



# **THE INSTITUTE REVIEW**

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**November 2016**



# THE INSTITUTE REVIEW

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## Registration is Open for the 2017 Forum on Environmental Accreditation

By Jerry Parr, TNI

Registration is open for the 2017 Forum on Environmental Accreditation to be held at the Hyatt Regency in Houston, TX from January 23-26, 2017. The Forum will feature open public meetings of all TNI committees to allow quality professionals, chemists, analysts, microbiologists, engineers, and managers from federal and state agencies; commercial, municipal, state, and federal laboratories; and many others who are actively involved and interested in accreditation issues to review what has been done and participate in the efforts to establish a national environmental accreditation program. The 2017 Forum will include:

- Meetings of all TNI committees;
- A special presentation on upcoming changes to ISO 17025;
- A mentor session focused on small laboratory challenges in implementing the TNI Standard;
- An Assessment Forum;
- A meeting of the EPA's Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB);
- A general session with updates about TNI programs; and
- A training course on the 2016 TNI Standard.

For more information, go to the 2017 conference website at <http://www.nelac-institute.org/meetings.php>.

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## 2017 Board of Directors Election

By Sharon Mertens, Past-Chair, TNI Board of Directors

The election for new Directors to fill vacancies in the Board of Directors will begin soon. This year, we will be looking for 8 candidates to fill available slots. The duties of the Board include supervising, controlling, and directing the business affairs of TNI; supporting its key programs; and reviewing policies for organizational impact.

Having a strong Board of Directors is vital to the strength and future of our organization. Our Board is balanced and has representation from all recognized stakeholder groups.

The Bylaws allocate a Board of 10-18 members so not all vacant slots need to be filled, but the Nominating Committee always seeks nominations from as large and diverse a cross section of the TNI membership as possible. The election will also include the ratification of ex-officio directors who represent federal agencies.



We need candidates who have a broad understanding of issues facing TNI and who are willing to uphold the organization's mission, goals, priorities, and Code of Ethical Conduct. Directors must have strong interpersonal skills and the ability to objectively consider various perspectives while making policy decisions. If that is you, and you have a desire to serve in this capacity or you know of someone that you'd like to see on the Board, now is the time to consider submitting a nomination. The process isn't complicated and the nomination form can be found on the TNI website under *News*.

Terms are for 3 years and are renewable. The Board generally meets monthly via phone conference call, and in face to face meetings as necessary.

Nominations will be accepted during the month of December. The actual election will coincide with the winter meeting to give the membership the opportunity to meet the candidates in person, and to vote at the meeting if they so choose. The schedule is as follows:

November 14-December 31, 2016	Nominations accepted
January 1-16, 2017	Nomination Committee will review the nominations and prepare a slate of candidates
January 16, 2017	Voting opens with the announcement of the slate of candidates on the TNI website
January 23-26, 2017	Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, Houston, TX Candidates Meet and Greet
February 13, 2017	Voting closes
March 8, 2017	Newly-elected Directors assume office

Finally, all TNI members have the opportunity and responsibility to vote to select the TNI Board of Directors. The voting process happens through our website and it is easy and quick. So please be sure to vote. Every member's vote can make a difference!

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## Report from Orange County, CA

By Lara Phelps, USEPA and Jerry Parr, TNI

The Environmental Measurement Symposium, which represents the combined meetings of the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) and the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation (the Forum), occurred in Orange County, CA this summer from August 8 – 12, 2016. This was the 10th combined meeting of the Forum and NEMC, which has only continued to grow.

Over 600 attendees participated in a week full of engaging technical presentations, thoughtful committee meetings of The NELAC Institute (TNI), special workshops, and technology innovation displays, among many other opportunities. The technical presentations from the NEMC meeting can be found at <http://www.nemc.us>. Minutes from TNI committee meetings and presentations from the Forum can be found at <http://www.nelac-institute.org>.

### 2016 Forum on Environmental Accreditation August 8-12, 2016

This summary is based on notes taken at the closing session of the TNI meeting on August 11, 2016.

**CSDEC** – Bob offered kudos to the expert committees and the involved membership of TNI for successful completion of the revisions. Four committees presented summaries of changes to their respective modules earlier on Thursday, and there are webinars and guidance documents still to be produced to complete preparations for adoption and implementation of the full Volume 1.

A revised draft of ISO 17025 will be coming out soon, and he anticipates this requiring many changes to the Quality Systems module (V1M2), but not a lot for other modules. Meanwhile, the CSDEC is working on SOPs and a NELAP Glossary. The CSDEC is trying to form an Asbestos Expert Committee and has a draft charter for that group prepared.

