

Summary of the NELAP Accreditation Council Meeting

November 7, 2011

1. Roll call and Approval of Minutes

The NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) met at 1:30 pm EST on November 7, 2011. Minutes of the October 17 meeting were approved. Those members and guests in attendance are listed in Attachment 1. In the absence of the Chair, the Vice Chair conducted the first part of the meeting; when the Chair arrived, she took over.

2. Updates on AB Renewals

Lynn reported on the status of ongoing evaluations:

CA – completeness review underway

FL – technical review underway, onsite scheduled for week of November 14. Request from a 3rd party to “observe” discussed after updates completed

KS – granted extension until Dec. 31, 2011, to complete corrective actions.

LA DHH – site report in final preparation stages, now that observation is complete.

NH – awaiting onsite report.

NJ – technical review is report sent, onsite being scheduled

NY – response to onsite report undergoing team review

PA – site visit report in preparation

UT – response to onsite report being reviewed by team

Lynn noted that Virginia has determined that it cannot provide a NELAP assessor (2nd person) for the planned OR evaluation, which Cathy Westerman has agreed to lead. Steve Stubbs asked if one of the states in that region (particularly CA) could provide someone to meet the NELAP assessor requirement, and George volunteered Fred Choske; Fred did agree to join the OR team. Fred has also led the UT evaluation, which is nearing completion.

Lynn stated that Mitzi Miller and Eric Smith were notified that none of the ABs had objection to introducing a TIA for the PT standard. (NOTE: this was discussed at the TNI Board meeting on November 9. The Consensus Standards Development Executive Committee had previously determined that such a TIA was not possible due to potential controversy, but will reconsider after discussion of additional aspects of the issue.)

3. Discussion of Request to Observe an Evaluation

The remainder of the meeting was spent considering the implications and ramifications of Jack Farrell's request to join the Florida evaluation site visit as an “observer.” Jack did complete the evaluator training, in Savannah, and had approached Florida and the Lead Evaluator for the FL evaluation, Michelle Wade, with a request to observe the evaluation

process (at his own expense.) Neither FL nor Michelle objected to this, although FL did ask that he not participate in the observation of an assessment, due to the sheer numbers of people involved (4 assessors and 2 observers, already.)

Lynn mentioned that Jerry Parr had observed that, with the potential of privatizing the FL AB's operations looming again for 2012, having a third party who was familiar with FL's operations might be valuable. Steve Arms noted that he was unaware of this aspect of the request.

The AC has already begun discussions about how to change the evaluation process to accommodate EPA's withdrawal from full participation in each team; process changes and the use of third party evaluators (TPEs) have been raised as options.

Several AB representatives expressed concern that Jack's participation in the FL evaluation would give a "competitive advantage" if TPEs are used. Others were concerned that some precedent-setting aspect of a hastily considered approval of this might arise to haunt us in the future.

One point of agreement within the AC was that, since the AC approves evaluation teams, so if Jack were to actually participate in onsite reviews, his addition to the team would need to be approved by the AC; for him to merely observe the activity, at the invitation of the FL AB, would be entirely up to FL.

Lynn noted that the training is available, for free, online, and that others could take the training and potentially request to observe any of the remaining evaluations. It was noted that Jack's participation could be considered a "pilot."

Considerations of conflict of interest were discussed at length – what if a potential or actual TPE were contracted (either currently or historically) to the AB being evaluated? What about cost differences among evaluators, since either TNI or the AB would need to pay for the TPE time and travel, instead of just travel?

Eventually, the group reached consensus that Jack be asked not to participate in the FL evaluation, and Michelle agreed to convey this position to Jack. At the same time, the AC built a consensus that, as a start to the long-range evolution of the evaluation process, the online evaluator training should be opened up to any individual desiring to take it.

Scott Hoatson moved, and Steve Stubbs seconded, that the AC make a formal request to the TNI Board of Directors, to open up the NELAP evaluator training to anyone who wishes to take it. This would provide flexibility for future changes that might be adopted by the Council. Of the 14 members present, there were a chorus of ayes, no nays, and 3 abstentions; since this was not an "accreditation issue," a roll call vote was not taken and email voting by the absent member will not be offered. Lynn will transmit this request to Jerry for the December Board meeting (the November agenda was already created at the time of the motion's passage.)

