleconference. The plan, developed by the IT Committee and TNI's Database Administrator, Dan Hickman, is well done. Many concerns were raised at conference about the Third Party Assessor (Contract Assessor) web page, listing available assessors, with some assessor organizations claiming they did not receive the notification of its availability, but after discussion, it became obvious that some emails were simply overlooked. Additional individuals and organizations are expected to provide their completed templates in the near future, and the LAB will begin considering how to develop phase 3, the verification of qualifications.

Stationary Source Audit Sample Program – Maria Friedman

DC – no time

The group is focusing on growing the program for now.

Chemistry Expert Committee – Richard Burrows

DC – ½ day

The committee finished the response to comments on the calibration standard, which is now ready for the next state. Comments on the Minimum Detection Limit (MDL) draft were received from EPA, and the committee has addressed a few SIRs, resolving at least one response with others still in review.

Proficiency Testing Program Executive Committee – Ilona Taunton
DC – ½ day

This group worked hard for most of its full day session, and will be ready to finish its revisions to the acceptance limit SOP 4-101 and its program assessment procedures in DC. New Leadership is stepping up as Stacie and Eric complete their terms. There exists a need to address how to ensure that random concentrations of PT samples are really random. PTPEC is considering a possible micro subcommittee to address the question of whether qualitative PTs are needed.

Information Technology Committee – John Kuhn
DC – ½ day with functioning internet access

This committee has completed the draft database development plan for the generic application, which will benefit both labs and ABs, and sees an ongoing role in the future development of that database. They are concerned that LAMS is relatively unknown even within the TNI community, and that it is greatly underutilized, and envision a future webinar on enhancements to LAMS and getting data from it. Discussions of the method compendium included a beta-test demonstration; what remains now is to get the actual methods (or sources for purchase for proprietary methods) into LAMS. The number of methods to be linked to the Method Code table is vast. The committee charter has been reviewed and adopted, and they discussed with TNI's webmaster the transition to a new internet service provider (ISP).

Advocacy Committee – Steve Arms

DC – full day forum plus ½ day for committee business meeting

The Wednesday session discussed CA's withdrawal from NELAP and how TNI should present updated information. The conclusion was that we need to remain positive and factual when we update the current statement, and to ask that ACIL issue some comment on the impact of CA's withdrawal on the laboratory community. Newsletter timing was discussed but actual assignments were postponed until the February teleconference.

The Thursday session discussed the massive information-gathering exercise envisioned, in advance of the forum in DC. The summary purpose of this forum will be how can we improve and re-direct resources for a national program in the current "climate." FSMOs will be included, so that the terminology shifts to being a "national environmental accreditation program," rather than a "national lab accreditation program." Non-NELAP states will be contacted by phone during March, after an introductory letter sent in late February, and some webinars will be scheduled for June, for the lab community primarily but to include other stakeholders as well, leaving a month to synthesize information in advance of the August forum. We need also to include the federal agencies that we normally work with, and it was recommended that the NIST person who coordinates consensus standards and accreditation also be invited to participate. That forum will consist of a presentation of what was learned, some break-out sessions and then, after a lunch break, report-outs with further discussion.

Nominating Committee – Steve Arms

DC – no time

This group must be constituted shortly, and its task will include the procedures for ratifying ex-officio members, as included in the recent Bylaws revision.

Conference Planning Committee – Jerry Parr

DC – yes

Jerry counted that 15 of the 17 available sessions in DC are accounted for; perhaps there will be room for a mentor session after all. The theme for DC will be the "Future of Environmental Monitoring." Two keynote speakers have already been identified, including EPA Administrator Gina

McCarthy. The exhibits will include some next generation air monitoring as a technical showcase, and a boat cruise on the Potomac is planned for Wednesday evening.

Sharon thanked everyone for their reports, and for a great meeting, with special thanks to Jerry and the staff.