**QS Expert Committee** – This group presented its changes to the QS module. During the fall, they will work on the Small Lab Handbook and address some rad chem issues, as well as formulating a plan for how to handle upcoming changes to ISO 17025.

**Chemistry Expert Committee** – Richard expressed relief at not leading a working session, but rather a presentation about the standard. Valerie Slavin will take over as Committee Chair. For the fall, the committee will address demonstrations of competency. Valerie believes the promised guidance documents are now complete.

**Microbiology Expert Committee** – Presented changes to the standard. Going forward, they will work on the Small Lab Handbook and tools for implementing the new module.

**WET Expert Committee** – The Tuesday afternoon session for this group was primarily a follow-on session to the morning's Assessment Forum, after a brief presentation of the committee's membership and progress to date. Future plans await the ability to begin revising the WET module of the standard.

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## Report from Orange County, CA cont.



**Radiochemistry Expert Committee** – This committee did not meet, but will be working on the Small Lab Handbook, and planning for assessor training and a webinar about compliance with the standard, going forward.

**LAB Expert Committee** – Dan Hickman gave a live demo of the updated software for the Generic Application and participants discussed preliminary thoughts on revisions of Volume 2 of the standard. NOTE: At the end of the meeting, a suggestion was made to develop a checklist and questions to be used for the evaluation of ABs (possibly to include NGABs as well as governmental) and possibly for performing the on-site assessments.

**PTPEC** – Session attendance was high as the committee discussed how to evaluate the preparation of PTs with its draft SOP. Also, they got permission to look at the DOE's PT data. A confidential update about updating FoPT tables was provided by the PTPs, and the committee initiated a vote to approve the updated NPW and SCM FoPT tables, so they can be sent to the NELAP AC for approval and acceptance.

**PT Expert Committee** – The committee celebrates the completion all four (4) modules/volumes of PT revisions, and welcomes a return to only monthly meetings. They will begin cataloguing “parking lot” items as well as developing training for the newly revised modules/volumes.

**NEFAP** – NEFAP's focus was on its strategic plan subcommittee, which is working on advocacy efforts. Their workshop on Wednesday had forty-five (45) participants, and was a joint effort with FAC to create strategies to get FSMOs accredited to the standard.

**Field Activities Committee** – This group expects to have its standard revisions completed by December. Implementation tools are being developed as well, and they are looking at the anticipated ISO 17025 changes to see how to realign the standard to address those.

**NELAP AC** – After discussing how the current evaluation cycle is winding down, with only two (2) evaluations pending completion, discussion of revisions to the Evaluation SOP took up most of the remaining time. These revisions were to improve efficiency and the overall process while cutting costs, and the Defense Department representative offered to share their evaluation SOP. Aaren thanked the expert committees for their efforts in revising the standard, and received a motion to begin voting on Monday, August 15, on the LASEC's recommendations that the AC accept the remaining individual modules of the 2016 standard.

Several small group meetings included AC members – an Advocacy Committee meeting with EPA about how to address the “equally effective” determination between NELAP and drinking water certification, a lunch meeting about LAMS, and an impromptu lunch meeting of AC members. Jerry promised that all ABs would get a copy of Volume 1 of the 2016 TNI Standard by Monday, August 15.

**LASEC** – The final review of the complete Volume 1 is underway, as LASEC awaits responses from the AC about its recommendations to accept individual modules of Volume 1. Judy offered kudos to the expert committees on completing the revisions, and noted that the guidance documents from the Chemistry Committee will soon begin review. Two policies are in draft form. The one about minimum requirements for assessing test methods was discussed with participants. The other policy will be about how to document that prep methods are assessed when different ABs don't always accredit the prep methods separately from the determinative step. This policy should be ready for discussion in Houston.

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## Report from Orange County, CA cont.



**Assessment Forum and Mentor Session** – The Mentor Session probably had more than 100 attendees and was well received on Monday morning. The Monday afternoon Assessment Forum (planned to assist California labs in particular) had perhaps 40-50 CA labs in attendance. The extremely successful Tuesday morning Assessment Forum featuring how to assess WET labs brought a capacity crowd with standees in the hallway. The Houston sessions may include one on the upcoming Method Update Rule, one about Standard Methods, and one additional topic. A request was made that these sessions not overlap the NELAP AC and LASEC sessions, so that AB representatives can participate in the Assessment Forum and Mentor Session activities.

**IT Committee** – This was a joint meeting with the NELAP AC. Dan Hickman discussed progress in getting FoAs reported into LAMS by the NELAP ABs, and also briefly mentioned the planned presentation.

