

Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Thursday, September 23, 2021 1:30 pm Eastern

1) Welcome and Introductions

Maria welcomed everyone to the meeting. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A. The minutes of July 22 and August 9 were approved by unanimous vote.

Lynn noted several staff updates that have recently been announced. Carol Batterton is completely retiring at the end of September and Lynn will take over staffing the Advocacy Committee. Also, Suzanne Rachmaninoff has announced her intent to retire after conference in January, and Paul Junio has been contracted to take over her responsibilities (with a few months transition time, as he learns). Paul plans to retain Chair of CSDEC but to step down from the Board when he assumes this role, and will likely minimize his involvement as associate member with other committees. NOTE: There will be four open Board seats for the January election, for various reason; Paul's will be one of them.

2) Approval of Revised Charter

The updated LASEC Charter, approved on May 27, 2021, was reviewed by Policy Committee and returned on September 16 with requested edits. Those edits were made and the revised document presented for re-approval. Jack moved that the revised Charter be approved and Harold seconded; the vote was unanimously in favor and the updated Charter (see Attachment 2, below) has been returned to Policy Committee for final approval.

3) SIR Issues

SIR 418 – this SIR was submitted by an AB but seemed to reflect an incident where a lab disputed a finding. Since both Chairs (NELAP AC and LASEC) deemed it to be not a valid SIR, it was referred to Dorothy (Vice Chair), as previously agreed, and she stated that she believed the issue in question needed to be clarified. With this disagreement, the decision was brought to the full committee.

Discussion points were as follows:

- If we're going to invalidate SIR submissions from labs when it's clear that a dispute is involved, we ought not to accept SIR submissions from ABs when there is a dispute.
- Requiring a resubmission of the SIR with rewording to omit any reference to a dispute is unnecessary – if the question is valid then it should be addressed.
- The whole point of the "dispute" issue is that a lab cannot hold up its response to an assessment finding while awaiting final SIR response – the assessment should proceed normally regardless of SIR submission.
- Different committee members clearly interpreted the section of the standard in question in different ways, indicating that the question does need an official interpretation.
- We ought not to allow this SIR to proceed, as having "dispute language" in a final SIR would make it clear that LASEC violated its own SOP.

- The AB could have simply asked other ABs how they handle the issue and avoided the time-consuming process of a SIR.

Lynn offered two options – either return a formal letter stating that the SIR is invalid but could be re-submitted or informally communicate to the submitter that we would prefer the SIR be withdrawn and then either resubmitted or have the AB ask other ABs.

Dorothy moved to informally ask for withdrawal and resubmission of the SIR if other ABs' explanations do not resolve the question, and David seconded the motion. In order to ensure the required two-thirds majority without a roll call vote, Maria asked for votes against (none) and abstentions (none), which left a unanimous approval by all 10 committee members present, meeting the two-thirds majority needed.

SIR Status update – Lynn provided a pdf of the summary statistics from the SIR tracking spreadsheet. This is not easy to read and several committee members have asked to see the full spreadsheet. Lynn is unwilling to distribute copies of the spreadsheet but will explore some sort of read-only link accessible to LASEC members only, and with the submitter information omitted. This would necessarily be a periodic viewing, not real-time access on-demand.

4) Update on Conversation between Maria and Paul Junio, CSDEC Chair

Maria and Paul have discussed LASEC's request that the status of SIRs discussed in the various expert committees be clarified, to eliminate confusion about whether labs are supposed to implement the SIR response that results from the discussion and approval by the expert committee(s) and to provide disclaimer language for the expert committees to use in their minutes, advising that the SIR is not "final" until it is actually posted to the TNI website, as there are several additional steps beyond the expert committee response that must be completed. Maria explained that Paul intends to write a memo to the expert committee chairs, but so far, this has not happened. Maria will follow-up with Paul.

