

**SUMMARY OF THE
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Teleconference
March 19, 2008; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT**

The Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board (ELAB) meeting was held via regular teleconference on March 19, 2008 from 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT. The original agenda for this meeting is provided as Attachment A. A list of participants is given in Attachment B. Action items are included in Attachment C. The official signature of the Chair or Vice-Chair is included in Attachment D.

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Pletl welcomed the members and guest and took a roll call of the Board. He also added that in order to help take more accurate minutes, Board members and guests should state their name before commenting.

The following guest participated in the call: Kirstin McCracken (TNI).

AGENDA ITEMS

APPROVAL OF OR CHANGES TO PREVIOUS MEETING/CALL MINUTES

Minutes from January 16, 2008 were approved by the Board after Dr. Pletl commented that there were some question marks as to who said what, but that it would be very difficult to go back now and fix this issue. Mr. Vitale brought up the question of whether or not individuals absent from a previous meeting should, in fact, comment on the minutes from that call. Dr. Pletl agreed that this may not be helpful and suggested that one should refrain from commenting unless there is a specific question or clarification regarding the missed meeting's minutes.

Minutes from February 20, 2008 were approved by the board after Mr. Lowry noted that some references were missing and/or inaccurate. Board members agreed that while it is not necessary to go back and try to change references at this point; issues such as this should be resolved in future meeting by speakers stating their name before commenting.

PROFICIENCY TESTING DISCUSSIONS

In the Board's February 20, 2008 meeting, the question was brought up of whether ELAB would participate jointly with TNI in regards to the Proficiency Testing (PT) issue. Mr. Lowry was in contact with Ms. McCracken, Chair of TNI's PT Subcommittee, and she agreed to participate in order to provide a TNI PT Committee update.

Ms. McCracken introduced the topic by stating that last fall they received three comments regarding a potential change in PT frequency from 2 PTs per TNI field of proficiency testing to 1. Those changes were deemed substantial and were put on hold. Ms. McCracken added that, in Newport, these issues regarding PT did arise, particularly in the LASC Committee, which has put together a white paper. She explained that what came out of an Advocacy Committee meeting is the plan that charges the PT Committee with evaluating each idea and making a ruling on whether the comments made about the PT frequency were convincing. Since then, the committee has met three times; a subgroup, of which Dr. Pletl is a part, was created with the primary purpose of determining what information and opinions are already out there, summarizing findings, and

updating the PT Committee in April. During their last call they learned that many people are gathering information on this topic and it is of great interest to many different groups. Ms. McCracken explained that the biggest challenge for the PT Committee is to figure out which opinions are relevant and applicable.

Mr. Dechant inquired as to whether it is possible to change the frequency of PT without changing the standard. He also asked what the time frame would be on such a change if the standard needed to be changed as well and if this would impact the environmental community quickly or not. Ms. McCracken answered that it is not likely to impact the environmental community quickly. She went on to explain that if they need to revise the standard formally, it may take up to two years, but TNI could issue an amendment to the current standard which could take effect in a more immediate time frame. However, Ms. McCracken explained, it would still be a process needing approval from the NELAC Board within TNI. To this, Mr. Dechant questioned whether or not an amendment could be made without full consensus from the TNI community. Ms. McCracken could not answer definitively at that time. Mr. Lowry also inquired whether the NELAC Board has adopted any of the TNI standards to date. Ms. McCracken informed the Board that the NELAC Board has not done so and are still in the assessment process, but that she will try to get feedback. Mr. Lowry then elucidated the two questions of interest: (1) when changes will be ready for the NELAC Board to adopt or not adopt and (2) whether the PT frequency can be changed without a vote from the TNI community.

Ms. McCracken expressed another concern; comments received so far are based on opinions. The assessment of whether or not more or less PTs are better should be based on some type of data, not opinion. Ms. McCracken explained that once they get information from various stakeholders, they can then find a means to evaluate which assessment technique is best.

Dr. Karimi then asked where these data are coming from, how these data will be assessed, and what the nature of the data are that this committee will be examining. To this, Mr. Lowry commented that the above question reiterates that the ELAB Board is nearly tasked with the same thing as the PT Committee, which is the reason they wanted Ms. McCracken to participate.

Mr. Dechant questioned whether or not, from the perspective of the PT Technical Committee, this was a committee task or a leadership task where they will draw from outside expertise. Ms. McCracken answered Mr. Dechant's question by stating that it is the latter; they want to set up a broad-based subcommittee comprised of many different people. She went on to explain that the driver of this goes far beyond TNI. Ms. McCracken commented that they wanted to make sure that the committee's decision would be a comprehensive change to proficiency testing which will not only be applicable to certain groups.

Ms. McCracken then brought up a paper entitled "Proficiency Testing in Analytical Chemistry," authored by the Royal Society of Chemistry. This paper, she explained, describes data collection techniques and statistical evaluations concerning such a data assessment. Ms. McCracken commented that there is already some useful information out there to help them figure out which data points to use to assess this matter, but that no decision has yet been made. She also stated that it makes sense to coordinate efforts between groups who are involved in this issue.

Dr. Pletl reminded the Board that there were two discussions taking place: one discussion concerning the frequency of PT samples, and another regarding a broader set of issues. He also commented that the broader discussion was not so much the focus of this meeting and that the focus of their discussion with TNI is PT frequency. Dr. Karimi and Mr. Lowry concurred with this statement from Dr. Pletl. Ms. McCracken then added that the last thing the TNI PT

Committee wants to do is to form their own assessments which are in conflict with another group who has done the same evaluation.

At this time, Mr. Dechant remarked that there are three possible scenarios for this situation: (1) the TNI PT Technical Committee takes the lead and ELAB participates actively (just frequency), (2) ELAB takes the lead and the TNI subcommittee participates actively, or (3) neither takes the lead and they proceed separately. Mr. Dechant explained that, given the general restrictions ELAB has within FACA requirements, one would think the best approach in regards to frequency would be for the ELAB Board to be an active participant. To this, Mr. Lowry added that they decided in last month's meeting that it would be most effective for ELAB to communicate the information to the EPA rather than TNI.

Dr. Pletl then expressed a concern that, as a lab community, they may not have consensus on the purpose of PTs. The purpose would better define what types of data are needed. Dr. Pletl suggested that perhaps working with TNI on this issue will facilitate reaching a consensus.

Before deciding on how to move forward, Ms. McCracken brought up the issue of a time frame. Board members agreed that the August time frame TNI's PT Committee is working from will work for them as well.

Board members then discussed and debated the issue of whether TNI or ELAB should take the lead and settled on the plan that TNI will take the lead in regards to collecting data in support of testing some hypothesis on PT frequency, but ELAB will still be responsible for transmitting information to the EPA. Dr. Pletl then remarked, in agreement with Dr. Karimi, that it will be much more effective to go to EPA with one voice. Board members agreed.

Mr. Lowry then asked whether Ms. McCracken will have ELAB members on her subcommittee. Ms. McCracken answered positively to this question and Mr. Lowry then made an inquiry amongst Board members to see who would like to participate. Mr. Pardue, Dr. Karimi, Mr. Dechant, and Mr. Lowry agreed to take part in the subcommittee. Dr. Karimi asked whether they want to combine their subcommittee meetings with TNI, to which Board members answered affirmatively.

Mr. Dechant then questioned whether, from the perspective of the ELAB working group, the primary concern will be with the generic, having the frequency issue being less important. Mr. Lowry commented that Ms. Morgan is now preparing two separate letters to EPA, one on frequency and one on general issues. He went on to state that since the frequency topic has been moved under their work group, it is a primary concern. Ms. McCracken then indicated that it will be constructive to get influence from various backgrounds for the subcommittee. She added that they might end up establishing a different PT frequency for micro than for radio chemistry; so many backgrounds would be preferred. Mr. Lowry offered to send along to Ms. McCracken email information for the ELAB members who agreed to participate in the subcommittee.

Ms. McCracken told the Board that the next scheduled PT Committee call is April 8, 2008 at 1 p.m. EST. She also notified Board members that they should expect an email from Tom McGenich about 7 days prior to the call. This call, Ms. McCracken explained, will be entirely dedicated to the issues they have been discussing and that it would a good time to vote to officially establish a subcommittee.

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Mr. Lowry then thanked Ms. McCracken for attending and explaining to the Board what TNI is doing in regards to PT frequency. Ms. McCracken thanked the Board for agreeing to be involved as well.

MUR MEMO DISCUSSION

Dr. Pletl informed the Board that, as to his understanding, the Methods Update Rule announcement distributed by Mr. Wyeth was for informational purposes.

NEMC ELAB MEETING

Dr. Pletl asked the Board whether or not a face-to-face meeting in Washington would be favorable. To this, Board members stated that a face-to-face meeting would be beneficial. It is to take place the week of August 10, 2008 in Washington. Dr. Pletl, Dr. Karimi, Mr. Pardue, Mr. Dechant, and Mr. Lowry agreed to attend.

COMMENTS AND/OR ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Before signing off, Mr. Dechant mentioned that the EPA is in the process of evaluating a second study, regarding detection limit scenarios. He added that, as this is moving forward, he does not believe much can be done until the study is completed and reviewed. To this, Dr. Pletl reiterated that the EPA is looking for reviewers of a study plan in order to test the approach that they would like to promulgate. Mr. Dechant added that he has been initially contacted but that EPA has not made a decision yet on the review team. Mr. Dechant signed off at 1:50 p.m. EST.

Dr. Pletl addressed the remaining Board members (Dr. Karimi, Mr. Pardue, Mr. Lowry, and himself) and stated that, as there is no longer a quorum, no decisions can be made, but open discussion can carry on. Board members decided it would be appropriate to adjourn early.

ADJOURN/CLOSING REMARKS

Dr. Pletl adjourned the Board meeting at 1:55 p.m. EST.

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Attachment A

**AGENDA
for
ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**

March 19, 2008; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT

Conference Call

Call in number: 1-866-299-3188; code 9195415544#

	Topic	Individual Responsible
1	Opening Remarks	DFO
2	Roll Call for ELAB Members Introduction of Guests	Chair
3	Review and approval of meeting minutes <ul style="list-style-type: none">January 16, 2008February 20, 2008	All
4	Proficiency Testing Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none">Kirstin McCracken - TNI	All
5	NEMI missing guidance	Morgan
6	Website Update	DFO
7	Work Group Reports <ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitoring Work GroupLaboratory Management Work GroupMeasurement and Technology Work Group	Chair Morgan Flowers Lowry
8	MUR memo discussion	Wyeth
9	FACDQ discussion	Dechant
10	NEMC ELAB meeting	Chair
11	Comments and/or Additional Issues	All
12	Open Discussion and Comments from Guests	All
13	Review Action Items and Assignments	Chair
14	Adjourn/Closing Remarks	Chair/DFO

MEMBERSHIP LISTING AND GUESTS**ELAB MEETING****March 19, 2008; 1:00 – 3:00 PM EDT**

Attendance (Y/N)	Name	Affiliation
Y	Dr. Jim Pletl (Chair)	Hampton Roads Sanitation District Representing: Municipal Env. Lab.
N	Mr. Robert (Bob) K. Wyeth	Columbia Analytical Services, Inc. Representing: ACIL
Y	Ms. Lara P. Autry, DFO	US Environmental Protection Agency Representing: EPA
N	Mr. Paul Banfer	EISC (Environnemental Info. Sys. Corp.) Representing: Information Systems
N	Mr. Eddie Clemons	Golden Specialty Laboratory Representing: INELA
N	Mr. Scot Cocanour	Promium Representing: Lab. Customers of Information Technology
Y	Mr. Gerald (Gary) Dechant	Analytical Quality Associates, Inc. Representing: DOE Analy. Mgmt. Pgm.
N	Dr. Jeff Flowers	Flowers Chemical Laboratories, Inc. Representing: Elected Officials for Local Gvt
Y	Dr. Reza Karimi	Southwest Research Institute Representing: Non-profit Research and Development Organizations with Academia
Y	Mr. Jeff Lowry	Environmental Resource Associates Representing: Proficiency Testing Providers
N	Ms. Judy Morgan	Environmental Science Corp. Representing: Commercial Env. Lab.
Y	Mr. Joe Pardue	Parallax, Inc. Representing: Clients of QS Services
N	Ms. Nan Thomey	Environmental Chemistry, Inc. Representing: Small Laboratories
Y	Mr. Rock Vitale	Environmental Standards, Inc. Representing: Third Party Assessors

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Attachment C

ACTION ITEMS

Dr. Pletl will sign and publish minutes from January and February ELAB meetings so that they may be posted on the web site.

Most of the Measurement and Technology Working Group members will participate in an April 8, 2008 call with TNI PT group.

Mr. Lowry will send to Ms. McCracken the email information for the four ELAB Board members who will be participating in the subcommittee.

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Attachment D

I hereby certify that these are the final version of minutes for the Environmental Laboratory Advisory Board Meeting held on March 19, 2008.

Signature Chairman

Jim Pletl

Print Name Chairman