**SSAS** – This group continues to work on technical issues regarding Method 8 and three other methods.

**NGAB** – The working group and the TNRC presented their thoughts on possible restructuring of TNI's organization chart to group the several AB recognition activities under one "umbrella" while maintaining the individual program activities needed for each activity. The group hopes to have an organic model to present in Houston, for adoption by the Board.

**Advocacy Committee** – The afternoon session was spent discussing the 2017 meeting in Houston. Monday morning will be the committee Annual Reports of accomplishments and plans, at the annual meeting, plus an hour to roll out the QMP as well as have Warren Merkle address changes to ISO 17025. Monday afternoon and beyond will have three concurrent sessions. There will be opportunities to discuss the 2016 standard and likely a workshop for TX and LA labs. Jerry noted that ISO 17011 is being revised too, and may be completed sooner than ISO 17025. A new half-day Small Lab Forum will be introduced, and may replace one of the Mentor Session or Assessment Forum events, with a special one-day price for small labs to attend this event. Ken Lancaster will contribute to the development of this since TX labs are most likely to participate.

This committee met again the day after the Board report-outs, on Friday morning. They reviewed progress towards meeting the Strategic Plan assignments, reviewed the EPA meeting about "equally effective" with certification programs, and discussed tentative assignments for the upcoming TNI newsletter.

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## Call for Abstracts for the 33rd National Environmental Monitoring Conference

By Earl Hansen, TNI

Organized jointly by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and The NELAC Institute (TNI), the 2017 Environmental Measurement Symposium is a combined meeting of the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) and the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation. The meeting will occur August 7-11, 2017. It is the largest conference focused on environmental measurements in North America. The NEMC Steering Committee is inviting abstracts for oral or poster presentations in these specific topic areas:

Academic Research Topics in Environmental Measurement and Monitoring	Field Sampling, Measurement and Sensor Technology
Advances in Sample Preparation and Clean-up	Forensic Chemistry
Advancing the Use of Passive Sampling	High Performance Liquid Chromatography in Environmental Monitoring
Air Methods, Monitoring and Technology	LIMS in the Modern Laboratory
Best Practices for Reference Materials	Metals and Metals Speciation Analysis in Environmental Samples
Challenges of Measuring Contaminants in Foods and Beverages	Non Targeted Compound Screening
Changing the Paradigm for Water Pollution Monitoring	Operational and Advocacy Issues Impacting the Environmental Laboratory Industry
Characterization of Perfluoroalkyl Substances in the Environment	Overcoming Interferences in Optical ICP Analyses
Chemical Risk Assessment Through In-Vitro Exposure Research	Overcoming Legacy Obstacles with Innovative Approaches
Citizen Science	Premise Testing in Drinking Water
Collaborative Efforts to Improve Environmental Monitoring	Reinventing Method Validation for Environmental Monitoring
Current Trends in Laboratory Information Management Systems	Topics in Drinking Water
Data Quality, Management, and Review	Topics in Shale Gas
Effectively Communicating Scientific Information	Use of Continuous Monitoring for Compliance Monitoring

**Please provide your abstract by January 31, 2017.** Abstracts received after the deadline are not guaranteed to be reviewed due to the number of available time slots and the high number of quality and timely submissions received. More information and submission instructions are on the NEMC website at [www.nemc.us](http://www.nemc.us).

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## The 2016 TNI Laboratory Accreditation Standard

By Jerry Parr, TNI

The NELAC Institute's Consensus Standards Development Program has released a new consensus standard for the accreditation of environmental laboratories, Management and Technical Requirements for Laboratories performing Environmental Analyses, Revision 2.0. The standard has not been adopted into TNI's National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (NELAP) at this time, but is being provided now so laboratories and Accreditation Bodies can begin plans for implementation. Note this is Volume 1 of the Environmental Laboratory sector standards. Volumes 2, 3, and 4, that relate to other aspects of NELAP, are nearing conclusion and should be released within the next few months.

This Standard consists of seven modules:

- Module 1: Proficiency Testing, Revision 2.0
- Module 2: Quality Systems General Requirements, Revision 2.1
- Module 3: Quality Systems for Asbestos Testing, Revision 2.0
- Module 4: Quality Systems for Chemical Testing, Revision 2.0
- Module 5: Quality Systems for Microbiological Testing, Revision 2.0
- Module 6: Quality Systems for Radiochemical Testing, Revision 2.0
- Module 7: Quality Systems for Toxicity Testing, Revision 1.0

Module 7 was not revised, but is included in the standard for completeness. Substantive changes to the other six modules are summarized below.

