

A2LA Accreditation Council (AC) Meeting Agenda

Sunday April 5, 2009

10:00 am – 12:00 pm

Alex Klein - AC Chair

Trace McInturff - A2LA Recording Secretary

SUMMARY

Attendees: Please reference attendance list located at end of meeting summary.

1. Welcome, Introductions and AC Performance Statistics: A. Klein

ACTION ITEM #1: Add B. Munguia to the Accreditation Council. (T. McInturff by April 30, 2009.

A. Klein introduced himself and welcomed the Accreditation Council Members to the meeting.

A. Klein presented a brief PowerPoint presentation based on his statistical findings from 2008. Accreditation Council performance statistics can be viewed in greater detail by referencing Attachment 1.

One AC member indicated that he feels that there is some inconsistency with the A2LA staff. He said that he was asked to change a vote based on a scope error one time and an invalid root cause another time. This was a difficult situation to be placed in as no AC member wants to change a vote for or sign their name to something they feel does not meet the requirements. T. McInturff indicated that a lab's root cause analysis should, for the most part, not be the reason for a negative vote. He further explained that the only time that we will be able to determine the effectiveness of a root cause is during the next assessment when it can be determined whether or not their corrective action measures are still in place and effective. The AC member who raised this concern believed that we need to have training to ensure that we are all on the same page. T. McInturff indicated that he would speak with A2LA staff directly.

2. Status of Action Items from Previous AC Meeting on April 13, 2008: A. Klein

Action Item 1: T. McInturff to consider changing the phrasing of the voting options on the AC ballot. (To be completed by June 30, 2008)

Update: Voting options for appeals were changed 4/22/08.

Action Item 2: T. McInturff to revise A2LA's process for handling accreditation decision appeals by laboratories to include an opportunity for the assessor to provide feedback. (To be completed by July 31, 2008). Update: SOP 205 was revised (7/31/08) to alert the assessor anytime the lab disagrees with a finding (2.2.2.2).

Action Item 3: T. McInturff to consider an automated process for the AC members to enter the period of time that they will be away on the AC location of the A2LA web site. (To be completed by May 31, 2008)

Update: It was discussed at the A2LA Staff Meeting on May 8, 2008 that, if AC members are entering this information themselves, staff might not be aware that the AC member is away. AC members should continue to notify T. McInturff or W. Wagner when they will be unable to review packages for a lengthy period of time.

Action Item 4: T. McInturff to consider a process that will allow AC members to review other votes after all of the ballots have been submitted. (To be completed by August 31, 2008)

Update: Completed

Action Item 5: T. McInturff to look into a systematic process for Accreditation staff to inform the next assessor of “red alert” issues. (To be completed by August 31, 2008)

Update: AcOs have been reminded of SOP 002, section 2.9.3 ‘Red Alert Files’ and were again reminded to create an ‘Issue’ in the database for next action.

Action Item 6: T. McInturff to investigate a means of tracking negative AC votes. (To be completed by September 30, 2008)

Update: Trace reviews all votes and contacts AC members or staff when additional information is required. Daren provided a list of negative votes. Completed.

3. AC Members Needed, Especially for EMC and Electrical: A. Klein

It was pointed out that life sciences and food testing AC members are also needed. Staff was encouraged to consider lab contacts for membership on the AC because it would be a great opportunity for both the Council and for them. AC members were reminded that the most important document is the Scope of Accreditation and the assessors should do a better job of determining Scope content so that the AC Members do not have to worry about it at the end of the process.

4. On-line AC Package Demonstration – D. Valentine and W. McQuiolen

D. Valentine indicated that A2LA is slowly releasing Fortis functions, such as highlighting making computerized edits, etc., to allow for changes along the way. Specifically, he wants to make a few new functions available periodically to allow the users to test these functions out. He will use feedback from the users to make adjustments as Fortis develops. He indicated that a detailed email was sent to help users download Fortis. D. Valentine briefly described the download process. If users open the program they must upload it on the exterior of the internet and users must make sure that security is turned down on their computer. D. Valentine and W. McQuiolen are available for any additional help that the users may need. Every AC member has a login regardless of whether or not they have downloaded Fortis. AC Members are only allowed access to view the contents of their own basket, even though all names are visible on the screen.

W. McQuiolen proceeded to go through a brief walkthrough of Fortis and its functions. The thumbnails on the left hand side give you a glimpse of what is to come in the AC package. A

page number can be entered to take you directly to that page. Pages can also be viewed in larger font. Staff has inserted a CAR cover page to aid in locating critical information.

D. Valentine explained that AC members can currently review the package as one continuous document, but this is being further developed so that AC members can separate out distinct sections or items. Accreditation Officers will eventually be able to export documents into Fortis and also annotate directly on the documents (i.e., no more handwriting on documents). The entire point of this program is to make one seamless process for all stakeholders. Soon Fortis will be available to the assessors so that they can view packages which have been assigned to them.

