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**SUMMARY OF THE
TNI
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING**

JANUARY 31, 2007

The Policy Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met on January 31, 2007 at 8:30 AM (MT) in Denver, Colorado, as part of the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation.

Chairperson Mr. Alfredo Sotomayor, of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, led the meeting. A list of committee members is given in Attachment A. A list of the action items generated during this meeting is included in Attachment B. The meeting agenda is given in Attachment C.

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, LOGISTICS

Committee members present introduced themselves and stated the program they were representing.

Attendees received copies of a set of administrative policies developed by Mr. Jerry Parr for the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA), a policy developed by the TNI Nominating Committee for seeking nominations to the TNI Board, and a set of procedures for expert committee operations developed under INELA.

Mr. Sotomayor reviewed the agenda and noted that some items were not expected to be completed or resolved during the meeting, but had been included to determine how the committee would propose to address them.

MISSION OF POLICY COMMITTEE

The committee briefly reviewed its mission, which at its broadest, is to serve as a resource for the development of policies under the direction of the TNI Board. To accomplish this, the committee develops general policies for TNI, reviews policies for conformity of style and consistency with the mission of TNI, and evaluates request for policies received by the membership for recommendation to the TNI Board.

Mr. Sotomayor noted that he envisioned each TNI program as being autonomous and capable of developing its own policies and procedures. He emphasized that the Policy Committee would serve as a resource to TNI programs and would only develop policies that had wide applicability within the institute. Each TNI program is represented in the Policy Committee and this ensures that the committee can receive feedback from and disseminate information to the entire institute.

Mr. Parr discussed possibilities for his involvement in the committee. He asked whether he should serve in an ex-officio capacity or as a full member. The committee recognized that Mr. Parr's participation was essential because all the committee's decisions potentially affected TNI's Executive Director, but postponed making a decision on the level of his participation.

POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND TASKS

To help frame the committee's discussion, Mr. Sotomayor discussed how these terms were related. Policies, procedures, and task outlines move from the general to the more specific. Policies describe what should be done and reflect management, in the broadest sense, decisions. Procedures describe who does what and when by listing in order the steps a team or a group take to complete an action loop. Task outlines explain how to accomplish a procedure and list in order the actions one person takes to complete a procedure step or a series of steps.

Usually, boards and governance bodies establish policies. To implement a policy, teams or committees create procedures. Those in charge of completing specific steps in a procedure usually draft task outlines.

IDENTIFYING NEED FOR SPECIFIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The committee reviewed a list of needed policies and procedures: standard operating procedure (SOP) for developing policies and procedures, committee operations, conflicts of interest, travel reimbursement, purchasing, and decision making by TNI Program Boards.

Mr. Sotomayor clarified that the last item stemmed from an inquiry from Mr. Daniel Hickman, chair of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) Board, regarding how that body would make decisions. Mr. Hickman envisioned a two-tier process for making decisions. For decisions regarding recognition of an Accreditation Body (AB), Mr. Hickman felt that a unanimous vote was necessary and that a negative vote from any recognized AB would prevent a prospective AB from getting recognition. Mr. Hickman felt that other decisions could be made by a simple majority vote. Mr. Sotomayor agreed with Mr. Hickman's reasoning and advised him to formalize that Board's decision making rule and process. Mr. Sotomayor felt that other programs would find general direction on making decisions useful, and that was why he added that to the list of topics for policies and procedures.

An attendee addressed the committee expressing some concern about the nature of the boards governing programs and in particular, the composition of the Proficiency Testing (PT) Board and the manner in which the board was constituted. The attendee felt that the PT Board should not have a member representing PT providers because of the high probability that conflicts of interest would arise. The attendee also was concerned that there would be confidential and proprietary information that would have to be discussed by the PT Board and many providers would be reluctant to share such information if the PT Board had an active PT provider as a member. The attendee was also concerned that PT Board members were not fully elected by the membership and that there was no limit to the number of Boards to which a member could be appointed or elected.

