

Laboratory Accreditation System Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, San Antonio, TX
Tuesday, January 10, 2023 3:30 pm Central

1) Welcome and Introductions

Maria welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced those committee members present. Attendance is recorded in Attachment A and the outline of Maria's presentation may be found in Attachment B.

2) Recent LASEC Activities

Maria discussed LASEC's mission and its major activities over the past year. Those were the Mentor Sessions and Assessment Forums (January 2022 in San Antonio and August 2022 in Arlington, VA) plus substantial changes and improvements to both the Standards Interpretation Request (SIR) Management and Implementation Guidance (IG) development processes (SOPs 3-105 and 3-114, respectively). The committee also reviewed the Draft Standard V1M6 and the Revised Draft Standard V1M3, providing recommendations to NELAP AC about their suitability.

Dorothy noted that the Mentor Session -- combined with the Assessment Forum for three separate but related sessions at this conference -- had good attendance (more than 90 people) and went smoothly. At recent conferences, the topics for the Mentor Session and Assessment Forum have been coordinated to be complementary but this is the first time they have actually been combined. The topic was a deep dive into internal audits, focusing on areas not usually addressed with particular emphasis on consumables. The final session, acting out various scenarios relevant to internal audits was fun, educational, and provided good networking interactions. Dorothy noted that Calista Daigle and Val Slaven have agreed to take over the Mentor Sessions after the 2023 summer conference in Minneapolis, as she will be retiring before the January 2024 conference in Columbus, Ohio.

Maria explained that, for the future, LASEC will review all Draft Standards (individual modules) and Revised Draft Standards as they become available in order to provide its recommendation to the NELAP Accreditation Council, sustain its management of SIRs, and provide Mentor Session and Assessment Forum sessions for the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation in Summer 2023 (NEMC in Minneapolis) and January 2024 (Columbus, OH)

3) SIR Update

Maria explained the processes used to address Standards Interpretation Requests (SIRs) and noted the changes made to both the SIR and Implementation Guidance processes during the past year. An enhanced SIR Tracking Spreadsheet monitors timeframes for the various procedural steps, and LASEC receives periodic reports on adherence to the timeframes in the SOP. Development of Implementation Guidances is not tracked in similar fashion, as those are strictly voluntary.

For SIRs, the SIR Management SOP 3-105 was updated in fall 2022, to have the SIR Subcommittee provide recommendations to LASEC for formal approval (rather than being handled within the subcommittee), as well as implementing a super-majority approval requirement for all SIR decisions.

The Implementation Guidance SOP 3-114 was updated fall 2022 to provide for both development and publication to require approval from LASEC after review by SIR Subcommittee, with a simple majority vote considered adequate for these non-binding "best practice" documents.

4) Discussion/Questions from Participants

The only question asked was whether LASEC can facilitate creation of a way to connect NELAP with the National Environmental Field Activities Program (NEFAP) for those labs actively involved with sample collection.

Maria thanked everyone for coming to the session.

5) Next Meeting

The next regular teleconference will be Thursday, January 26, 2023, at 1:30 pm Eastern. The agenda and any needed documents will be sent in advance of the meeting.

The next SIR Subcommittee teleconference will be on Thursday, January 19, at 1:30 pm Eastern.

