

Professional Development Program Executive Committee (PDP EC)
Meeting Summary
April 21, 2026

1. Roll Call and Approvals

Joe Manzella, Chair, called the meeting of the PDP EC to order at 11:10am Eastern on April 21, 2026. The meeting was attended by 8 Voting Committee members (see Attachment A).

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

The March meeting minutes will be reviewed for approval at the May meeting.

2. Action Item Review

Ilona asked about the status of the course Jerry is developing for emerging leaders. He prepared DRAFT slides and sent them to Joe for initial review. Joe noted that they are ready for Committee review, and this should be added to the May meeting agenda.

Ilona will check-in with Duncan to see how his action item for Emerging Leaders is coming along. This may also be a May agenda item.

Action items in Attachment B were updated.

3. Training Committee Update – Calista

Calista reported that the Training Committee had not achieved quorum for several meetings. With no quorum on April 9th, the meeting was rescheduled to April 24th.

Ilona noted that she had circulated questions to committee members regarding continued participation, voting status, and preferred meeting times. Based on responses received, the committee determined that moving meetings to the fourth Friday of the month would likely improve attendance and quorum.

4. Credentialing Committee Update - Ken

Ken reported that the Credentialing Committee met on March 25, 2026. Three volunteers have agreed to serve as in-person exam proctors. He explained that the committee believed in-person testing was currently the most practical option. The volunteers would arrange local meeting spaces for candidates taking the examinations. The Credentialing Committee approved a proposal to present to the Finance Committee where volunteer proctors would receive complimentary conference registration as an incentive. Jerry noted that the Finance Committee would discuss the proposal during its Friday meeting.

The Credentialing Committee also continued work on KSAs for organic chemistry. The metals section had been completed and that the Committee had begun work on the

organic chemistry section. Jerry added that organic chemistry was more complex and that approximately two of seventeen sections had been completed so far.

5. Jack Farrell Analytical Excellence Scholarship Discussion

Joe explained that the workgroup met four times and developed:

- a draft scholarship evaluation and award SOP
- a draft scholarship recipient packet, and
- a recommendation for award distribution.

Joe shared information about the two applications received:

Candidate A

Candidate A works for an accrediting body as a laboratory assessor and has approximately eight years of laboratory experience, including about one year in the environmental field. The applicant requested assistance to pursue the QMS professional credential through the digital badge pathway.

Committee members noted that the applicant's financial breakdown did not fully explain the total requested amount but that it likely included coursework costs in addition to badge fees.

Candidate B

Candidate B works as a Technical Director in a laboratory. The applicant requested exam fees to pursue digital badges leading toward the Quality Professional Credential.

Ilona noted that one of the fee amounts in the application incorrectly listed a badge cost as \$85 instead of \$95. The Committee also observed that the applicant's proposal did not appear to include coursework costs associated with earning the digital badges.

Ilona commented that she reached out to both candidates by email asking about their Budget Breakdown related to course work, but has not heard back from either candidate yet.

Scholarship Recommendation

Joseph Manzella presented the workgroup recommendation to award each candidate half of the monies that were contributed by March 31, 2026.

The committee discussed several reasons supporting this recommendation:

- Dividing funds between two recipients would increase the likelihood of successful outcomes.
- Awarding both candidates could encourage future applications.
- Partial funding would encourage recipients to contribute their own resources or seek employer support.
- Recipients would still have the opportunity to reapply in future years if additional funding were needed.

The Committee discussed the 18-month completion window for scholarship activities and clarified that recipients could reapply for future scholarships but would not be guaranteed additional funding.

The Workgroup worked on a Scholarship Recipient Packet and an SOP outlining the procedures for awarding scholarships. Joe reviewed DRAFT materials which included:

- Award notification letter
- Scholarship agreement
- Terms and conditions
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- Award request form to access funds

The committee discussed:

- Assigning mentors to scholarship recipients
- Tracking scholarship balances and course usage
- Use of existing TNI ethics and professional conduct SOPs
- Extending course access periods when needed
- Potential online tracking forms
- Clarifying expectations for digital badge completion

Ken suggested explicitly stating in recipient materials that receiving one scholarship award does not guarantee future funding. Joe agreed to add this clarification.

Robin raised questions regarding retesting fees for failed digital badge exams. Jerry Parr clarified that retest fees currently were \$65.

The Committee also discussed the role of mentors in helping recipients choose courses strategically to maximize progress toward digital badges and credentials. Ken will discuss this with the Credentialing Committee and look at developing incentives for people to volunteer to do this.

Ken noted that the scholarship process could become highly competitive in future years as participation increased in the various credentials that will be offered.

Sharon added that future Committees might need to decide whether to distribute many smaller awards or select only a few recipients from a larger applicant pool. She emphasized that these long-term considerations should begin being discussed now.

Ilona confirmed that communication with applicants had already begun and that additional clarification was being sought from both individuals.

Joe reviewed the original scholarship timeline:

- Applications open in January (at winter meeting)
- Applications close in March
- Work group review completed in April
- Candidate recommendations presented to PDP EC in April
- Award notifications issued in May
- Awards activated in June

Joe stated that, based on committee discussion and the need for additional clarification from applicants, the Committee could either proceed with voting immediately or delay the process. A one-month delay would not be a problem this time because each applicant is pursuing the badge process and is not in a rush to sign-up for the Credentialing Exam in Houston.

Joe will distribute the material he shared on screen before the end of the week so people can begin reviewing and commenting on the material.

The Committee generally agreed to postpone any formal scholarship vote until the May meeting pending:

- Additional communication with applicants
- Updated financial information
- Committee review of draft scholarship materials

The Workgroup will meet again before the next meeting to address any comments on the material sent out and to review any new material from the candidates that might affect their recommendation to the Committee regarding scholarship awards.

6. Emerging Leaders

It was noted that the Committee was still awaiting information from Duncan before planning to further discuss this initiative. Joe would also prefer to finish the scholarship award before devoting more time to this.

Joe discussed the possibility of organizing an informal extracurricular networking opportunity during the August conference, noting that the Tuesday evening conference schedule appeared open. He suggested exploring a possible group outing to an Astros versus Blue Jays baseball game during the conference and stated he would investigate group ticket pricing and talk to Paul Junio who often catches games during conferences.

7. New Business

Joe may not be available to Chair the May meeting, but Sharon is available to lead the meeting.

8. Next Meeting and Close

The next meeting will be by teleconference on May 19, 2026, at 11am Eastern.

Joe adjourned the meeting at 12:21pm 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 Absent	Lab (Credentials)	City of Houston	harold.longbaugh@houstontx.gov
Littia Mann Present	AB	Vermont Department of Health Laboratory	littia.mann@vermont.gov
Duncan Millar Absent	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 Absent	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		Lummus Technology	jean-francois.borny@lummustech.com
Salima Haniff		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 prepare DRAFT slides that will be reviewed during the May meeting.
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

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes
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			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.
11a	Compile summary about how other organizations handle Emerging Professionals			Duncan	2/17/26				
12	Develop material for Scholarship:				4/21/26	4/21/26			In progress. 4/21:Committee members need to review material

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes
	SOP, FAQs, Contract, Etc...								sent by Joe before the next meeting.
13	Present Mentor concept to Credentialing Committee – need volunteers		Ken		4/21/26				