The committee explained that the Partnership Planning Team (PPT) recommended constituting the PT Board with representatives of all constituencies. To that effect, the PPT recommended including accredited laboratories as part of the PT Board. It seemed logical then to include PT providers on the Board, since they were the only constituents that were not represented. The PPT discussed at length the potential for conflicts of interest from the participation of PT providers on the board. To lessen the potential the PPT considered several options, and in the end deferred the final composition of the PT Board to the interim TNI Board. The TNI Board,

after some discussion agreed that the PT Provider seat would be limited to two years and assigned the seat holder the responsibility of communicating with all PT providers.

Mr. Sotomayor asked attendees whether there were other specific policies and procedures that the committee should be developing. After a brief discussion, the committee noted that it would be helpful to develop policies or procedures defining what groups could be constituted as boards, committees, or subcommittees. Attendees also noted that clear policies on communication with members and stakeholders could be established, as well as a general policy on appeals of final decisions. Finally, participants agreed that an organizational chart that included all existing programs, boards, committees, and subcommittees would help the membership understand the breadth and composition of TNI.

OTHER FUNCTIONS OF THE POLICY COMMITTEE

Attendees reviewed a list of other functions that had been assigned to the committee: establishing communication routes with TNI Programs regarding policies and procedures, designing a template for TNI policies and procedures, reviewing policies and procedures from TNI programs, and evaluating requests for policies from TNI members.

The committee and attendees agreed that the list was fairly comprehensive. The committee reiterated that it would focus on process and would defer most content matter to the individual TNI programs.

FUTURE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The committee agreed to postpone the discussion about future meetings. Mr. Sotomayor will poll members electronically to determine the best day and time to schedule regular meetings.

REVIEWING EXISTING PROCEDURE ON COMMITTEE OPERATIONS

The committee dedicated the rest of the meeting to discussing a draft policy on committee operations that had been developed by Program Structure and Policy Committee of INELA and that the Consensus Standards Development Program (CSDP) intended to revise and adopt. The Policy Committee wanted to use the draft as the basis to develop a generic policy for the operation of all TNI committees. A copy of the draft policy is included in Attachment D.

The policy developed by the committee would be a general overriding policy that would be in effect when individual programs lacked one. Once the CSDP adopted a policy, that policy would govern the operation of committees in that program. The Policy Committee would review all policies to ensure consistency and avoid conflicting requirements. Attendees discussed whether the same policy and procedures would apply to TNI Boards and Administrative Committees. The committee could not decide whether a single policy and procedure document could be used for all TNI units, but agreed that whether in a single or multiple documents, guidance needed to be provided.

The section in the INELA policy on committees and duties would be adapted to reflect committees other than the CSDP ones. The section on committee composition would have to address when maintaining balance would be mandatory, the number of members a committee

could have, and any restrictions on membership. Participants discussed item 2.3.3 and reaffirmed that an organization or entity should not have more than one member in a committee.

Discussing item 2.4.9, attendees noted that that process would not apply to the TNI Board, since the TNI Board would be elected. The committee added that the policy would have to advise about the degree of autonomy that programs would have to appoint members. The committee concluded that the policy and procedure document would need to address the use of nomination forms, the periodicity of appointments, restrictions to appointments, and the retention of nomination documents. The committee could not clarify whether a membership committee would have an active role in the process.

The policy's section on terms and appointments would need to consider the duration and rotation of appointments, procedures to address upsets in balance, selection of chairs and other committee officers. In reviewing item 2.5.2, attendees discussed setting aside a section to deal with the NELAP and TNI Boards. Participants noted that a committee chair should have authority to remove a member to re-establish balance in a committee bound by balance rules. Attendees agreed that procedures for maintaining balance were critical. Attendees felt that item 2.5.3 should address whether members of the TNI Board would be allowed to serve on other boards.

The policy would need to include the rules used by committees to make decisions and whether different rules would be needed for different types of decisions. Discussing item 2.6, the Policy Committee felt that not all committees would need or want a Vice-Chair so the election of that officer could be optional. Attendees noted that the interactions between the TNI Board and other boards regarding the removal of a committee chair had to be clarified.

The committee discussed briefly the use of charters to guide committee activities and how the documents could help to set committee work plans. Attendees felt that charters should be approved by the TNI Board and that they should be posted for all members to review.

