

Professional Development Program Executive Committee (PDP EC)
Meeting Summary
June 16, 2026

1. Roll Call and Approvals

Joe Manzella, Chair, called the meeting of the PDP EC to order at 11am Eastern on May 19, 2026. The meeting was attended by 9 Voting Committee members (a quorum was met) and 1 Associate member (see Attachment A).

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

The May meeting minutes were reviewed for approval. A motion was made by Ken to approve the May 19, 2026, meeting minutes as written. The motion was seconded by Michelle and unanimously approved. The March meeting minutes were supposed to be approved during the May meeting. *(Addition: The minutes will be added for approval during the July meeting.)*

3. Training Committee Update – Calista

Calista reported that the Training Committee met in May.

- Caught up on minutes
- Changed meeting schedule – meeting every other month. Next meeting is in July.
- Discussed professional development hours

4. Credentialing Committee Update - Ken

Ken reported that the Credentialing Committee met in May.

- Updated digital badges
- Talked about advisor vs. mentor
 - Committee prefers advisor
- Working on Technical Specialist KSAs
 - Organics

5. Mentor vs. Advisor

The following two perspectives were sent by email to help the Committee determine whether to use the term “mentor” or “advisor”.

Joe:

Perspective found online at <https://www.science.org/content/article/advisor-versus-mentor>:

Many can advise; but few can mentor. That's because an adviser is one who directs. A mentor, on the other hand, guides. So, an adviser will direct you without regard to your specific personal situation, needs, or passions. A mentor will allow you--and even encourage you--to choose your own direction, offering guidance that does take into consideration your personal situation, needs, and passions. A mentor is often more analogous to a coach: True mentors know what motivates their mentees. An adviser is

more like a director: Advisers may or may not know what motivates their advisees. This information is not relevant to this type of relationship, because the adviser simply provides the direction that the advisee "should" follow.

Ilona:

The best choice depends on what you want applicants to experience and what responsibilities the role will have.

"Advisor" suggests:

- Guidance on process, planning, and requirements
- Helping applicants evaluate options
- Providing information without making decisions for them
- A more structured, professional relationship

People generally expect an advisor to:

- Explain timelines
- Discuss course sequencing
- Help interpret test requirements
- Point out tradeoffs
- Keep someone on track

Helping someone make informed decisions rather than prescribing choices.

"Mentor" suggests:

- Personal encouragement and long-term relationship
- Coaching and confidence-building
- Sharing lived experience
- Emotional support and motivation

People often expect a mentor to:

- Invest personally in their growth
- Advocate for them
- Stay connected over time
- Provide broader life/career perspective

The risk is that "mentor" can imply a deeper and more open-ended relationship than your program may realistically support.

Discussion:

- Ken: In favor of advisor as defined in second definition.
- Robin: If we call it advisor, it doesn't mean you can't also provide some mentoring.
- Calista: Advisor points out the minimum requirement of what we're expecting. Mentor is a much larger commitment
- Jean-Francois:
 - Advisor: here's what you should do
 - Mentor: Let's figure it out together
- Duncan
 - Dumbledore: Mentor
 - Remember the Titans coach: Advisor
- Harold: Mentor is more involved, mentee is actively seeking out.
- Michelle: Advisor can take on a mentor aspect if they choose.

There was general agreement an advisor role is the most appropriate. An advisor can take on a mentorship role organically if they so choose. The second definition for advisor should be used.

Ken will solicit volunteers at the next Credentialing meeting.

6. Donation

A sizable donation was received for next year's scholarship. The donator will be thanked. The Committee should develop a policy on publicizing donations.

7. Digital Badge Presentation

The Draft presentation prepared by Jerry was distributed with the agenda for the Committee to review. The following conclusions were reached:

- Need to streamline and simplify the presentation.
- The Credentialing Committee should review it.
 - Simplify
 - Needs to be as short as possible - less than 10 minutes.

8. Emerging Leaders

Duncan prepared material for this discussion that was distributed with the agenda. It summarized how other organizations handle similar initiatives.

Discussion:

Introductory Course

- Jerry's Draft slides were reviewed briefly
- The Committee should review the presentation and be prepared to comment at the July meeting.
- An introductory slide should be added that says "this is what we're doing today and why".
 - Then transition into "how did we get here?"
 - End with reinforcement of where we are now, and TNI's role

Common Elements of Emerging Leader Initiatives

Duncan researched best practices from other entities: ASTM, ANSI, APHL, Society of Women Engineers, and ASCE.

Discussion: Connect new people with experienced people

- Encourage participation
- Emerging leader recognition?
 - Robin: FSEA has a "shining star" award. The nominations are done by co-workers. Looking for someone that is above and beyond in terms of industry leadership.
 - Sharon: Shift it to a TNI focus, based on committee participation. A "shining star" for each program.

- Ilona: How would you pick the person? If they are new, that would be a smaller pool of people to choose from.
- Have TNI members and staff nominate those who are new to TNI and actively participate
- Awards
 - If they receive the award, can we cover their registration for a meeting?
 - Certificate for reduced rate on a credentialing class?

9. New Business

None.

10. Next Meeting and Close

The next meeting will be by teleconference on July 21, 2026, at 11am Eastern.

Joe adjourned the meeting 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 Absent	Lab	Vermont Department of Health Laboratory	littia.mann@vermont.gov
Duncan Millar Present	AB	IAS	dmillar@iasonline.org
Anand Mudambi Absent	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 Absent	TNI Executive Director	TNI	Jerry.parr@nelac-institute.org
Ilona Taunton Present – 30 minutes	Program Administrator	TNI	ilona.taunton@nelac-institute.org
Associate Members:	Present		
Jean-Francois Borny	X	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 prepared DRAFT slides that will be reviewed during the May meeting (5/19 delayed to June). 6/16: Sent to Credentialing to simplify 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 William. 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	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.

	Task Description	Doc Number	TNI Contact	Committee Contact	Action Item Added	Start Date	Complete Date	Communication	Notes
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.
13	Present Mentor concept to Credentialing Committee – need volunteers		Ken		4/21/26				6/16: Ken will solicit Committee volunteers to be advisors.
14	Develop policy on publicizing scholarship donations.				6/15/26	TBD			