### Module 1: Proficiency Testing

- The proficiency testing (PT) reporting requirement has been reverted back to Proficiency Testing Reporting Limit (PTRL) reporting. Laboratories are required to evaluate and report results to the PTRL and the use of the less-than (<) sign when the analyte is present in the PT sample will be evaluated as "Not Acceptable". The 2009 TNI Standard required that laboratories evaluate and report PT results to the lowest calibration standard or Limit of Quantitation (LOQ). The Standard allowed laboratories to report a less-than (<) value for an analyte that was present and be scored "Acceptable" as long as the value reported with the less-than (<) sign was within the acceptance range. This evaluation of less-than (<) values was a major stumbling block for many of the accrediting bodies (ABs).
- The tracking of PT frequency is now based on the closing date, and the required time between the closing date of one PT study and the opening date of a subsequent PT study is now seven (7) days. The 2009 version of the standard required tracking PT results via analysis date for each analyte. This was an onerous requirement for the ABs as well as the laboratories. The 2009 Standard also set a minimum timeframe between PT studies at fifteen (15) days. The timeframe was shortened to allow laboratories to regain or obtain new scope(s) of accreditation more quickly.
- New sections have been added for Radiochemistry, Whole Effluent Toxicity (WET), and Cryptosporidium/Giardia analysis based on input from these committees. These sections are long overdue additions to the volume.



#### Module 2: Quality Systems General Requirements

- Added language to Section 1.2 indicating that Notes are guidance and not requirements.
- Revised the definitions for Limit of Detection. The new definition is consistent with the Method Detection Limit defined by EPA in 40 CFR Part 136.
- Section 4.1.7 was clarified to indicate the quality manager and the technical manager can be the same person.
- Added in missing language in sections 5.4.4, 5.5.5 and 5.4.6 from ISO 17025. The 2009 Standard had moved some language from ISO 17025 into the Technical Modules 3-7, but in an inconsistent manner and some language from 17025 was omitted. The 2016 Standard faithfully contains all of 17025 in Module 2.
- Section 5.5.13.1 was clarified to allow laboratories to use a single-point calibration check for support equipment such as water baths and ovens.

#### Module 3: Quality Systems for Asbestos Testing

- Sections 1.4 and 1.5 on Method Selection and Validation were revised to be consistent with other modules.
- Section 1.6, Demonstration of Capability, was revised for clarity and to allow for more options. The revised section reinforces that this demonstration applies to each individual that performs the test.

#### Module 4: Quality Systems for Chemical Testing

- Sections 1.4 and 1.5 on Method Selection and Validation were revised to be consistent with other modules and to easily allow the addition of a new analyte to a reference method.
- Section 1.5.2 on detection and quantitation limits was significantly revised to be consistent with the EPA MDL procedure in 40 CFR Part 136 and to reflect best professional practice. The new procedures for detection and quantitation limits corrects problems with the existing EPA procedure in 40 CFR Part 136, most importantly allowing for the use of blank results where appropriate, and allows one set of spikes to serve to determine both a limit of detection and a limit of quantitation.
- Section 1.6, Demonstration of Capability, was revised for clarity and to allow for more options. The revised section reinforces that this demonstration applies to each individual that performs the test.
- Sections 1.7.1 and 1.7.2 on instrument calibration have been extensively revised, describing various calibration options, discussing how to drop calibration points, and introducing a new quality control measure for evaluating calibration curves.

#### Module 5: Quality Systems for Microbiological Testing

This module was substantially revised to add clarity, reinforce the concept of minimum requirements, and default to the use of the data. Section 1.5 on Method Validation was revised to allow the use of a statistically better method and allow for improvement. The Quality Control section (1.7) was reorganized to separate the activities done before analysis from those done during analysis. There are many other minor changes.



#### Module 6: Quality Systems for Radiochemical Testing

Module 6 was substantially revised by the Radiochemistry Expert Committee. While the substance of the 2009 standard was overall retained, the text underwent substantial reorganization and reformulation to add clarity and better address less well-developed concepts. The revised standard now better reflects current practices in environmental radiochemistry laboratories.

Changes in the revised Module 6 include the following:

- Definitions for key terms were added to Section 1.3.
- Requirements for method validation in Section 1.5 were refined to better address laboratory-developed/modified methods and to evaluate uncertainty and method performance at background (zero) activity.
- Section 1.6 requirements for Demonstrations of Capability include analysis of blanks, once again to address method performance at background activity.
- Technical requirements in Section 1.7 were reorganized to logically parallel set-up, calibration, calibration verifications, and quality control of instrumentation.
- Section 1.7.1 provides requirements for mathematical calibration methods and for several approaches to background determination, both of which are in common use, but neither of which are currently permitted.
- The most substantial change to method quality controls in Section 1.7.2, the Radiation Measurements Batch, was introduced to eliminate substantial confusion and inconsistent implementation of batch quality controls for non-destructive analyses such as gamma spectrometry.
- Section 1.7.3 contains requirements for evaluating chemical yield, which were not included in previous revisions. It also addresses reporting requirements for uncertainty.

