Professional Development Program Executive Committee (PDP EC)
Meeting Summary
October 20, 2026

1. Roll Call and Approvals

Joe Manzella, Chair, called the meeting of the PDP EC to order at 11am Eastern on October 20, 2026. The meeting was attended by 11 Voting Committee members (a quorum was met) and 2 Associate members (see Attachment A).

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

A motion was made by Duncan to approve the September 15, 2026, with a correction to the spelling of Gouthami's name. The motion was seconded by Ken. A vote was taken: For – 10, Against – 0, Abstain – 1 (Michelle had not had an opportunity to review them). The minutes were approved.

Action Items can be found in Attachment B.

2. Credentials Committee Update – Ken

Ken reported that the Credentials Committee continues to work on developing the knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) for the organics discipline. There were no additional significant updates or issues to report.

3. Training Committee Update - Calista

The Training Committee reviewed the evaluation surveys from the Houston conference's mentor session and assessment forum. Overall feedback for both sessions was positive. However, survey participation remains relatively low compared with the number of attendees.
To improve response rates, the Training Committee discussed having attendees open and begin completing the surveys on their phones before the sessions conclude. This approach may encourage more participants to provide feedback while the sessions are still underway.

The Committee discussed the topics and formats for the January conference sessions:

- Assessment Forum: The session will focus on calibration, including what constitutes effective calibration, selecting appropriate models, establishing midpoints, and other related considerations. Calista will work with Judy and Val to finalize the content and agenda.
- Mentor Session: This session will be structured as an open discussion and forum addressing assessment findings, recurring issues, and common challenges. The Training Committee hopes to collect questions from attendees in advance, develop a list of frequently encountered findings, and provide opportunities for additional questions and discussion during the session.

  Jerry also offered to share a compilation of audit findings from approximately 60 California laboratories, prepared by consultant Diane Lauver. The information includes graphs and detailed explanations and may provide useful material for the mentor session.

The Training Committee also finalized its discussion regarding Professional Development Hours (PDH). The Training Committee decided not to pursue an official process for awarding PDH for conference attendance. Verifying full conference attendance would create an administrative burden. Although attendees may continue to use conference participation toward professional development requirements through other organizations, TNI will not establish a formal verification process.
The Training Committee is planning to review and update the online application to propose a future training. Ilona noted that the application needs to be updated before a short instructional video can be developed to guide prospective trainers through the application process.

Additional discussion included identifying potential instructors for technical training courses. Ilona will contact Rock Vitale regarding possible organics training opportunities and has already contacted Tony regarding a corrective action course.

4. Jack Farrell Scholarship Program

Joe provided an update regarding one of the current scholarship recipients, who has completed her planned coursework, including Silky's 2016 TNI Standard Implementation course and Marlene's Small Laboratory Implementation series. She is now beginning the process of completing her digital badges.

Jerry Parr clarified that scholarship recipients are not required to take examinations associated with individual training courses if they do not intend to obtain the corresponding course badge. The primary examination requirement is associated with earning the applicable digital badges. This distinction is important because some course examinations involve additional fees, which recipients must consider when managing their scholarship budgets.

<u>Scholarship Application Schedule and Procedures</u>

The Committee continued its work on revising the scholarship schedule, following the discussion at the September meeting. The revised schedule will maintain a January opening period but extend the application deadline to approximately August, following the second conference of the year. This will provide more time to promote the scholarship, recruit applicants, and communicate opportunities throughout the year.

The revised process will also allow applications to be reviewed as they are received rather than waiting until the end of the application period. The scholarship evaluation Workgroup will conduct a more concentrated review and approval process toward the end of the year, with the goal of notifying recipients in time for the next scholarship cycle.

Joe has been revising the scholarship standard operating procedures (SOPs) to reflect the proposed schedule changes. The scholarship evaluation Workgroup includes Joe, Ilona, Sharon, Anand, Robin, and Salima.

The Workgroup will be meeting in early November to review the SOP, identify necessary revisions, and work toward presenting a draft to the full committee at the next meeting. The goal is to have the procedures finalized and ready for implementation when the next scholarship period opens in January.

The Committee also discussed creating a short instructional video for scholarship applicants. The video would be posted on the scholarship application webpage and explain the application requirements, particularly the importance of providing sufficient detail about the courses and training opportunities applicants intend to pursue. This would supplement the existing FAQ and provide an alternative resource for applicants who prefer video instructions.