The policy designed by the committee would need to contain information on types of meetings committees could hold as well as scheduling the meetings, notification requirements, documenting meeting proceedings and rules governing meeting conduct.

Other topics that the committee considered for inclusion in the policy were conflicts of interest and procedures for appealing decisions about committee appointments. Mr. Jerry Parr agreed to forward the committee the American Association's Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA) policy on conflicts of interest that could be used as a starting model.

NEXT STEPS

The committee will establish a schedule for meetings and will set priorities for developing identified policies and procedures.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 (MT).

COMMITTEE MEMBERS
TNI
POLICY COMMITTEE
JANUARY 31, 2007

Member		
Alfredo Sotomayor, Chair	Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources	T: 608-266-9257 E: Alfredo.Sotomayor@dnr.state.wi.us
JoAnn Boyd		T: 210-522-2169 E: jboyd@swri.org
RaeAnn Haynes		T: 503-229-5983 x227 E: haynes.raeann@deq.state.or.us
Silky Labie	Florida Department of Environmental Protection	T : 850-245-8065 E : silky.labie@dep.state.fl.us

<p>Carol Schrenkel (Absent)</p>	<p>Technical Assistance</p>	<p>T : 610-280-3013 E : schrenkc@lionvillelab.com</p>
<p>Steve Stubbs</p>		<p>T : 512-239-3343 E : sstubbs@tceq.state.tx.us</p>

Robert Wyeth
(Absent)

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Advocacy

**TNI
POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING
JANUARY 31, 2007**

ACTION ITEMS GENERATED AT THIS MEETING

Item No. Meeting Date	Action	Date to be Completed
1. 01/31/07	Mr. Sotomayor will contact committee members to determine suitable dates for committee teleconferences.	02/28/07
2. 01/31/07	Mr. Sotomayor will set priorities for developing policies and procedures needed by TNI.	02/28/07
3. 01/31/07	Mr. Parr will forward the committee A2LA's policy on conflicts of interest.	02/28/07

The NELAC Institute
Policy Committee

Forum on Laboratory Accreditation
Wednesday, January 31, 2007
8:30 –12:00 Noon

Welcome, Introductions, Logistics

Mission of Policy Committee

Policies, Procedures, and Tasks

Identifying Need for Specific Policies and Procedures

- General SOP for Developing Policies and Procedures
- Committee Operations
- Conflicts of Interest
- Travel Reimbursement
- Purchasing
- Decision Making by TNI Program Boards

Establishing Communication Routes with TNI Programs

Designing a Template for TNI Policies and Procedures

Reviewing Policies and Procedures from TNI Programs

Evaluating Requests for Policies from TNI Members

Future Policy Committee Meetings

Reviewing Existing Procedure on Committee Operations

Next Steps

Adjournment

**INSTITUTE FOR NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY
ACCREDITATION
PROCEDURES FOR COMMITTEE OPERATIONS
Revised July 2006**

1 GENERAL

1.1 Purpose

These procedures govern the operations of INELA standing committees. The INELA by-laws give the Board of Directors responsibility for appointing such standing and special committees as deemed necessary to further the objectives of the Institute. INELA has two types of standing committees: expert committees and administrative committees. The board may also appoint special committees as needed.

1.2 Scope

These procedures shall apply to the membership and operation of all Expert and Administrative committees.

2.0 COMMITTEES

2.1 Expert Committees and Duties

2.1.1 INTRODUCTION

The duties of Expert Committees include development and maintenance of a standard for the accreditation of environmental laboratories. Expert Committees may also develop guidance documents. The number and scope of Expert Committees may not necessarily be limited to the list in Section 2.1.2.

2.1.2 COMMITTEES AND DUTIES

2.1.2.1 *Proficiency Testing Committee.* This committee develops a standard for laboratory proficiency testing and proficiency testing samples, including: criteria for selection of the providers of the samples; protocols for the use of proficiency test samples and data in the accreditation of laboratories; and criteria for Proficiency Test Oversight Bodies/Proficiency Test Provider Accreditors (PTOB/PTPA).