**Attachment A TNI LABORATORY ACCREDITATION SYSTEMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
ROSTER**

	NAME	EMAIL	Term End Date	INTEREST	AFFILIATION	S/H CATEGORY	PRESENT
1	Maria Friedman, Chair	gamfriedman@gmail.com	1/23 (first term)	SIRs	CA ELAP	AB	Yes
2	Harold Longbaugh, Vice Chair	harold.longbaugh@houston.tx.gov	1/25 (3rd term)	SIRs	Houston Lab	Lab	Yes
3	Aaren Alger	Aaren.s.alger@gmail.com	1/23 (first term)	SIRs, Assessment Forum	Alger Consulting & Training	Other	Yes
4	Patty Carvajal	pmcarvajal@sara-tx.org	1/25 (first term)		San Antonio River Authority	Lab	Yes
5	Sumy Cherukara	Cherukara.sumy@epa.gov	1/23 (second term)		EPA R2	Other	No
6	Stacie Crandall	scrandall@hrsdc.com	1/24 (first term)	SIRs	Hampton Roads Sanitation Distr.	Lab	No
7	Mike Delaney	mike@mikedelaney.org	1/23 (first term)		Retired (MWRA)	Other	No
8	Jack Farrell	aex@ix.netcom.com	1/25 (second term)	Mentor Session	Analytical Excellence	Other	No
9	Bill Hall	george.w.hall@des.nh.gov	1/26 (first term)	SIRs	NH DES	AB	No
10	Silky Labie	elcatllc@centurylink.net	1/25 (second term)	SIRs	ELCAT	Other	No
11	Bill Hall	George.Hall@des.nh.gov	1/25 (second term)		NH ELAP	NELAP AB	No
12	Louise McGinley	louise.mcginley@tceq.texas.gov	1/25 (second term)	SIRs	TCEQ	NELAP AB	Yes
13	Shari Pfalmer	Shari.pfalmer@pacelabs.com	1/25 (first term)		Pace Analytical	Lab/FSMO	Yes
14	Michele Potter	michele.potter@dep.nj.gov	1/24 (second term)		NJ DEP	NELAP AB	Yes

Associate Members

	Debbie Bond	DBOND@southernco.com		SIRs	Alabama Power	Lab	No
	Myron Gunsalus	ngunsalus@kdheks.gov			KS Lab Director	NELAP AB	No
	Margaret Hurst	mhurst@acz.com			ACZ Laboratories	Lab	No
	Carl Kircher	carl.kircher@doh.state.fl.us			FL DOH	NELAP AB	No
	Dorothy Love	dorothylove@ET.eurofinsus.com		Mentor Session	Eurofins Environmental	Lab	Yes
	Mitzi Miller	mitzi.miller@moellerinc.com		Mentor Session & Assmt Forum	Dade Moeller	Other	No
	Judy Morgan	Judy.Morgan@pacelabs.com		Assessment Forum	Pace Analytical	Lab/FSMO	No

	William Ray	Bill_Ray@williamrayllc.com			Wm Ray Consultants	Other	No
	Mohan Sabaratnam	msabaratnam@iasonline.org			IAS	AB (non-gov.)	No
	Nick Straccione	nstraccione@emsl.com		Mentor Session	EMSL	Lab	No
	Katie Strothman	katie@sanderslabs.net			Sanders Labs	Lab	No
	Program Admin. Lynn Bradley	Lynn.bradley@nelac-institute.org					No

Attachment B – Outline of Presentation

Activities of LASEC Maria Friedman, Chair California ELAP

Agenda

- ❖ Welcome and Introductions
- ❖ Recent LASEC Activities
- ❖ SIR Update
- ❖ Participant Feedback Request
 - ❖ Are there other issues that would benefit from LASEC attention?
- ❖ Discussion/Questions from the Participants
- ❖ Adjourn

LASEC Members

Our Mission

- ❖ Manage TNI's efforts in supporting a national program for the accreditation of environmental laboratories by
- ❖ Supporting the NELAP Accreditation Bodies (ABs) and non-governmental ABs (NGABs) recognized to accredit to the TNI Environmental Laboratory Sector (ELS) Standard
- ❖ Enabling stakeholders such as laboratories, proficiency testing providers and data users to effectively participate in the development of, adoption and implementation of, and compliance with the TNI standards

Recent LASEC Activities

- ❖ Mentor Session and Assessment Forum
 - ❖ Forum on Laboratory Accreditation, January 2022
 - ❖ Environmental Measurement Symposium, August 2022
 - ❖ Mentor Sessions and Assessment Forums are now recorded and made available as webcasts through TNI's Educational Delivery System
- ❖ Improvements to SIR management processes and Implementation Guidance development
- ❖ Reviewed Draft Standard V1M6 & Revised Draft Standard V1M3, provided recommendations to NELAP AC