#### Summary

This new Standard represents a significant improvement over the 2009 Standard. TNI plans to hold regional workshops and webinars next year to help laboratories implement these changes. Other groups within TNI are working on an implementation plan. The new Standard is not expected to become a requirement until 2018 or later.

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### TNI Turns 10!

By Sharon Mertens, Past Chair, TNI Board of Directors

On November 6, 2006, The NELAC Institute was formed by combining the operations of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) and the Institute for National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation (INELA). At the time, we did not know what the future would bring, but now ten (10) years later, it is clear that TNI has grown beyond what we imagined.

In 2006, we were focused solely on laboratory accreditation issues. We now are engaged in many other activities, including field sampling and measurement, stationary source audit sample (SSAS), training, and the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC). We had fewer than 500 members; membership is now approaching 1000. We had very limited staff support. Now, almost all of our committees have support.

We were not sure if our vision could be realized. We now see our efforts to establish national accreditation programs are very strong and the TNI Standard is nationally recognized.

So, Thank You, to all of you who have contributed to our success over the past decade!



*thank you*

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## California ELAP Selects 2016 TNI Standard as Base for New Laboratory Accreditation Standard

By Katelyn McCarthy, California ELAP

California ELAP notified the environmental laboratory accreditation community that it intends to develop regulations using the 2016 TNI Standard, Volume 1 as the basis for its new laboratory accreditation standard. The program held a State Water Board Public Workshop on October 6, 2016 in Sacramento, California and via webcast to present its preliminary recommendation to the community and the State Water Resources Control Board Members and to receive public comments. The presentation slides and a recording of the meeting are available on ELAP's website at [www.waterboards.ca.gov/elap](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/elap). There was a formal public comment period open until Noon on October 20, 2016 regarding this recommendation. The comment letters are available on the State Water Board's website.

ELAP is proposing to work with laboratory and regulatory stakeholders to consider partial revisions or exemptions for the laboratories it certifies. ELAP has asked its Environmental Laboratory Technical Advisory Committee (ELTAC) to prioritize elements for consideration of revision and is also accepting comments directly from stakeholders at its Comments email inbox ([elapca\\_comments@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:elapca_comments@waterboards.ca.gov)). ELAP will deliberate and verify with its second advisory body, the State Agency Partner Committee (which consists of regulatory agency representatives from the agencies who use ELAP-accredited laboratory data), that the revisions are acceptable and do not lessen the value of certification to their programs.

To review the program's progress on this and other recommendations, the ELAP Expert Review Panel will reconvene in Costa Mesa, CA from January 31, 2017 – February 2, 2017 to write a second Panel report regarding progress on reform initiatives and any additional recommendations they determine. The meeting will be open to the public and an agenda can be expected shortly from the facilitating agency, the Southern Coastal California Water Research Agency (SCCWRP).

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## New ELAB Membership

By Lara Phelps, USEPA

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB), which is a Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) Board to the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), was formed in 1997. Their general purpose is to provide advice or recommendations to the EPA on enhancing the Agency's measurement programs and facilitating the operation and expansion of a national environmental accreditation program. Every two (2) years, there is a membership transition to renew board membership and invite new members to participate (i.e., two-year term with a maximum of three (3) potential terms). Please join us in congratulating the October 2016 – 2018 Board.

### Renewed Members:

- Ms. Patricia M. Carvajal, Senior Water Quality Planner and Quality Assurance Officer, San Antonio River Authority
- Dr. Michael F. Delaney, Director of Laboratory Services, Massachusetts Water Resources Authority
- Mr. Michael Flournoy, President, Eurofins Frontier Global Systems Division
- Dr. Deyuan (Kitty) Kong, Senior Research Scientist, Chevron Energy Technology Company
- Dr. Henry Leibovitz, Chief of the Environmental Sciences, Rhode Island State Health Laboratories
- Dr. Mahesh P. Pujari, Senior Chemist and Quality Assurance Officer, City of Los Angeles California
- Dr. A. Dallas Wait, Principal, Gradient