2.1.2.2 *On-Site Assessment Committee.* This committee develops a standard for on-site assessments, and publishes standard checklists based on these procedures. This standard also addresses the minimum frequency of assessment, and the minimum education, experience, and training requirements of assessors.

2.1.2.3 *Accreditation Process Committee.* This committee develops a standard for the process of accreditation of environmental laboratories, including the requirements for accreditation,

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procedures for changes in accreditation status, roles and responsibilities of laboratories, and appeal processes.

2.1.2.4 *Quality Systems Committee*. This committee develops a standard for the quality systems in environmental laboratories. The elements of the quality system include organizational structure, responsibilities, procedures, processes, and resources (e.g., facilities, staff, equipment) for implementing quality management in testing operations.

2.1.2.5 *Accreditation Body Committee*. This committee develops the standard for operation of accreditation bodies.

2.1.2.6 *Field Activities Committee*. This committee develops a standard for the accreditation of field sampling and measurement organizations (FSMO).

2.2 Administrative Committees and Duties

2.2.1 Introduction

Administrative Committees help carry out the day-to-day functions of the Institute.

2.2.2 Committees and Duties

2.2.2.1 Program Policy and Structure Committee. This committee establishes administrative procedures and policies. This committee also develops modifications to the scope, structure, and requirements of laboratory accreditation.

2.2.2.2 Implementation Support Committee.

2.2.2.3 National Database Committee.

2.2.2.4 Public Affairs Committee.

2.2.2.5 Website Committee.

2.3 Committee Composition

2.3.1 Committees shall consist of:

Committee Members whose votes are tallied to determine the passage or failure of a voting item, and whose votes with comments must be brought to resolution for passage of the voting item; and

Associate Committee Members whose votes are not tallied to determine the passage or failure of a voting item, and whose votes with comments must be brought to resolution for passage of the voting item. Every INELA member is an Associate Committee Member of every Expert and Administrative Committee.

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- 2.3.2 All Committee Members and Associate Committee Members must have individual INELA membership, or must be Affiliates as described in the INELA Bylaws. The number of Committee Members on any Committee shall be not less than five (5) and not more than fifteen (15).
- 2.3.3 No organization may have more than one Committee Member at any one time on a particular Administrative Committee. An organization is a company, state government, EPA Program/Office/Region, or other federal agency.
- 2.3.4 INELA will maintain balance of interests on Expert Committees and will attempt to achieve balance of interests on administrative and special committees.

2.4 Procedures for Joining Committees as Committee Members

- 2.4.1 Committees will publicize no later than October 1 of each calendar year the number of openings available on the committee and the interest categories needed for additional Committee Members. Applications for committee membership will be accepted for 30 days after the announcement of committee vacancies.
- 2.4.2 INELA members or affiliates can nominate themselves or be nominated by another individual to be Committee Members. Any INELA member may apply to join any Committee by completing and returning the nomination form provided on the INELA web site (www.inela.org) and entitled Nomination Form for Membership on INELA Committees. Instructions for returning the completed form to INELA are also provided.
- 2.4.3 Nominees must be able to:
- Represent an affected party or stakeholder;
 - Cooperate effectively with other affected parties or stakeholders;
 - Communicate with affected parties or stakeholders;
 - Commit a significant amount of time over a multi-year period;
 - Understand the technical and/or policy issues pertaining to national environmental laboratory accreditation; and
 - Contribute substantively to the issues assigned to the Committee.
- 2.4.4 **AN INDIVIDUAL MAY SERVE ON AN EXPERT COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATIVE COMMITTEES CONCURRENTLY, BUT NO INDIVIDUAL MAY SERVE AS A COMMITTEE MEMBER ON MORE THAN ONE EXPERT COMMITTEE CONCURRENTLY.**
- 2.4.5 Every nominee must declare one interest category as described in INELA Policies Governing Standards Development, Section 1.3.7. The declared interest category will be confirmed by the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors with the concurrence of the Board of Directors, before the nomination may move forward for consideration by the Committee Members.
- 2.4.6 Upon receipt of a nomination form, INELA staff will review the form to verify that the information is complete and sufficient for the committee chairs to consider the potential

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Committee Member. If the nomination form requires additional information, INELA staff will return it to the sender with instructions about the required additional material.