5) New Business

Lynn noted that several additional mentors are needed for TNI's new Mentor Program. There are currently 8 labs requesting mentors and only 6 mentor volunteers, so any LASEC members interested in mentoring a lab should please contact Jerry Parr. Most but not all of the labs requesting mentors are in California.

6) Next Meeting

The next teleconference meeting will be **Thursday, October 28, 2021, at 1:30 pm Eastern time**. An agenda and documents will be provided prior to the meeting.

The next SIR Subcommittee meeting is planned for Thursday, October 21, 2021, at 1:30 pm.

For November and December, to avoid conflict with major holidays, both full committee and SIR Subcommittee meetings will be held at 1:30 pm Eastern on the third Thursdays, November 18 and December 16, with the subcommittee meeting immediately following

the full committee meeting.

**Attachment A TNI LABORATORY ACCREDITATION SYSTEMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ROSTER**

	NAME	EMAIL	Term End Date	INTEREST	AFFILIATION	S/H CATEGORY	PRESENT
1	Maria Friedman, Chair	gamfriedman@gmail.com	1/23 (first term)	SIRs	CA ELAP	AB	Yes
2	Dorothy Love, Vice Chair	dorothylove@eurofinsus.com	1/22 (2nd term)	Mentor Session	Eurofins Environmental	Lab	Yes
3	Aaren Alger	Aaren.s.alger@gmail.com	1/23 (first term)	SIRs	Alger Consulting & Training	Other	Yes
4	David Caldwell	david.caldwell@deq.ok.gov	1/23 (first term)	Assmt. Forum, SIRs	OK DEQ	NELAP AB	Yes
5	Sumy Cherukara	Cherukara.sumy@epa.gov	1/23 (2nd term)		EPA R2	Other	Yes
6	Stacie Crandall	scrandall@hrsd.com	1/24 (first term)	SIRs	Hampton Roads Sanitation Distr.	Lab	Yes
7	Mike Delaney	mike@mikedelaney.org	1/23 (first term)		Retired (MWRA)	Other	No
8	Jack Farrell	aex@ix.netcom.com	1/22 (first term)	Mentor Session	Analytical Excellence	Other	Yes
9	Silky Labie	elcatllc@centurylink.net	1/21 (first term)	SIRs	ELCAT	Other	No
10	Bill Hall	George.Hall@des.nh.gov	1/22 (first term)		NH ELAP	NELAP AB	No
11	Harold Longbaugh	harold.longbaugh@houstontx.gov	1/23 (2nd term)	SIRs	Houston Lab	Lab	Yes
12	Louise McGinley	louise.mcginley@tceq.texas.gov	1/22 (first term)	SIRs	TCEQ	NELAP AB	Yes
13	Michele Potter	michele.potter@dep.nj.gov	1/21 (first term)		NJ DEP	NELAP AB	Yes

Associate Members

	Debbie Bond	DBOND@southernco.com			Alabama Power	Lab	Yes
	Myron Gunsalus	ngunsalus@kdheks.gov			KS Lab Director	NELAP AB	No
	Carl Kircher	carl.kircher@doh.state.fl.us		SIRs	FL DOH	NELAP AB	Yes
	Mitzi Miller	mitzi.miller@moellerinc.com		Mentor Session & Assmt Forum	Dade Moeller	Other	No
	Judy Morgan	Judy.Morgan@pacelabs.com		Assessment Forum	Pace Analytical	Lab/FSMO	No
	William Ray	Bill_Ray@williamrayllc.com			Wm Ray Consultants	Other	No
	Mohan Sabaratnam	msabaratnam@iasonline.org			IAS	AB (non-gov.)	No
	Scott Siders	siders6six@yahoo.com		Mentor Session	Retired	Other	No
	Nick Straccione	nstraccione@emsl.com		Mentor Session	EMSL	Lab	Yes
	Katie Strothman	katie@sanderslabs.net			Sanders Labs	Lab	No
	Program Admin. Lynn Bradley	Lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org					Yes

Laboratory Accreditation Systems Executive Committee

2021 Charter

(September 23, 2021)

Mission

Manage TNI's efforts in supporting a national program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories by supporting the NELAP Accreditation Bodies (ABs) and non-governmental ABs (NGABs) recognized to accredit to the TNI Environmental Laboratory Sector (ELS) Standard, enabling stakeholders such as laboratories, proficiency testing providers and data users to effectively participate in the development of, adoption and implementation of, and compliance with the TNI standards.