### New Members:

- Dr. Kim A. Anderson, Professor, Oregon State University and Director, Food Safety and Environmental Stewardship
- Ms. Ann Bailey, Environmental Scientist, EcoChem, Inc.
- Dr. Brian T. Buckley, Executive Director Laboratories, Environmental & Occupational Health Sciences Institute
- Dr. Keri C. Hornbuckle, Donald E. Bently Professor of Engineering and Associate Dean for Academic Programs, College of Engineering, University of Iowa
- Mr. Jeffrey M. Loewe, Principal, NiSource Environmental
- Mr. Brad Meadows, Vice President and Laboratory Director, BSK Associates
- Ms. Sharon Mertens, Director, Water Quality Protection, Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District
- Mr. Elan Rieser, Senior Specialist, Con Edison EH&S ChemLab
- Ms. Debra Waller, Research Scientist, State of New Jersey Department of Health

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## TNI's New Quality Management Plan

By Lynn Bradley, NELAP Program Administrator

At its July 13, 2016, meeting, TNI's Board of Directors approved and adopted a Quality Management Plan (QMP) for the organization. The QMP has been in development for a few years and, after Policy Committee review, was offered to the Board as an implementable plan. The effective date for the QMP will be January 1, 2017, with a presentation on the plan provided during the TNI annual meeting in Houston, TX.

The plan commits TNI to conducting its operations within a quality management system that uses a consensus process for developing goals using strategic planning, measuring accomplishments against stated goals and meeting customer needs.



The document itself is about ten (10) pages long and summarizes TNI's stakeholder categories, as well as the structure and management, and the core programs (Consensus Standards Development, NEFAP, NELAP and Proficiency Testing). It discusses how strategic planning guides our activities and how staff, volunteers and vendors carry out those efforts in the programs and our supporting information management and technology activities. The QMP notes TNI's efforts to sustain customer satisfaction and commitment to professional ethics in all operations.

The quality management system elements focus on continuous improvement and include periodic internal and self-audits for all areas, as well as external audits as required (ANSI and fiscal audits, for example). Corrective action and complaint response processes are also in place.

The major changes that will impact member volunteers are the changes to committee charters and the new committee self-audits. In the past, committee charters have been updated annually to reflect changes in yearly activities and membership, as well as any new activities directed by TNI's strategic planning. Going forward, the committee charters themselves will be set once the strategic plan is in place, and only revised when that plan is updated. The charters will be supplemented by an annual implementation plan for each committee, to be presented at the TNI Annual Meeting. These annual plans will be reviewed and endorsed by the Board of Directors early each year and will guide TNI's operations through the coming year.

Committee self-audits will be required annually, using a standardized checklist where the first part is based on Committee Operations SOPs, the Bylaws, and the QMP, and the second part is based on the particular SOPs and policies of that committee or its parent program. The committee chairs will work with committee staff to accomplish these self-audits each year, with audit results and corrective actions tracked in a database. Further, on a five-year cycle, as determined by priorities and identified needs, traditional internal audits will be conducted for each TNI committee by a staff member or volunteer not involved with that committee's activities.

The QMP itself will be regularly reviewed, in synchrony with the strategic plan revisions, to ensure that it remains current and reflects all needed course corrections to keep TNI's operations functioning optimally.

See the full document on the TNI Board web page, <http://www.nelac-institute.org/committee/board>, under the Documents bar.

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### *ChairSpeaks —* **Musings from the TNI Chair**

This spring I was elected Chair of the TNI Board of Directors. I am honored by the Board's endorsement and humbled by the accomplishments of all others that have previously served TNI in this capacity. I have been with the Institute since its inception and will continue to work with all of you to contribute to TNI's progress in becoming the premier environmental accreditation organization in the United States.

There is so much that is admirable about TNI, but if I had to highlight one aspect it would be its human capital's extraordinary talent and enthusiasm. Cadres of volunteers share their expertise creating and revising standards for the accreditation of laboratories and field sampling and measurement organizations. Our Executive Director and his staff nimbly and effectively maintain the structure that keeps the Institute functioning mostly seamlessly. Our diverse membership is a pleasure to behold exchanging ideas and perspectives during our annual meetings. Our associated trainers and adjunct instructors consistently deliver products that educate, challenge, and fulfill the needs of the environmental community. Our vendor members are generous with their support.



*Alfredo Sotomayor*

As your Chair, I will stir that potent mix to promote interactions and foster relations. I may also challenge you to see connections that may not be apparent at first glance, ask you to exercise more flexibility than what you may be accustomed to, and invite you to take alternate paths to reach your destination. If some of this pushes you out of your comfort zone, allow me a little grace, but warn me if I go too far. This is all part of my modus. I hope you can come to appreciate my frequent, although not persistent, tendency to venture outside of the box and to engage in lateral thinking.