- 2.4.7 INELA staff will maintain a record that tracks the nomination forms received and their status.
- 2.4.8 Once a nomination form is considered complete, it will be forwarded to the chair(s) of the committee(s) that the individual has been nominated for, in addition to all other committee chairs for consideration. The nominee will also be informed within sixty (60) days of receipt of the nomination that the nomination is under consideration.
- 2.4.9 No later than December 1, the Committee Members of each Committee will identify any new Committee Members who are to be appointed the following calendar year, and will recommend their appointment to the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors.
- 2.4.10 Appointments of Committee Members will be confirmed by the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors, and will normally become effective on January 1. If openings exist on a committee, new Committee Members may be appointed at any time during the year, such appointment being immediately effective, and having a term beginning on January 1 of the year the individual joined the committee.
- 2.4.11 Committee Member nominees will be informed about the disposition of their nomination at the time new committee lists are posted on the INELA web site (December - January). An individual not selected to join a Committee as a Committee Member may participate as an Associate Committee Member.
- 2.4.12 Committees will publicize, on the INELA website, the number of openings available on the committee and the interest categories needed/desired for additional Committee Members.

2.5 Committee Members Terms of Appointment

- 2.5.1 Committee Members are appointed to three-year terms that are staggered so that members rotate off each year. Any member who has completed a first term may be nominated for a second three-year term, but no member may serve more than two (2) three-year terms consecutively. If a member resigns before his/her term of appointment is complete, the Committee Chair may nominate another individual from the same or another organization to complete the resigning member's term.
- 2.5.2 Any Committee Member who changes employment during his or her term of office must again declare one interest category (as defined in Section 1.3.7 of the Policies Governing Standards Development). In the case of an Expert Committee, if the criteria for balance (Section 2.3.2 of the Policies Governing Standards Development) are no longer met, the Committee Member will be removed from the Expert Committee unless balance can be re-established by immediately appointing one or more new Committee Members. In addition, any Committee Member who does not continue to meet the requirements of Section 2.4.3 (above) will be removed from the Committee.

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- 2.5.3 Members of the Board of Directors may serve as Committee Members on any Committee.
- 2.5.4 Each Committee shall select a Chair from among its Committee Members, and the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors shall confirm the appointment of the Committee Chair with the endorsement of the Board of Directors. After obtaining concurrence from the Board of Directors, the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors has the authority to remove any Committee Chair from that office.
- 2.5.5 Any Committee Member who is absent from three (3) successive meetings of the Committee (including telephone conferences) or who is absent from at least 50% of the meetings in a six month period will, on the recommendation of the Committee Chair, be removed by the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors with concurrence of the Board of Directors as a Committee Member. It is permissible to hold closed meetings when matters relating to the removal of a member are discussed.
- 2.5.6 For an official vote of a Committee to pass, a two thirds majority of the members must vote in favor of the item.
- 2.5.7 In order for a Committee Member to be eligible to vote at the committee level, an individual must have been a Committee Member of the Committee continuously during the three-month period preceding the vote. Any Expert Committee Member who does not participate in any three (3) consecutive committee votes on a Draft Interim Standard will be removed from the committee.

2.6 Committee Leadership

Each Committee shall select a Chair from among its Committee Members, and the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors shall confirm the appointment of the Committee Chair with the endorsement of the Board of Directors. After obtaining concurrence from the Board of Directors, the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors has the authority to remove any Committee Chair from that office. With the exception of a newly formed committee, the Chair shall have at least one year's experience on the committee. The committee shall elect a Vice Chair who normally will assume the duties of the Chair at the expiration of the Chair's term of office. The Chair may appoint any additional officers necessary for efficient operation of the committee.

2.7 Committee Charter

Committees shall have a charter stating mission and objectives of the committee. The charter will be developed using a template provided by the INELA Executive Director, and will be approved by the Chair of the INELA Board of Directors with the concurrence of the Board of Directors.