Mentor Sessions

The Sessions

- Encourage networking and collaboration
- Provide for knowledge sharing (guidance)
- Reduce barriers to:
 - ✦ getting accredited
 - ✦ maintaining accreditation

Speakers include

- State Accreditors
- Assessors
- Lab Managers
- Quality Assurance Specialists

➤ Instrument Specialists

Assessment Forum

Started in 2005

Goal

- ❖ To provide an opportunity for laboratories and laboratory assessors to share information on how to improve the laboratory assessment process

Topics

- ❖ Feedback from the previous participants
- ❖ Hot topics of the day
- ❖ Suggestions from individuals
- ❖ Member presentation interests

2023 Joint Mentor Session and Assessment Forum: The Dark Side of Internal and External Auditing – Stuff We Rarely Talk About Publicly, Part 1

❖ **Assessment Forum**

- Session Moderator: Judy Morgan, Pace Laboratories VP and Chief Regulatory Officer
- *Purpose of Assessments – benefits to operations and quality*
- *Dealing with Differences – handling disagreements between the lab and an assessor or different agencies*
- *Etiquette – take the gloves off – no need for tears*

2023 Joint Mentor Session and Assessment Forum: The Dark Side of Internal and External Auditing – Stuff We Rarely Talk About Publicly, Part 2

❖ **Assessment and Mentor Combo**

- Moderators: Dorothy Love, Eurofins, and Judy Morgan, Pace Labs
- *Focused Reports and Responses – the need to be more concise*
- *Evaluating Vendors, Suppliers, Consumables – by the assessors*
- *Evaluating Vendors, Suppliers, Consumables – by the labs*
- *Handling Issues with Vendors or Suppliers*

2023 Joint Mentor Session and Assessment Forum: The Dark Side of Internal and External Auditing – Stuff We Rarely Talk About Publicly, Part 3

❖ **Mentor Session**

- Moderator: Dorothy Love, Eurofins Environment Testing
National Business Line Service Center QA Director
- *Acting on scenarios covered in the Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning sessions – audience participation, panel discussion*

SIR and SIR Management Update

- ❖ New submittals receive an acceptance decision within 5 business days

Total/Valid	Year
8/4	2016
8/2	2017
19/14	2018
30/6	2019

26/10	2020
29/17	2021
24/13	2022 plus 2 withdrawn

SIR Process

SOP 3-105 – Standards Interpretation Request

Criteria for a valid SIR

- ❖ Must contain only one question
- ❖ Must apply directly and clearly to cited section of Standard
- ❖ Question is understood without supposition
- ❖ Question is compelling – the language used in the Standard section cited is not clear or might have more than one interpretation
- ❖ Cannot be used to settle a dispute between a laboratory and an AB
- ❖ Is not a “how to” question or a method interpretation question
- ❖ Where possible, the question should be framed in a manner that solicits a “Yes” or “No” answer

LASEC is responsible for verifying that all SIRs relevant to the module have been reviewed for incorporation when each module of the TNI Environmental Laboratory Sector Standard undergoes revision

Expert Committees are requested to always mention in minutes and discussions that their SIR responses do not become part of the Standard until approved as implementable by the NELAP Accreditation Council and then are posted to the TNI website

LASEC SIR Process Changes

- ❖ Enhanced SIR Tracking Spreadsheet Now Monitors Timeframes
- ❖ SIR Management SOP 3-105 – updated in fall 2022
 - ❖ SIR Subcommittee now provides recommendations to LASEC for formal approval with required super-majority vote for all SIR decisions
 - ❖ LASEC receives periodic reports on adherence to timeframes
- ❖ Implementation Guidance SOP 3-114 – updated in fall 2022
 - ❖ Development and publication both require approval of LASEC after review by SIR Subcommittee (simple majority vote)

Coming Up Next

- ❖ LASEC will review all Draft Standards (individual modules) and provide its recommendation to the NELAP Accreditation Council
- ❖ Mentor Session and Assessment Forum sessions for the Forum on Laboratory Accreditation in Winter, 2023
 - ❖ Suggestions for topics are welcome!
- ❖ LASEC will sustain its management of SIRs

Any other issues?
Questions?
Discussions?