Isadora Duncan, the American modern dance pioneer, reputedly once said she could dance a chair. She meant she could dance anything, but what is novel about the pronouncement is how it pairs a physical everyday object with the creative impulse, freeing movement from rhythmical strictures and conventional trappings. I would like to do that, but I am not there. I can hear the dance and see the music, but this Chair has yet to dance a chair. I am working my way up to that, starting with an ottoman.

Only connect! Wish me luck.

*Alfredo*

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## TNI Committees Looking for New Membership

By Ilona Taunton, TNI

Every year, there are committee members that rotate off the committee they are serving on. Many TNI committee chairs are now reviewing membership applications to establish their committee for the coming year.

If you are interested in taking an active role in TNI, consider filling out an application. If your application is not chosen, you still have an opportunity to be an associate member of the committee.

Associate members participate in meetings and become active members of subcommittees, but do not have a vote on final committee business. Many committees choose their next members from their associate members.



You can find the committee membership application by clicking on the *Members Page* icon on the TNI website ([nelac-institute.org](http://nelac-institute.org)). Then click on “Join a Committee”.

Please contact Ilona Taunton ([ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org](mailto:ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org)) if you need any assistance or have any questions about joining a committee.

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### Update on TNI Ambassadors

By Steve Arms, Advocacy Committee Chair, and Carol Batterton, TNI

TNI's Ambassadors to non-NELAP states are continuing to make progress establishing relationships with non-NELAP state certification and accreditation officials. As reported last year, TNI recognized the need to increase our outreach and communication to non-NELAP states during the last strategic planning effort. In response to this need, TNI established a pilot project assigning an "ambassador" to eight (8) non-NELAP states. Over the past year, these ambassadors have been busy contacting and meeting with state officials.

Information gathered by the ambassadors indicates that some of these non-NELAP states are using portions of the TNI Standard in their state programs and are taking advantage of technical and training resources that TNI offers. TNI's goal with the ambassadors is to make it easier for these states to find the resources they need. In at least one instance, an ambassador has been able to provide information to an agency's senior management regarding their questions about becoming a NELAP accreditation body. While we realize that it is not realistic to expect that all states become NELAP accreditation bodies, TNI hopes that the ambassadors can be instrumental in clearing up any misconceptions the state may have about how national accreditation works, and to identify any barriers the non-NELAP state may have about establishing an accreditation program consistent with national standards.

TNI has incorporated the ambassadors into the Advocacy Committee as associate members in order to use their input in developing outreach programs. These ambassadors and the states they serve are as follows:

Arkansas:	Teresa Coins
Georgia:	Andrea Teal
Kentucky:	Zonetta English
Nevada:	Devon Morgan
South Carolina:	Bob Pullano
Tennessee:	Judy Morgan
Washington:	Lee Wolf
Wisconsin:	Paul Junio

TNI is interested in adding ambassadors to other non-NELAP states. If you would be interested in serving as a TNI ambassador to your state, please contact Steve Arms at [arms.steve@comcast.net](mailto:arms.steve@comcast.net) or Carol Batterton at [carbat@beecreek.net](mailto:carbat@beecreek.net).

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## November 2016



## Ethics Training Course Now Offers CEUs

By Ilona Taunton, TNI

The On-Demand training course, "Brown Bag 4: Ethics Training for the Environmental Professional", is now available with CEU credits. Students should order a certificate when they sign up for the course and submit the quiz upon completion. The course is offered for individuals or groups.

In recent years, there have been numerous requests to offer this webcast course with CEUs. Many people use this course as part of their new employee or refresher training to meet the requirements of TNI Standard V1:M2, Sections 4.2.8.1 and 5.2.7. The course cannot be used alone to meet the requirements of the Standard, but it does satisfy a portion of the required training. Organizations still need to supplement the course to include information about their own ethics policies and procedures.

Please contact Ilona Taunton ([ilonataunton@nelac-institute.org](mailto:ilonataunton@nelac-institute.org)) with any questions. This course, and many others, can be found under the Training & Meetings tab on the TNI website (<http://nelac-institute.org/content/eds-home.php>).

## Member Spotlight

### Richard Burrows: Climbing Higher

By Stephanie Drier, Minnesota Dept. of Health

If you are involved in regulated environmental chemistry, have attended a TNI training session or ventured to a TNI Conference, then you have probably encountered Richard Burrows. Richard is easily recognizable for his English accent and his dedication to sorting out and the re-thinking the method detection limit. After a lengthy and diligent process, the 2016 TNI Standard has been published and includes new procedures for chemistry detection and quantitation limits, and changes to calibration procedures. He has been on the TNI's Consensus Standard Chemistry Committee for six (6) years and he reflects, as his term draws to a close, *"It really has been a privilege to work with all the great people on the committee; they have put in an amazing amount of work. The standards development process has been long and arduous, but I think that the changes implemented will make things better in the future."* At the beginning of his career, he became involved in the inception of TNI because he knew he wanted to be involved in shaping the rules of environmental laboratory accreditation to ensure consistent standards across the states.