5. Emerging Leaders Initiative

Review of Jerry's Presentation – A Brief History of Environmental Testing

The presentation is intended to introduce the environmental testing industry to emerging professionals, newer laboratory personnel, and individuals transitioning into the field.

The Committee resumed its review of the presentation from the beginning since Jerry had made multiple updates. The Committee evaluated the slides and discussed possible improvements to content, organization, clarity, and presentation.

Discussion:

- The Committee supported the revised introductory slide and recommended consistently using U.S. EPA to distinguish the federal agency from state agencies.
- Suggested adding a descriptive title to the historical 30,000-gallon water sample example to highlight advances in analytical methods. Jerry will look for a clearer image of the original documentation.
- Recommended adding dates to historical environmental events, including Times Beach, and rearranging slides so environmental disasters precede related publications and public awareness.
- Jerry will explore developing a visual timeline connecting major environmental events to subsequent legislation.
- Recommended clarifying the distinction between academic research and regulatory environmental testing, emphasizing that regulatory testing must follow prescribed methods to ensure consistent and comparable results.
- Jerry will revise the slide language to better explain regulatory compliance science and may incorporate additional context into the speaker notes.
- The Committee agreed to defer a detailed discussion of PARCCS data quality concepts to a future Quality Time with TNI session.
- Recommended clarifying that environmental testing requirements originate from regulations and that EPA program offices may have different method and quality control requirements.
- Suggested explaining that regulations do not always require laboratory testing and that compliance may be demonstrated through other means.
- Supported adding general examples involving wastewater and hazardous waste to illustrate differences in regulatory requirements.
- Approved the revised EPA program office slide, with a recommendation to use current office names and include historical names in the speaker notes as appropriate.
- Recommended clarifying when regulations require specific methods versus allowing laboratories flexibility in method selection.
- Recommended reorganizing the air section to introduce regulated pollutants before discussing individual categories. Separate slides will address criteria pollutants, air toxics, and air testing methods.

- Supported retaining the "SOx, NOx, and ROx" heading while adding sufficient context for new professionals.
- Jerry will improve the readability of the EPA emissions graph and provide an appropriate citation or source link.
- Supported retaining the lead-in-gasoline example to illustrate how regulatory compliance can be demonstrated without necessarily requiring routine laboratory testing.

The Committee reviewed the presentation through approximately slide 24 and agreed to continue the review at the next meeting. Joe agreed to distribute the current presentation so members can review the remaining slides ahead of the meeting.

New Attendee Orientation and Networking

The Committee discussed plans for improving networking and helping new attendees feel more comfortable participating in the January conference.

Jerry confirmed that an introductory orientation for new attendees is planned for Monday morning at 8:00 a.m.

The Committee revisited the idea of identifying experienced conference attendees who are willing to answer questions and help newcomers navigate the conference. Anand reminded the Committee of providing optional identification for both new attendees and experienced participants who are willing to serve as informal resources.

The Committee generally supported two identification options:

- Experienced attendees may wear a button identifying them as someone attendees can approach with questions.
- New attendees may voluntarily place a small colored sticker or dot on their conference name badge to indicate that they are attending for the first time.

Participation by new attendees will be entirely voluntary. The intent is to make it easier for newcomers to connect with experienced professionals without making anyone feel singled out. Joe offered to coordinate the design and production of the experienced-attendee buttons. He will prepare several design mock-ups for Committee review at the next meeting.

The Committee discussed button size, traditional pins versus magnetic attachments, and ways to avoid damaging conference badges. Committee members also agreed that the identification system should remain simple rather than introducing too many different colors or categories.

The Committee also agreed that the orientation session and conference materials should explain the purpose of the buttons and stickers, so attendees understand how to use them. Experienced attendees wearing the buttons may be asked to identify themselves during the orientation session.

6. New Business

None.

7. Next Meeting and Close

The next meeting will be by teleconference on November 17, 2026, at 11am Eastern. (Addition: The meeting was rescheduled to November 24, 2026, due to other meeting conflicts.