There was some further discussion that third party assessors are being looked at by the Laboratory Accreditation Body Expert Committee, including criteria for qualifying them, and that this process might inform how the AC eventually handles TPEs.

4. Next meeting

The next AC meeting will be Monday November 21, at 1:30 pm EST. Agenda items (thus far) will be:

- Welcome and Roll Call
- Approval of Minutes
- Update on Renewals
- Vote on PA renewal recommendation (letter distributed Nov. 9)
- Alternative approaches to evaluation (Paul Ellingson, QAO) to include request for straw poll by KS, about whether other ABs would be interested in “borrowing” assessors, if the originating AB pays travel, as a way of supplementing staff
- Update from LAS EC about using assessment reports from federal accreditations (Kristin and/or Lynn)
- Other issues that may appear before the meeting convenes

Attachment 1

STATE	REPRESENTATIVE	PRESENT
CA	George Kulasingam T: (510) 620-3155 F: (510) 620-3165 E: gkulasin@cdph.ca.gov	yes
	Alternate: Jane Jensen E: jjensen@cdph.ca.gov	no
FL	Stephen Arms T: (904) 791-1502 F: (904) 791-1591 E: steve_arms@doh.state.fl.us	yes
	Alternate: Carl Kircher E: carl_kircher@doh.state.fl.us	no
IL	Scott Siders T: (217) 785-5163 F: (217) 524-6169 E: scott.siders@illinois.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBA	
KS	Michelle Wade E: MWade@kdheks.gov Ph: (785) 296-6198 Fax: (785) 296-1638	yes
	Alternate: none	no
LA DEQ	Paul Bergeron T: 225-219-3247 F: 225-325-8244 E: Paul.Bergeron@la.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBD	
LA DHH	Donnell Ward T: E: donnell.ward@la.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBD	
MN	Susan Wyatt T: 651.201.5323 F: E: susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	no

	Alternate: Stephanie Drier E: stephanie.drier@state.mn.us	no
NH	Bill Hall T: (603) 271-2998 F: (603) 271-5171 E: george.hall@des.nh.gov	yes
	Alternate: TBD	
NJ	Joe Aiello T: (609) 633-3840 F: (609) 777-1774 E: joseph.aiello@dep.state.nj.us	yes
	Alternate : TBD	
NY	Stephanie Ostrowski T: (518) 485-5570 F: (518) 485-5568 E: seo01@health.state.ny.us	yes
	Alternate: Dan Dickinson E: dmd15@health.state.ny.us	no
OR	Gary Ward T: 503-693-4122 F: 503-693-5602 E: gary.k.ward@state.or.us	no
	Alternate: Scott Hoatson T: (503) 693-5786 E: hoatson.scott@deq.state.or.us	yes
PA	Aaren Alger T: (717) 346-8212 F: (717) 346-8590 E: aaalger@state.pa.us	yes
	Alternate: Dwayne Burkholder E: dburkholde@state.pa.us	
TX	Stephen Stubbs T: (512) 239-3343 F: (512) 239-4760 E: sstubbs@tceq.state.tx.us	yes
	Alternate: Steve Gibson E: igibson@tceq.state.tx.us	no

UT	David Mendenhall T: (801) 584-8470 F: (801) 584-8501 E: davidmendenhall@utah.gov	yes
	Alternate: Kristin Brown E: kristinbrown@utah.gov	yes
VA	Cathy Westerman T: 804-648-4480 ext.391 E: cathy.westerman@dgs.virginia.gov	yes
	Alternate: Ed Shaw T: 804-648-4480 ext.152 E: ed.shaw@dgs.virginia.gov	no
	NELAP AC Program Administrator and Evaluation Coordinator Lynn Bradley T: 540-885-5736 E: lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org	yes
EPA Liaison	Arthur Clark T: 617-918-8374 F: 617-918-8274 E: clark.arthur@epa.gov	yes
EPA Liaison effective 2012	Marvelyn Humphrey T: (281) 983-2140 E: Humphrey.Marvelyn@epa.gov	no
	Quality Assurance Officer Paul Ellingson T: 801-201-8166 E: altasnow@gmail.com	yes
	Oklahoma: David Caldwell	yes
	Guests:	