2.8 Subcommittees

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- 2.8.1 The Committee chair with concurrence of the committee may appoint subcommittees on various issues. The scope and duties delegated to the subcommittee shall be approved at the time it is formed, and subsequent changes in scope or duties shall also require approval. An appropriate balance of subcommittee interests should be considered, but is not required.
- 2.8.2 The subcommittee is responsible for actions delegated to it by the Committee and any subcommittee recommendations and actions require approval by a two thirds majority of the full committee.

3.0 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3.1 Conference Calls

- 3.1.1 Participation in all meetings of Committees is open to all INELA Members and Affiliates. Any INELA Member who wishes to participate on the Committee as an Associate Committee Member should register with the Committee Chair and then re-register annually.
- 3.1.2 Every Committee will post on the INELA website a schedule of proposed conference calls. This schedule will cover, at minimum, the period from the end of one semiannual INELA forum on laboratory accreditation up to the date of the next. Notice of any supplementary meetings will be posted at least 5 days in advance of the meeting if possible. Notice of any cancelled meetings will be posted at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting if possible.
- 3.1.3 At least 5 days prior to a scheduled meeting, the Committee Chair will send out a meeting invitation notice to all Committee Members and Affiliates, and all Associate Committee Members who have registered with the Chair (see Section 3.1.1). Accompanying the notice will be an abbreviated agenda, and all recipients of the invitation who wish to attend the meeting will be required to so notify the Committee Chair at least 24 hours prior to the meeting; otherwise, a telephone line will not be made available for that person. Before the meeting, the Chair will send out a detailed draft agenda to all persons scheduled to be on the call.
- 3.1.4 If a non-responder or any other INELA member calls in to the teleconference, the chair may tell him/her to hang up and try again in 10 minutes. Then, if there is still an open line, the person will be allowed to stay on the call.
- 3.1.5 During the call, any changes to the agenda must first be agreed on, and the minutes must reflect those changes.
- 3.1.6 At the Chair's discretion, Robert's Rules of Order may be invoked as needed. For disciplined debate of an issue, a motion may be proposed and adopted, and debate may be limited to a fixed time per person. Also, the Chair may first limit debate among Committee Members before inviting Associate Committee Members to speak.

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- 3.1.7 Minutes must be taken and circulated to the committee for comment within 5 days. Minutes can be discussed, amended and approved by e-mail or during the next conference call of the Committee. Final minutes should go to INELA within 10 days after approval.

3.2 Face to Face Committee Meetings

- 3.2.1 Participation in all meetings of Committees is open to all INELA Members and Affiliates. Face to face meetings will include the semi-annual INELA forum on environmental laboratory accreditation and any special meetings a committee decides to hold.
- 3.2.2 Notification procedures for both types of meeting will be developed. As with Conference Call Meetings, procedures will be written for the agenda, approving and posting minutes, and for keeping order during the meetings.
- 3.2.3 Notification and agenda for the semi-annual laboratory forum will be taken care of by the INELA Executive Director and must be at least 60 days prior to the meeting. Ground rules will be applied to the sessions. A facilitator and/or scribe may be used at the chair's discretion.
- 3.2.4 Notification of special meetings must be at least 60 days prior to the meeting. (It is recommended that committees post notices of special meetings well in advance, since they can always be cancelled if not needed). At a reasonable time prior to the meeting, the Chair will send out a reminder to all Committee Members and Affiliates, and all Associate Committee Members who have registered with the Chair (see Section 3.1.1), and will include an abbreviated proposed agenda. Participants should request travel assistance from INELA if needed.
- 3.2.5 During the meeting, any changes to the agenda must first be agreed on, and the minutes must reflect those changes.
- 3.2.6 At the Chair's discretion, Robert's Rules of Order may be invoked as needed. For disciplined debate of an issue, a motion may be proposed and adopted, and debate may be limited to a fixed time per person. Also, the Chair may first limit debate among Committee Members before inviting Associate Committee Members to speak.
- 3.2.7 Minutes must be taken and circulated to the committee for comment within 10 days. Minutes can be discussed, amended and approved by e-mail or during the next conference call of the Committee. Final minutes should go to INELA within 10 days after approval.