Professional Development Program Executive Committee (PDP EC)
Meeting Summary
February 17, 2026

1. Roll Call and Approvals

Sharon Mertens, Vice-Chair, called the meeting of the PDP EC to order at 11:10am Eastern on February 17, 2026. The meeting was attended by 5 Voting Committee members (see Attachment A).

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

The December and January meeting minutes were reviewed. A motion was made by Ken to approve the December 16, 2025 and January 13, 2026, minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Calista and unanimously approved.

2. Action Item Review

The Committee reviewed several ideas discussed during the Boston meeting that Ilona mentioned added to determine whether they should become formal action items: Develop Quality Time with TNI, mentorship opportunities, pre-conference communication for new attendees, badge system at conferences and research Emerging Professional examples (Duncan volunteered).

- Quality Time with TNI: The committee discussed this quarterly webinar concept designed to involve individuals who cannot attend conferences. The webinar series would feature various topics relevant to the organization and could be hosted using existing virtual platforms with minimal cost. This item was added as a separate action item for future development.
- Pre-conference Communication with New Attendees: This communication would provide guidance on networking opportunities, mentor sessions, and general navigation of the conference experience. While everyone agreed the concept was valuable, they discussed where the task belongs. It was decided this would be part of the Emerging Professionals initiative.
- Badge or Identifier System at Conferences: Help new attendees recognize individuals who could provide assistance or might be people they should get to know. The Committee discussed identifying experienced members or volunteers who could serve as mentors or ambassadors. Ideas included colored ribbons, dots, badges labeled “mentor,” or buttons worn by designated volunteers. Volunteers should be approachable, experienced individuals who can assist newcomers with networking, introductions, or questions about the organization. It was decided this would be part of the Emerging Professionals initiative.

The action items (Attachment B) were reviewed and updated.

3. **Training Committee Update - Calista**

Calista reported that the Training Committee did not meet in January due to travel schedules following the conference. The next meeting is scheduled for February 24 at 1:30 PM Eastern.

4. **Credentialing Committee Update - Ken**

Ken reported that three individuals took the credentialing examination, and two successfully passed. The Credentialing Committee plans to meet again on February 25 to continue discussions and review additional ideas raised during the Boston meeting.

5. **Membership**

The committee reviewed six new membership applications submitted following the Boston conference.

Committee composition was discussed. Review of the Charter confirmed that balance of stakeholder groups is not required, but members agreed that maintaining a variety of perspectives remains beneficial. The Charter does include representatives from each of the Committees – three from Training and 3 from Credentialing. It was also noted that the current Charter needs to be posted on the website.

After discussion, the Committee agreed to add three applicants as voting members. The remaining applicants would be invited to participate as associate members, allowing them to engage with the committee and potentially transition to voting membership in the future.

Ken made a motion to accept Anand Mudambi, Michelle Wade, and Litia Mann as voting members. The motion was seconded by Sharon and passed unanimously. The remaining applicants will be invited to participate as associate members.

Joe will send notifications to the applicants confirming their membership status, and Ilona will update the committee database accordingly.

6. **Jack Farrell Scholarship**

Today's discussion centered around how to evaluate applications to select scholarship recipients?

Discussion:

- Many of the current application processes in TNI are largely subjective: Charlie Carter Award at NEMC and Nominating Committee for the Board of Directors are examples.
- Ilona noted that Joe talked about an unbiased system in Boston. Maybe it is a combination of a biased and unbiased system.
- When application volume increases, an unbiased system helps with the initial review. Examples of unbiased criteria include that they need to be a TNI member and the scholarship needs to be used classes or fees associate with getting a badge or a credential.

- Robin suggested that if two applicants are otherwise equal, differentiators such as GPA (used in her Florida scholarship experience) could serve as tie-breakers. While TNI's scholarship is different from academic awards, the concept of having a secondary differentiator could be helpful. .
- Sharon commented on the need to draft at least a preliminary SOP to guide decision-making and avoid difficult situations without clear guidance. The SOP can be revised over time as the process is used.
- Jerry and Ilona will work on TNI SOP updates since PDP needs to be incorporated into SOP 1-100 – SOP on SOPs.
- Applications are due in March, so the process needs to be substantially defined before the next meeting. There was agreement that a small workgroup should draft a proposal before the March meeting. Workgroup: Joe, Sharon, Robin (can provide input but cannot lead) and Ilona.

7. Newsletter Article

Sharon volunteered to work with Joe to provide an article on what the Committee is doing.

8. Emerging Professionals

The Committee briefly discussed the Emerging Professionals initiative. It was noted that the conversation in Boston had evolved beyond simply supporting new professionals entering the field. The concept had broadened to include emerging leadership development, mentoring opportunities, and professional growth for individuals already working in the industry who may wish to take on greater leadership roles.

The Boston meeting minutes contained an extensive list of related ideas, including examples of programs from other organizations such as ASTM, ANSI, APHL, and others. Duncan had previously offered to review these external programs and prepare a summary that could help guide the Committee's future planning.

Members agreed that a meaningful discussion on the initiative would benefit from Duncan's summary of comparable programs. As a result, the committee decided to wait for that information before moving forward with detailed planning.

9. New Business

None

10. Next Meeting and Close

The next meeting will be by teleconference on March 17, 2026, at 11am Eastern.

Sharon adjourned the meeting at 12:25pm Eastern.

Attachment A

Participants
PDP Executive Committee

Voting Members	Represent	Affiliation	Contact Information
Joe Manzella **Chair** Absent	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 Absent	Lab (Credentials)	McCampbell Analytical	theresa.johnson@mccampbell.com
Harold Longbaugh Present	Lab (Credentials)	City of Houston	harold.longbaugh@houstontx.gov
Duncan Millar Absent	AB	IAS	dmillar@iasonline.org
Elizabeth Turner Absent	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: PDP EC Action Item Summary 2025

	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				2/17/26 - Jerry will work on this.
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 Professionals				8/17/25	TBD			Develop a course with a basic overview of the environmental testing industry and have it be free.
7	Vendor donations to Jack Farrell scholarship.		Jerry		9/16/25		12/16/25	Closed.	12/16/25: Jerry was able to add a donation option for vendors. 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.

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes
									Worked on application instructions. Application is now live. COMPLETE
9	Develop Templates to letters related to scholarships.				10/7/25				
10	Quality Time with TNI		Ilona/Jerry	Joe	2/17/26	TBD			
11	Emerging Professionals 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.
11a	Compile summary about how other organizations handle Emerging Professionals			Duncan	2/17/26				