

TNI Policy Committee Meeting Summary Friday September 20, 2013

1. Welcome, Roll Call and Announcements

The meeting was called to order by Alfredo at 11 am Eastern.

2. Follow-Up from Conference

Alfredo and Sharon Mertens met earlier in the week to discuss revisions to the training that Sharon presented at the Policy Committee meeting in San Antonio. They accepted most of the suggestions documented in the August 5 minutes, and the text of the presentation is complete but still needs a few transition slides and possibly speaker notes.

Concerning the guidance about member conduct, this will be included in the above training once two additional videos portraying dysfunctional meetings are included. We discussed how to present this package, and consensus was that a Monday morning session at conference in Louisville would work best, done as a Webinar but live to conference attendees. TNI's Educational Delivery System manager can be present to assist with technical issues, and committee chairs and other interested parties unable to attend conference can participate remotely. Alfredo will confirm with Sharon that this is suitable to her.

3. Handling of Complaints about PT Issue

Alfredo updated the committee on the handling of three separate complaints about one particular revision of the Non-Potable Water (NPW) Field of Proficiency Testing (FoPT) table that was implemented on July 1, 2013. There were an excessive number of PT failures for the Total Suspended Solids (TSS) analyte, and complaints were received from one PT Provider (PTP) and two laboratories. At its September 11 meeting, the TNI Board urged quick action to resolve the problem, and thus the PT Executive Committee (PT EC) revised the FoPT table to use the previous equation for calculating TSS results, then transmitted the revised table to the NELAP Accreditation Council (AC) for its approval, while simultaneously working with the PTPs and the PTP Accreditors to establish a practical timeline for implementing the revision.

Pat noted that, while the problem was clearly handled effectively, it may have been an over-reaction, since one problem study doesn't necessarily indicate there was an error in the FoPT table itself. He did note that PT EC committed to monitoring later studies to determine whether the corrective action was appropriate.

4. Revising TNI Bylaws to Permit Voting by Ex Officio Members of the Board of Directors

Alfredo noted that his initial review of the Bylaws showed additional opportunities to revise the document but that the Board is inclined to focus revisions on Ex officio voting and the stakeholder categories, for now, and that revisions to permit voting along with some form of affirmation of the appointment of Ex officio members to the Board should be our first objective.

After discussing several alternatives, participants reached consensus that Article IV, Section 1 – Composition, should be revised to read “The Board of Directors shall consist of no fewer than ten (10) or more than eighteen (18) elected members and up to five (5) Ex officio members.” (additions underlined) Then the final sentence of Section 1 should be replaced with “At the request of the Board, a federal agency may nominate an individual to serve on the Board in an Ex officio capacity.”

Next, participants discussed what might be an appropriate mechanism for ratifying appointments made by federal agencies, and whether that should occur only initially or periodically, as with other Board members' elections. Alfredo agreed to draft language for a new section in Article IV that will address this ratification mechanism and the role of the TNI Nominating Committee in such ratification.

Within that conversation, participants noted that the Past Chair position (sections 1, 2 and 7 of Article V) is not elected but required by the Bylaws, and if the Past Chair is not a currently elected Board member, then the Past Chair serves in an ex officio and non-voting capacity. There was no sentiment to change this status for the Past Chair, but participants recommended that the position of Past Chair could be made optional, that is, if no one eligible to serve as Past Chair is able and willing to serve, then the position would remain vacant until such time as a new Past Chair becomes available. Alfredo agreed to draft appropriate language to make this modification to the Bylaws.

Participants also noted that the Executive Director (ED) serves as an ex officio member of the Board as well as all committees, so that this use of ex officio also needs to be addressed; Alfredo again agreed to draft or modify the language of Article XI section 1, clarifying the ED's ex officio status. Lynn noted that, when the Committee Charter format is next revised, the ED should be listed in all committee rosters, as a way of reminding committees that the ED can choose to take a more active role when circumstances warrant.

