Professional Development Program Executive Committee (PDP EC)
Winter Forum Meeting Summary - Boston
January 13, 2026

1. Roll Call

Joe Manzella, Chair, called the meeting of the PDP EC to order at 8am Eastern on January 13, 2026, in Boston, MA. The meeting was attended by 6 Voting Committee members (see Attachment A).

2. Winter Forum 2026 – Boston, MA

Joe provided a presentation he used to organize the meeting (Attachment B). Highlights and discussion:

Scholarship Program Update

- See slides in Attachment B.
- Vendors were given the opportunity to donate towards the Jack Farrell Analytical Excellence Scholarship. He thanked IAS for their contribution.
- The Scholarship webpage that includes the application is now complete. A press release needs to be developed. Joe, Sharon and Ilona will work on this after the meeting and distribute it for Committee feedback today so it can go live.
- Awards are expected to be issued in May and funds will be usable for 18 months.
- Scholarship covers:
  - TNI training that helps towards a credential or digital badge
  - Credentialing fees
  - Digital badges

  Does not cover:
  - Travel
  - Non-TNI courses
- Funds will be credited directly to recipients' TNI accounts (no direct cash distribution).
- A scoring system is under development to ensure objectivity when reviewing the applications.
- Vendor and member donations are now enabled.
- More sponsorship opportunities need to be explored.

Emerging Professionals / Emerging Leaders Initiative

The Committee discussed defining and structuring an initiative focused on professional growth and engagement. While discussing Emerging Professionals, it lead to a discussion on Emerging Leaders.

Defining "Emerging"

- There was consensus that "Emerging" is not age-based. Emerging may be a growth mindset rather than career stage. It may include individuals who:

  - Are new to TNI.
  - Are transitioning roles or disciplines.
  - Are seeking greater responsibility.
  - Want to move from observer to contributor.
  - Are preparing for leadership roles.
  - It was noted that people with minimal experience are not typically the ones that come to our conferences or necessarily have TNI memberships.
- Examples of similar emerging professional groups were given:
  - ASTM
  - ANSI
  - FSEA (gives a mentor)
  - Association of Public Health Labs – Emerging Leaders
  - State of Vermont – Leadership programs that include training and mentorship – work with people that want to take on more responsibilities in their work.
  - Duncan volunteered to pull together information on examples of how other organizations handle this type of initiative.

Expansion of Emerging Options

- Build opportunities for people to connect with other people that can help them expand what they are doing now.
- Next generation of Committee Chairs
- In TNI, pair people with a mentor – an AB, then an industry person, etc …
- Need to look at how new people experience a conference and improve it
  - Approaching senior leaders can be intimidating.
  - Positive, welcoming interactions leave lasting impressions.
  - Early awkward or isolating experiences can discourage engagement
  - First impressions and intentional onboarding matter
  - Identify leaders with a different color badge so new people know who to reach out to. Badge identifiers for: Board members, AB representatives, Ambassadors, Staff. The goal is to make help visible without labeling new attendees.
  - Social event for first timers to meet people.
  - Mentor Session is a great suggestion to give to new people.
  - Maybe send an email to new people with suggestions for getting the most out of the conference. Networking tips.
  - Discount for new attendees.
  - Table for new people.
  - It was noted not to just concentrate on new people, because it sometimes takes a meeting or two before people start rising as leaders.
  - Use Slido for comments – some people don't like coming to the microphone.
  - Survey new people to help refine the onboarding process.
- Mentorship is important
  - Assign mentors to scholarship recipients
  - Encourage credentialed professionals to serve as mentors.
  - Allow multiple mentors over time (technical, leadership, AB, peer).
  - Integrate mentorship into leadership development pathways.
  - "Phone a Friend" Concept (extends beyond conferences, less intimidating)
- Social

  The Committee discussed the value of informal, low-pressure social events.
  - Examples:

    - Bowling outings
    - Glass-blowing event (San Antonio)
    - Mystery dinner boat cruise
    - Lab tours
    - Vendor-hosted events
    - Walkable local activities
- Benefits Identified
    - Encourages interaction in a non-technical setting.
    - Builds shared experiences.
    - Helps hesitant attendees participate.
    - Creates stronger professional relationships.
- Logistical Considerations
    - Organized events create registration and liability complexity.
    - Capacity limitations can exclude attendees.
    - Informal, self-organized activities may be more feasible. Use of message board or coordination platform to allow attendees to self-organize social outings.

Discussion throughout the session shared a goal to move members from attendance to engagement, from engagement to contribution, and from contribution to leadership.

Quarterly Livestream Proposal

Joe asked how can we bring the experience of being at a conference to people who do not get the opportunity to attend? - "Quality Time with TNI"

- Quarterly live webinar – 1 hour
    - Live-streamed event.
    - Interactive chat/Q&A.
    - Rotating themes such as:
        - Ask an AB
        - Meet a Member
        - TNI history & leadership perspectives
        - Hot industry topics
        - Consensus standards process overview
        - FoPT table explanation
        - Technical Specialist spotlight
        - Back-to-basics refreshers:
        - QC fundamentals
        - Traceability
        - Support equipment
        - "Why" behind requirements
- Objectives
    - Provide access to non-traveling members.
    - Encourage outreach and networking.
    - Increase understanding of standards development.
    - Build confidence to engage at future conferences.
- Funding Considerations – Livestream
    - Estimated cost: Could be as much as $5 per participant depending on details
    - Funding options discussed:
        - Vendor sponsorship (probably place to start)

- Brief vendor promotional segment during session.
- Members-only access.
- Small participation fee.
- Modest dues adjustment.
- Integration with existing training budgets.

3. **New Business**

   None

4. **Next Meeting and Close**

   The next meeting will be by teleconference on February 17, 2025, at 11am Eastern.

   Joe adjourned the meeting at 10:00am Eastern.

Attachment A

Participants
PDP Executive Committee

Voting Members	Represent	Affiliation	Contact Information
Joe Manzella **Chair** Present	Lab (Training)	Orange County Sanitation District	jmanzella@ocsan.gov
Sharon Mertens **Vice-Chair** Present	Other	Consultant	skmertens@icloud.com
Kenneth Brown Present	Lab (Credentials)	City of Escondido	kenneth.brown@escondido.gov
Robin Cook Absent	Lab	City of Daytona Beach	cookrobin@CODB.US
Calista Daigle Present	Lab (Training)	Pace Analytical Services	calista.daigle@pacelabs.com
Theresa Johnson Absent	Lab (Credentials)	McCampbell Analytical	theresa.johnson@mccampbell.com
Harold Longbaugh Absent	Lab (Credentials)	City of Houston	harold.longbaugh@houstontx.gov
Duncan Millar Present	AB	IAS	dmillar@iasonline.org
Elizabeth Turner Present	Lab (Training)	Eurofins	elizabeth.turner@et.eurofinsus.com
Jerry Parr Present	TNI Executive Director	TNI	Jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org
Ilona Taunton Present	Program Administrator	TNI	ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org
Associate Members:	**Present**		

Attachment B – Presentation Slides

Insert PDF when minutes are sent for posting.