Richard is a problem-solver in his role of TNI Chemistry Committee Chair and in his daily profession at TestAmerica. His role in the environmental laboratory and with TNI has spanned more two (2) decades and all began with his interest in a chemistry set he received as a kid. Richard moved from the kid chemistry set and leaving marks on his kitchen ceiling to obtaining a PhD in analytical chemistry from the University of Bristol. He has used his curiosity and knowledge in his lengthy career with the largest environmental laboratory in the nation.

His current position, Corporate Technical Director, includes helping analysts with technical issues, as well as providing clients with a perspective on the problems they are confronting. *"It's quite rewarding to be able to remove a barrier that has been standing in the way of someone's progress,"* Richard says. The challenges lie in gathering information remotely and from over twenty-five (25) labs in the network and ensuring you ask the right question to fully understanding the issue before jumping to conclusions and proposing resolutions.

His commitment to chemistry and consensus standards development has not gone unnoticed, as recently Dr. Richard Burrows was presented the 2016 NEMC Charlie W. Carter award. The award recognized him for his commitment and collaboration in environmental chemistry and laboratory communities. The late Dr. Charlie Carter, who was Richard's manager, played an instrumental role as a member of the scientific community and the environmental business for over thirty (30) years. Richard Burrows stated upon receiving the award, *"It is an honor to be the first recipient of the award and it means a tremendous amount to me. Charlie was a colleague, mentor and friend for many years and receiving this award is wonderful. It was also bittersweet, as it is a reminder that Charlie is no longer with us. It was also wonderful that Charlie's wife, Carolyn, was able to be present the award at the ceremony. I feel that the award was really also a recognition of the work done by the whole TNI Chemistry committee and a validation of the importance of that work."*

Richard will continue his dedication to laboratory accreditation to ensure TNI is successful across several states to warrant that the hard work and time spent in the laboratory is useful and the data is reliable. When reflecting on the work of TNI over the years, he stated, *"The laboratory community has come a long way in the last 20 years and we are on the right track for continued success."* The standards are a great basis for new

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## Member Spotlight—Richard Burrows cont.



laboratories starting in the business by provides great guidelines for where to start and labs following the Standard provide data users the understanding and basis for the value of each data set. Richard goes on to say that, *"TNI is only as good as its members, and TNI has some great people. I have learned a lot from many TNI members over the years, and it has been great working everyone. The standards development process can seem like hard work, but it is worth it!"*

When Richard is not working or contributing to standards development, he is enjoying traveling to wonderful places like Thailand, Nepal, Greece, and Italy. He also enjoys rock climbing — his greatest climbing achievement was successfully topping the Nose on El Capitan in Yosemite. Climbing in Yosemite was one of the draws for Richard to relocate to the States and he has continued to enjoyed climbing there and around the world for forty-five (45) years. *"Climbing takes your mind of everything else, as you need not think about emails while clinging to a rock,"* said Burrows.

Please join the TNI community in congratulating Richard on the receipt of the 2016 NEMC Charlie Carter Award. Richard won the award for his dedication to the environmental laboratory community and for his leadership and contributions to the consensus standard development process for chemistry.



*Dr. Richard Burrows receives the 2016 Charlie Carter award.*

## 2017 Charlie Carter Award

Dr. Charles (Charlie) William Carter dedicated over 30 years to the environmental laboratory business and community. Considered a highly respected environmental testing genius by everyone fortunate enough to know him, he was brilliant and had relentless energy, work ethic, and passion for advancing the environmental testing industry by providing critical scientific expertise and support. Charlie was deeply involved in many environmental organizations and a frequent speaker at conferences, forums, and meetings. He was a leader in the industry and one you could count on always pushing the envelope to help the environmental measurement, monitoring, and laboratory community excel in meeting the highest levels of integrity and quality.

This award has been established to recognize a technically competent individual and leader in the environmental measurement, monitoring, or laboratory industry, embodying Charlie's strengths in scientific expertise, communication and mentoring. One (1) recipient will be selected annually and recognized at the National Environmental Monitoring Conference (NEMC) as part of the Environmental Measurement Symposium (Symposium) held jointly with the Forum on Environmental Accreditation. The recipient will provide the Monday Keynote Address at the Symposium, receive free registration for the full Symposium, and be presented with the award in the year that follows the nomination.

For more information and to submit a nomination, visit  
<http://nemc.us/carter-nominate.php>.

Nominations will close on December 31, 2016.