Composition of the Committee

1. This is a balanced committee, with members representing each core TNI program.
2. Members serve staggered three-year terms.
3. Ex Officio members include TNI's Small Laboratory Advocate as well as the TNI Executive Director.
4. A number of associate members are active participants.

Objectives

1. Work in cooperation with the NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) to assist in implementing this program.

Goal: Provide timely and thorough review and feedback to NELAP AC on TNI standards, policies and SOPs as needed or requested.

- **Success Measure:** Acceptance of final document without revision combined with implementation of document without need for interpretation or other consideration.
- **Success Measure:** Review time does not exceed established timeline for the activity.

Goal: Ensure that laboratory assessors, regulators, QA managers and technical managers have an organized forum at every TNI conference to discuss common issues (Assessment Forum). Organize each Assessment Forum to address subjects that are current to the stakeholder community, hot topics or topics recommended by attendees.

- **Success Measure:** Attendance at or above average for the conference size. Overall ratings of 3.5/5.0 or greater.

Goal: Oversee a mentoring program to assist both laboratories and accreditation bodies with implementing accreditation programs. Ensure that Mentor Sessions are organized at every TNI conference to provide expanded and detailed information on issues that are key to successful implementation.

- **Success Measure:** Attendance at or above average for the conference size. Overall ratings of 3.5/5.0 or greater.

2. Work with the Consensus Standard Development Program Executive Committee to ensure that new or revised accreditation standards developed for this program are suitable for use by reviewing standards and by considering AB and laboratory needs early in the development process.

Goal: Utilize and maintain SOP 3-106 to ensure that suitability is being assessed in accordance with the needs of the ABs and accredited labs.

- **Success Measure:** Documents are successfully accepted as recommended.

Goal: Perform reviews in a timely manner to allow for conformance to the timelines established in SOP 3-106, 2-100, and 3-103.

- **Success Measure:** Review time does not exceed established timeline for the activity.

3. Manage the Standards Interpretation Request (SIR) process to ensure that all SIRs meeting the requirements of SOP 3-105 are successfully addressed. Engage the assistance of Expert and Executive Committees as appropriate for standards interpretations, guidance documents and related tools. Manage development of Implementation Guidance in accordance with SOP 3-114, as needed.

Goal: Utilize a subcommittee to discuss, handle, and process SIR's. This committee has delegated authority to act on behalf of LASEC for SIR decisions and will provide a summary to the LASEC quarterly.

- **Success Measure:** Determine validity of Standards Interpretation Requests within 5 business days from submittal, using criteria in SOP 3-105.
- **Success Measure:** Successfully resolve SIR via written process so that the majority of interpretations result in a favorable AC vote upon initial submittal.

4. Prepare and deliver an Annual Report for previous year and Work Plan for the coming year for the Annual Meeting or when requested by the Executive Director.

- **Success Measure:** Work plan design and any subsequent revisions are approved by the TNI Board.

Available Resources:

- Volunteer committee members
- TNI web site for on-line storage, maintenance and archiving of SOPs, Policies, SIRs and related documents
- Existing national and international consensus-based standards
- Teleconference and A/V services
- Program Administrator support
- Other TNI Committees
- Participating organizations and other entities as the committee sees fit, that pertain to our mission

Anticipated Meeting Schedule:

- Teleconferences: regular schedule of calls to be published on the TNI website.
- Face-to-face meetings as needed at TNI conferences.