Lastly, participants sought to address how to describe in the Bylaws the evolving concept, endorsed by the Board, that TNI Core Programs have the flexibility to define their stakeholder groups more explicitly than is presently defined in Article XI section 5. (Core Programs are identified in Article VI and will remain unaltered for now.) No restriction on the number of categories will be placed in the Bylaws but the general three categories as described in section 5, Article XI, will remain unchanged. The most impacted area, the one needing clearer definition of stakeholder categories at present, is the SSAS committee within the Consensus Standards Development Program. Alfredo again offered to craft language about how the core programs or individual committees within a core program can more clearly define or describe their stakeholder categories, subject to approval of the Board.

2. Next Meeting

Policy Committee will meet again on Friday October 4, at 11 am Eastern. Teleconference information and an agenda will be circulated in advance of the meeting. A draft revision of the Bylaws will be reviewed and as time permits, other documents awaiting Policy Committee review will be addressed. These other documents are, in rough order of priority:

- Revisions to Pol 1-122 (Determining Stakeholder Category of Committee Members, should accompany Bylaws revision when presented to TNI Board)
- SOP 2-100 (Standards Development and Review)
- Revisions to the "Small Lab Quality Systems" Position Statement from Advocacy Committee
- NEFAP SIR SOP 5-106 (partially completed)
- Policy about Notification of Changes to AB Operations
- Newsletter SOP (from Advocacy)
- NELAP Evaluation SOP 3-102
- Revisions to NELAP Voting SOP per Policy Committee
- NELAP SIR SOP revisions (from LAS EC)

Action Items are included in Attachment B and Attachment C includes a listing of reminders.

Attachment A

Name/Affiliation	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	Lab and FSMO	Yes
Patrick Brumfield Sigma-Aldrich RTC, Laramie, WY patrick.brumfield@sial.com	PT Executive Committee	Yes
Silky Labie Env. Lab. Consulting & Technology, LLC Tallahassee, FL elcatllc@centurylink.net		No
John Moorman South Florida Water Management District West Palm Beach, FL jmoorma@sfwmd.gov	NEFAP Executive Committee	Yes
Mei Beth Shepherd mbshep@sheptechserv.com		No
Susan Wyatt, Vice Chair Minnesota DOH, St. Paul, MN susan.wyatt@state.mn.us	NELAP AC	No
Bob Wyeth Retired rfwyeth@yahoo.com	CSD Executive Committee	No
Jerry Parr (ex-officio) Executive Director, TNI Jerry.Parr@nelac-institute.org		No
Lynn Bradley, Program Administrator The NELAC Institute (Staunton, VA) lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org		Yes

Attachment B

Action Items – TNI Policy Committee

	Action Item	Who	Expected Completion	Comments/ Completion
34	Review NELAC chapter 6 for needed policies and SOPs, applicable to the AC	Susan	3/15/13	Pending with AC
48	Review SOPs 1-101 and 2-101 for possible edits to assign responsibility to chairs for addressing committee member changes in stakeholder categories	Alfredo	6/5/13	Hold until stakeholder category revisions to Bylaws are completed
51	Continue review of NEFAP SIR SOP	Full committee to take up at future business meeting	Deferred until after Bylaws revision	
54	Add videos to committee chair training on the SOP and conduct guidance, and confirm with Sharon that a webinar in Louisville will be acceptable.	Alfredo	October 4, 2013	
55	Draft revisions to Bylaws addressing ratification of ex officio federal nominees, clarifying ex officio roles of Past Chair and ED (to remain non-voting, w/ Past Chair becoming optional appointment), and describing how core programs and committees can define their particular stakeholder categories for their particular mission(s)	Alfredo	October 4, 2013	See also #48 above

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	
3	In SOP 1-101, "Committee Operations," or else SOP 1-102, "Decision Making...", some mention of "default" decision making rules would be beneficial, since most committees do not have documentation of their decision processes.	10/22/12	SOP 1-102 discusses various options and situations where one might work better than others, but SOP 1-101 refers to 1-102 as if it sets a default.
6	New Committee Charter format should include listing for Executive Director as ex officio member for all committees (per Bylaws.)	9/20/13	Charter format to be upgraded to address committee annual budgets later this year