

TNI Policy Committee Meeting Summary Friday, October 5, 2012

1. **Welcome and Roll Call**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair at 11 am Eastern. Attendance is recorded in Appendix A.

Alfredo welcomed Pat Brumfield and Mei Beth Shepherd as confirmed full members of the committee. He then asked that each committee member verify the email address noted in Appendix A of the minutes, since in some cases that is not the email currently being used for committee correspondence, and notify him and the Program Administrator which is preferred. He also asked that each committee member send him a list of committees in which they participate, so that he can ensure that the Policy Committee includes a point of contact for each of the more challenging committees.

Jerry noted that the anticipated Policy on Position Statements from the Advocacy Committee will soon be complete and on its way for Policy and Board approval.

2. **Review of Draft Revisions to SOP 1-104, Control of TNI Documents**

This SOP is being updated to include Standards Interpretation Requests and a few other details. A redline/strikeout version was provided for committee review, along with the companion document, "Specifications for TNI Controlled Documents." The proposed changes were acceptable, and three further modifications were proposed. First, section 5.1 was modified to read "The Secretary is the official custodian of all *final TNI controlled* documents" (italicized words added,) and second, section 9.1 was edited to remove a second "be." Lastly, the Specifications document was added as an Appendix to the SOP.

Mei Beth moved and Pat Brumfield seconded to approve the draft with those three changes. The motion carried unanimously.

Participants discussed whether these minor revisions needed to be approved by the Board, and concluded that, assuming the Board's acceptance of SOP 1-116 at its next meeting, these minor changes can be accepted by the Policy Committee chair without needing Board review. The program report for Policy Committee will note that minor changes were made and accepted by the committee, and that the revised SOP will be offered for Board review if requested.

3. **Abstentions**

Jerry reviewed the "usual" and unusual usage definitions of abstentions from **Robert's Rules of Order**. "Usual" usage is that an abstention is not a vote and is not counted for passing of the action. Some variations of wording for decision rules may require an affirmative vote of those present, or of committee membership and that would require that a majority of those in the voting population (however defined) cast affirmative votes, so that an abstention would have the same effect as a negative vote, detracting from the total count of affirmatives.

The example which has brought this issue to the fore is that, for the NEFAP Executive Committee, all non-governmental accreditation bodies (NGABs) believe they are required to abstain from voting on accreditation issues due to US laws about trade restrictions. The NEFAP EC has eleven (11) members total, of which five (5) are NGABs; this means that for any

accreditation action to pass with a majority of the membership, all remaining EC members would have to vote affirmatively, by the decision rules currently in force for that group.

By contrast, the NELAP AC Voting SOP 3-102 (Provisional) requires a two-thirds affirmative vote of all AC representatives, for all accreditation issues, so that abstentions do count as votes, but this is definitely not “usual.” Another concept, recusal, is not mentioned in **Robert’s Rules**, but is described there as a non-mandatory abstention from voting due to a direct personal interest in the outcome.

Participants discussed how to remind committee chairs that decision rules need to be specified for each decision-making unit. Jerry will compose a communication to all committee chairs, and ask for review by the Policy Committee prior to sending it out. Eventually, one of the TNI General and Administrative SOPs should mention this issue explicitly; SOP 1-102 Decision-Making Rules for TNI Committees and Boards is the likely place and such a change may be considered for the next revision of that now-five-year-old SOP.

4. Review of Pol 1-115, Use of TNI Presentations

This provisional policy was received from the Advocacy Committee and distributed prior to the meeting. Two changes were made. First, reference to PowerPoint was eliminated since other types of presentations might also be included, and second, in deference to TNI’s NEFAP program, the reference to “laboratory accreditation” was changed to simply “accreditation.” Also, since there was some discussion about defining the types of presentations that might be covered by this policy, a sentence was inserted to clarify that they would be ones representing TNI using the TNI logo.

Mei Beth Shepherd moved to approve this Policy, and Joann Boyd seconded the motion. The policy was approved by unanimous vote and will be submitted to the Board for final approval at its next meeting.

4. Pending Items

As discussed at the previous meeting, the financial policies and SOPs which have been in place since TNI’s first federal funding were submitted for approval by e-mail ballot. At meeting time, only two (2) yes votes had been received, with a deadline of the end of the day, October 5.

Jerry will update the priority list of documents awaiting Policy Committee review and approval, to adjust for the items already addressed. He noted that the NEFAP Evaluation SOP and three others are still highest priorities for now.

5. Action Items

See Attachment B.

6. Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Policy Committee will be October 19, 2012 at 11 pm Eastern. Action Items are included in Attachment B and Attachment C includes a listing of reminders.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30 pm Eastern.

Attachment A

Name/Affiliation NOTE: Please check your email and notify Lynn of correct one. Shown here is the TNI member contact but is not always the one used to contact you for Policy Committee meetings.	Representing	Present
Alfredo Sotomayor, Chair Wisconsin Dept. of Natural Resources, Madison, WI alfredo.sotomayor@Wisconsin.gov	TNI Board	Yes
JoAnn Boyd Southwest Research Institute, San Antonio, TX jboyd@swri.org		Yes
Patrick Brumfield Sigma-Aldrich RTC, Laramie, WY patrick.brumfield@sial.com	PT Executive Committee	Yes
Gary Dechant Analytical Quality Associates, Inc. Grand Junction, CO gldechant@aol.com		No
Silky Labie Env. Lab. Consulting & Technology, LLC Tallahassee, FL labie@comcast.net		Yes
John Moorman South Florida Water Management District West Palm Beach, FL jmoorma@sfwmd.gov	NEFAP Executive Committee	No
Mei Beth Shepherd mbshep@sheptechserv.com	Associate Member	Yes
Susan Wyatt Minnesota DOH, St. Paul, MN susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	NELAP AC	No
Bob Wyeth Pace Analytical Services, Inc., West Seneca, NY rfwyeth@yahoo.com	CSD Executive Committee	No
Jerry Parr (ex-officio) Executive Director, TNI Jerry.Parr@nelac-institute.org		Yes
Lynn Bradley, Program Administrator The NELAC Institute (Staunton, VA) lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org		Yes
Guest: none		

Attachment B

Action Items – TNI Policy Committee

	Action Item	Who	Expected Completion	Comments/ Completion
22	Send finance SOPs for voting per pass-through process	Alfredo	For 10/9/12 Board Meeting	10/5/12
23	Send 9-21-12 version of SOP 1-116 for Board approval	Alfredo	For 10/9/12 Board Meeting	10/5/12
24	Email acceptance of Pat Brumfield [and Mei Beth Shepherd] for full committee membership	Alfredo		10/2/12
25	Send 10/5/12 revision of Policy 1-115 for Board approval	Alfredo/Lynn/Jerry	For 10/9/12 Board Meeting	10/7/12
26	Draft statement re “abstentions” for committee review and then sending to all committee chairs	Jerry	10/31/12	
27	Update priority list of items pending Policy Committee review	Jerry	10/31/12	

Attachment C

Backburner / Reminders – TNI Policy Committee

	Item	Meeting Reference	Comments
1.	Look into need to include something about review schedule in all SOPs.	3/20/12	
2	Include mention of abstentions in SOP 1-102 revision (or elsewhere,) to ensure that intentional choice of appropriate wording is made in committee decision making choices	10/5/12	