Due to time constraints, the Committee was unable to complete all agenda items. The agenda will be continued to the next meeting. Anand made a motion to adjourn, and Calista seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The next meeting will be by teleconference on October 20, 2026, at 11am Eastern.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:30pm 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 Present	Lab	City of Daytona Beach	cookrobin@CODB.US
Calista Daigle Present	Lab (Training)	Pace Analytical Services	calista.daigle@pacelabs.com
Theresa Johnson Present	Lab (Credentials)	McCampbell Analytical	theresa.johnson@mccampbell.com
Harold Longbaugh Present	Lab (Credentials)	City of Houston	harold.longbaugh@houstontx.gov
Littia Mann Present	Lab	Vermont Department of Health Laboratory	littia.mann@vermont.gov
Duncan Millar Present	AB	IAS	dmillar@iasonline.org
Anand Mudambi Present	Other	Retired (from US EPA)	amudambi@netzero.net
Elizabeth Turner Absent	Lab (Training)	Eurofins	elizabeth.turner@et.eurofinsus.com
Michelle Wade Present	Other	Wade Consulting & Solutions	michelle@michellefromks.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**		
Jean-Francois Borny	X	Lummus Technology	jean-francois.borny@lummustech.com
Salima Haniff	X	Bureau Veritas	salima.haniff@bureauveritas.com
Charles Morrow		SPL	Charles.morrow@spllabs.com

Attachment B: PDP EC Action Item Summary 2025/2026

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes
1	Build website for PDP.		Jerry		8/17/25	8/17/25	11/18/25		COMPLETE
2	Add PDP to membership database.		Jerry/ Ilona		8/17/25	8/17/25	11/18/25		COMPLETE
3	Update Committee Operations SOP with PDP Exceptions	SOP 1-101			8/17/25			Closed	2/17/26 - Jerry will work on this. COMPLETE
4	Share Program Budget		Jerry		8/17/25	8/17/25	9/16/25	Closed.	COMPLETE
5	Send Board Summary of Jack Farrell Scholarship to Committee		Jerry		8/17/25	8/17/25	9/16/25	Closed.	COMPLETE
6	Develop Course for Emerging Leaders				8/17/25	March 2026			Develop a course with a basic overview of the environmental testing industry and have it be free. 4/21/26: Jerry prepared DRAFT slides that will be reviewed during the May meeting (5/19 delayed to June). 10/20: The Committee began the review of the revised presentation.
7	Vendor donations to		Jerry		9/16/25		12/16/25	Closed.	12/16/25: Jerry was able to add a donation option for vendors.

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes
	Jack Farrell scholarship.								COMPLETE
8	Develop Application for Scholarships		William		10/7/25	11/18/25			11/18/25: DRAFT developed in meeting and sent to Jerry for William to work on online application. 12/16: Jerry following up on status with Wiliam. Worked on application instructions. Application is now live. COMPLETE
9	Develop Templates to letters related to scholarships.				10/7/25	3/17/26	7/21/26	COMPLETE	4/21/26: Work in progress.
10	Quality Time with TNI		Ilona/Jerry	Joe	2/17/26	TBD			
11	Emerging Leaders Initiative				2/17/26	TBD			2/17/26: Consider pre-conference communication for new conference attendees and use of volunteers that can be identified to help new attendees with networking, introductions, or with questions. 7/21 – Seeking more feedback in Houston. 10/20: Working on new attendees at conference and networking opportunities.

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes
11a	Compile summary about how other organizations handle Emerging Professionals			Duncan	2/17/26	2/17/26	6/16/26		5/19: Duncan prepared summaries of what other organizations are doing with this type of initiative. It will be looked at in June. 6/16: Reviewed.
12	Develop material for Scholarship: SOP, FAQs, Contract, Etc…				4/21/26	4/21/26			In progress. 4/21:Committee members need to review material sent by Joe before the next meeting 5/19: Templates presented during May meeting. Work will continue during the month to finalize. 7/21: Workgroup 10/20: Workgroup is working on finalizing an SOP.
13	Present Mentor concept to Credentialing Committee – need volunteers		Ken		4/21/26		7/21/26	CLOSED	6/16: Ken will solicit Committee volunteers to be advisors. 7/21: Jerry and Joe will be the Advisors for this round. Ken should continue to look at this for next year.
14	Develop policy on publicizing scholarship donations.				6/15/26	TBD			7/21: Add to Scholarship SOP.
15	Develop a more accessible scholarship donation process.				9/15/26				9/15: Website donation links, QR codes, and recurring financial donations with minimal fees.

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes