

Summary of the TNI Credentials Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 28, 2024 1:00 pm Eastern

1. Welcome and Roll Call

Ken welcomed everyone to this meeting. Attendance is recorded in Attachment 1.

After adding the member election of David Smith, the agenda was approved unanimously following a motion by Joann, seconded by Elizabeth (see Attachment 2). The minutes from November 15 and December 6, 2023, and January 24, 2024, were approved unanimously after a motion by Scott, seconded by Patty.

2. Election of New Member Applicant

Ken asked David Smith to introduce himself. Joann moved and Theresa seconded that David be elected to voting membership, and approval was unanimous. Welcome, David!

3. Updates

Jerry explained that the Credentials conference session brought a good amount of feedback on the exam questions, especially about the clarity of wording to avoid confusion, and that he has asked a short list of experienced individuals (who are unlikely to seek the Quality Management credential) with a request to review and edit the questions by April 1.

Jerry also praised William's presentation of the software, saying that it is better than he ever imagined it could be, and noted that William identified the need for discussion to possibly add an opt-out to the public databased listing. Plans are to expand this software so that it can be used for tracking completion and exams for TNI's training courses.

4. Next Role to be Addressed

This meeting continued the discussion from conference about the next role, focusing on the belief that a Technical Specialist (TS) and a laboratory Assessor need essentially the same technical skills and knowledge of lab methods and equipment, so that KSAs created for the TS role could also become a portion of the Assessor KSAs. Assessors also need knowledge of how to assess plus some of the "softer" skills and abilities ("people skills" and interviewing, for instance) that were addressed back in the early days of the Competency Task Force (a draft KSA document that was set aside until the V2M1 language is finalized).

Neither of the modules (V1M2 for TS and V2M1 for assessor competency) are finalized yet, but the TS language for Volume 1 modules primarily addresses education and experience qualifications, leaving the technical skills for each discipline up to the judgement of the lab, whereas the assessor competency language (V2M1) will also include some specific training requirements that address each of the technical disciplines.

We anticipate that there will be far more Technical Specialists than assessors, However, there is a growing body of anecdotal evidence that Third Party Assessors (TPAs), particularly in California, are excessively focused on minor details that are relatively inconsequential while seeming to lack a focus on the overall quality system's effectiveness in a lab.

Discussion went back and forth about which of these two areas should be the next focus, but there was never a question that the TS role shares its KSAs with the assessor role, but the

assessor role is far broader. Also, both roles share some of the Quality Manager KSAs – none of these three can be looked at in complete isolation due to the amount of overlap among them, and the Technical Specialist likely needs less knowledge of the overall quality management system. At the same time, an assessor does not need to know all of the details that a TS needs, about the technical requirements of an analytical discipline, however defined. There was general agreement that even the TS credential ought not to focus on the fine details of analytical operations (focus on fundamentals but not the “knob-turning” of instrumentation, for instance) – a credential cannot reasonably cover that level of detail, as equipment and SOPs are not identical in different labs. One suggestion was that we choose one module and try to define what an assessor needs to know with respect to that technical discipline.

Eventually, consensus was reached, that the next role should be the Technical Specialist. Jerry will draft a KSA list for an inorganic, non-metal chemical lab TS (colorimetric, gravimetric, ion chromatography, BOD, etc.) for the March meeting.

5. New Business

Ken noted that the August conference will provide for only a short, half-hour session for Credentials. Jerry noted that registration will open on April 1, and that there will be a special session for California labs on Friday after the NEMC conference ends.

6. Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled video/teleconference will be on **Wednesday, March 27, 2024, at 1 pm Eastern**. The agenda, a Teams meeting link, and any necessary documents will be sent in advance.

Attachment 1

Credentials Committee Roster

NAME		EMAIL	AFFILIATION	STAKE-HOLDER CATEGORY	Present?
Paul	Banfer	paul.banfer@eisc.net	EISC	Other	Yes
Kenneth	Brown	kbrown@escondido.org	City of Escondido	Lab	Yes
Patricia	Carvajal	pmcarvajal@sara-tx.org	San Antonio River Authority	Lab	Yes
Steve	Drielak	drielak-associates@usa.net	Drielak & Associates	Other	No
Amanda	Dutko	adutko@fairway-laboratories.com	Fairway Laboratories	Lab	No
Stacey	Fry	Stacey.fry@cannabis.ca.gov	CA Dept. of Cannabis Control	Other	Yes
Salima	Haniff	Salima.haniff@bvlabs.com	Bureau Veritas Labs	Lab	No
Harold	Longbaugh	Harold.Longbaugh@houston.tx.gov	City of Houston	Lab	Yes
Theresa	Johnson	Theresa.Johnson@mccampbell.com	McCampbell Analytical, Inc.	Lab	Yes
Joann	Slavin	joann.slavin@health.ny.gov	NY DOH	AB	Yes
Scott	Siders	siders6six@yahoo.com	Retired	Other	Yes
David	Smith	david.smith@antylia.com	Environmental Express	Other	Yes
Alfredo	Sotomayor	asotomayor@mmsd.com	Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewer District	Lab	Yes
Elizabeth	Turner	Elizabeth.turner@pacelabs.com	Pace Labs, Inc.	Lab	Yes
Associate Members:					
Ezekiel	Lebron	Ezekiel.Lebron@waterboards.ca.gov	CA ELAP	AB	No
Jerry	Thao	Jerry.thao@pacelabs.com	Pace Labs, Inc.	Lab	No
Staff:					
Jerry	Parr	Jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org	TNI Executive Director		Yes
Lynn	Bradley	Lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org	TNI Program Administrator		Yes

Attachment 2

Agenda as amended, February 28, 2024

- Welcome and Roll Call
- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes (November, December and January minutes attached)
- Election of New Member
- Update on Conference Session and Follow-up, Including Exam Question Vetting
- Discussion and Decision on Next Role to be Addressed (committee vote or consensus, TBD)
 - Technical Specialist (if current V1M2 revision language is settled or nearly so)
 - Assessor Competency (current V2M1 revision language appears to be settled, see also attached documents when this effort was set aside)
 - Other Possibilities as Identified in Discussion
- Next Steps
- New Business
- Adjourn