

**MINUTES OF  
THE NELAC INSTITUTE'S  
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE  
October 13, 2009**

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**Agenda Item 1: Standing Committee Operations**

The Proficiency Testing (PT) Committee of The NELAC Institute (TNI) met by conference call on October 13, 2009. Committee Chairperson Kirstin McCracken led the call.

**Call to Order:** The teleconference was called to order at 1:04 PM ET.

The following committee members were present for this call:

Kirstin McCracken (KM)  
Steve Arpie (SA)  
Lisa Touet (LT)  
Roger Kenton (RK)  
Jim Webber (JW)

5 out of 9 committee members were present and this number does comprise a majority sufficient to conduct committee business. A complete list of committee members is provided in Attachment B.

The following associate members were present for this call:

Rachel Ellis (RE)  
Judy Morgan (JM)  
Gary Dechant (GD)  
Mike Miller (MM)  
Chuck Wibby (CW)

**Agenda Item 1: Standing Committee Operation Items**

The minutes from the PT Call held on 09/01/09 were reviewed. Steve Arpie moved to approve the minutes without revision. Jim Webber seconded the motion. Vote Tally: 5 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain. Kirstin will forward the minutes to the TNI Webmaster for posting.

**Agenda Item 2: Subcommittee Progress Reports and Goals**

Amy, Shawn and Stacie were not present on the call to provide an update. Kirstin contacted Jerry and Bob Wyeth (CSDB) to determine how the committee should proceed with the format for creation of these standards. It was decided that appendices to the volume/module is the best approach. Additionally, given that the PT Board is or has already developed FoPT for some of these parameters, the appendices can be issued as Tentative Interim Amendments (TIA). The desired completion date for the TIA is July 2010 in order to allow sufficient time for ABs to revise regulation as necessary. The subcommittees should be prepared to present a draft of the TIA to the TNI membership in Chicago in January 2010.

Mike Miller noted that the appendices should be written solely to supplement the general PT requirements. Roger noted the time-frame seemed ambitious given the upcoming holidays. Point noted - nonetheless the subcommittees need to be prepared to present in Chicago even if it is a very rough outline of PT requirements for those parameters.

Jim Webber recommended Dr. Ellen Braun Holland to chair the microbiology subcommittee and Jim will send an email to Kirstin with contact info.

Lastly, Kirstin will contact PT Board to learn about their future goals for setting FoPT for parameters that might be exception to the general PT requirements.

### **Agenda Item 3: PT Program Goals**

The purpose of this agenda item was to discuss future activities of the committee in relation to the PT program. The following is a summary of dialog between members present on the call and is not necessarily presented in order of discussion.

The PT Frequency Subcommittee has wrapped up its work and the comments that were placed on hold for next revision have been resolved but the committee has been tasked with the continued evaluation of the PT standard to determine if it meets the intended scope and application. Questions: What is the intended scope of the standard? Is the PT Committee tasked with development of a national PT program or establishing PT requirements necessary for accreditation? If accreditation standard, which accreditation body? NELAP is the primary customer but the standard should be written so that it can be adopted by any accreditation body. If the PT expert committee is tasked with developing a PT standard (sans accreditation requirements); standards for PT program already exist in ISO Guide 43 and ISO Guide 17025- but it was noted that ISO may be too limited- the ISO language needs to be supplemented. It was noted that the scope in the TNI standard needs to clearly identify the purpose and the purpose of the PT program needs to be determined before the committee can proceed with consideration of changes to the program. To understand the purpose, the committee needs to understand how accreditation bodies (NELAC, non-NELAC and Federal) use PT data.

Chuck Wibby noted that this could be the most important question to be answered by the committee – a general problem with the NELAC process is that the states have not provided clear expectations to TNI on what they desire from the accreditation program. It was also noted that TNI is a consensus standard but it is developed to meet the needs of its primary customer – the NELAP Board. It was generally agreed by those present that feedback from the states would be very helpful. To that end, Judy Morgan volunteered to conduct a formal survey of the ABs similar to the type of survey she performed for NELAC laboratories. The purpose of the survey would be to capture information on how each AB handles PTs, what are the gaps between the expectations of AB and the existing PT program and unlike the informal surveys that were previously held, this survey would reach out directly to those who have the authority to make decisions about their program and provide concise feedback to the committee. The committee members cautioned that the questions need to be carefully worded so as not to be leading to gain objective evidence. After further discussion, Kirstin moved that the committee authorize Judy Morgan to develop a draft survey of ABs on PT. Roger seconded the motion. Vote Tally: 5 Yes, 0 No, 0 Abstain. Action Item: Judy to develop survey questions and have them available for committee review by the next scheduled call, November 10, 2009. Roger suggested that we allow TNI members to provide input on the survey. Judy noted that the survey engine is powerful enough that it could also capture information from other stakeholders.

Kirstin mentioned her idea of creating various workgroups comprised of volunteers who would work specifically on one idea of proposed change such as combination of WP/WS, PT Frequency, Multi-level PTs. After overall discussion it became clear that there were two separate requirements to which these smaller topics fall: PT Requirements for Accreditation & Technical PT Requirements. Instead of many small workgroups- perhaps two will suffice.

In the short-term it was collectively decided that the committee should focus on the AB survey first and simultaneously work on the appendices for the (for lack of a better term) unique parameters whose PT requirements may be exception to general PT requirements.

Judy raised the following question: Can an AB adopt the TNI standard without adopting the PT standard? It was decided that no-the PT standard is integral to the TNI standard.

#### **Agenda Item 4: Committee Membership**

Kirstin informed the group that it is time to evaluate member terms; and expand the committee. The committee should expand membership to 15 members and is particularly in need of representation from NELAC AB and more “other” category interests, including data users and the EPA. Kirstin will forward member term info and list of potential candidates to committee by email.

#### **Agenda Item 5: Standards Interpretation Requests**

Two requests for standards interpretation were received from Ilona this week. Kirstin will forward via email for consideration.

#### **Other:**

Gary asked if Chicago schedule is set. It is. PT Committee meeting is Tuesday morning; PT Board Tuesday afternoon.

**Meeting was adjourned at 2:16 PM.**

**Attachment A**

**ACTION ITEMS  
TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Action Item</b>	<b>Assigned To</b>	<b>Due Date</b>	<b>Date Complete</b>
1	Contact TNI Board about Survey	Kirstin	07/28/09	10/01/09
2	Forward suggestion for Micro Chair to Kirstin	Jim	10/13/09	10/13/09
3	Contact PT Board about future FoPT development	Kirstin	11/10/09	
4	Develop draft AB Survey	Judy Morgan	11/10/09	
5	Send out Committee Terms and Potential Member Candidates	Kirstin	11/10/09	

**Attachment B**

**TNI PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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