W. McQuiolen further explained that the toolbar has many options that users can employ that apply to the package they are reviewing. Anything users do in Fortis can be converted to a PDF and can be saved for emails, etc. Users can create their own toolbar. A "Preferences" tool can also further customize access and the overall experience in the Fortis system. W. McQuiolen indicated that a standardized resolution cannot be set. As a result, the default will always be a 1/3 page view. The program will automatically pull up the user's default email system and attached documents.

D. Valentine indicated that more information is available by request and that changes will be communicated to the AC members as they occur.

One AC member stated that the current viewing window is problematic when a very large package. D. Valentine explained that users will eventually be able to convert the entire document to a PDF to view a full page.

The question was raised regarding whether or not a user can have an index. W. McQuiolen and D. Valentine said that this feature will be available at a later date.

One AC member indicated that he frequently shifts between several documents when performing his review and asked if an option can be available that allows several documents to be reviewed at the same time. D. Valentine indicated that this feature is not available yet, but it will be explored in the future.

It was clarified that the moment an AC package is sent to the system, an email notification is issued to the AC members involved.

Any further comments or suggestions should be sent to D. Valentine.

T. McInturff reminded the AC that the information in Fortis is still confidential and that members are still not allowed to share this data with other people.

Concern was expressed over having to take down firewalls to upload this program.

W. McQuiolen and D. Valentine stated that there is no need to disable the firewalls or antivirus programs. W. McQuiolen went on to explain that, since there are many antivirus programs, there might be a chance that a particular program may not allow the installation. If this is the case, the antivirus must be deactivated for the duration of the installation. An older version of Java will be uploaded, but it will revert back to the newer version almost immediately.

5. 2008 AC Appeals – None; One Nine-Member AC Appeal is in Process: A. Klein

No further discussion took place.

6. AC Package Contents – Format, Too Much, Not Enough: A. Klein and T. McInturff

A. Klein posed the following question to the AC Members: Are there are things that you are getting that you do not want or are you are not getting enough?

One AC member expressed his aversion for repeat pages, especially emails. He requested that staff group only relevant documentation together for each deficiency. T. McInturff indicated that this might be very cumbersome and even more repetitive. Staff has been encouraged to print email exchanges at the end and not attach repeat objective evidence.

It was pointed out that the highlighting option available on the new Fortis program might make referencing documents easier.

7. AC Package review process: SOP/ Training – is there a need: A. Klein and T. McInturff

The question was raised as to whether members should take formal training. An ISO/IEC 17025 training session with D. Valentine might be an option. D. Valentine and T. McInturff have been tasked with creating an open-book quiz to administer to AC members. There may be a self-training program or module to review before the AC is asked to take the quiz. A quiz had been administered to the Guide 65 assessors and it yielded good results. The quiz for the AC members may be created in a similar fashion and it may focus not only on ISO/IEC 17025 but also on A2LA policies.

8. AC – Accreditation Services Electronic Feedback on A2LA Staff – is this something in which the AC would be interested: A. Klein and T. McInturff

No interest was expressed in pursuing this. Members are content with the current system of contacting T. McInturff or the Accreditation Officer directly if there are concerns and feedback.

9. Written/ email correspondence between AC and A2LA Staff must be professional; this correspondence is retained in assessment files and may be reviewed and audited: T. McInturff

T. McInturff explained that P. Unger wanted to emphasize the importance of an adverse action potentially resulting in a complete review of the A2LA applicant files. All records and votes must be professional and objective. If an investigation is deemed necessary as a result of an adverse action, it would be best for A2LA to have an applicant file free from incriminating evidence or any other information that can be considered biased.

One AC member indicated that he has sent a single email with comments/votes for two separate AC packages. T. McInturff indicated that this should not be done; that a separate email should be sent for each package.

10. 3rd Vote prompts – are they still needed? Is there a better mechanism: A. Klein and T. McInturff

All attendees were satisfied with the mechanism currently in place.

11. Comments from the AC to Assessors: A. Klein and T. McInturff

One AC member that asked that assessors be required to explain why a particular checklist item is considered “Not Applicable”. T. McInturff felt that this might be redundant.

ACTION ITEM #2: When the AC ballot box is marked requesting feedback, T. McInturff to ensure that the Accreditation Officer responds accordingly. Some AC members indicated that they do not receive feedback even when it is specifically requested. (T. McInturff, by May 31, 2009)

One AC member asked if positive feedback from the AC is passed on to the assessors when appropriate. A2LA staff indicated that this feedback is indeed passed along.

11. Other New Business

No new business

Adjournment: 12:00 PM

Attendees of the 2009 Accreditation Council Meeting were as follows:

Name:	Affiliation:	Name:	Affiliation:
Abdalla Mohamed, Marwa	Consultant	Kyle, Phil	MVA Scientific Consultants
Adams, John	Consultant	Lehmus, Walt	Swanson Tool Manufacturing
Athanas, Karin	A2LA	Lentz, Douglas	Consultant
Ball, John	JBC-Alabama	Martins, Jorge	Consultant
Belsher, Nathan	Consultant	Mason, Shawn	Consultant
Berg, Douglas	Consultant	McCully, Dennis	Consultant
Berg, Nancy	NA	McInturff, Trace	A2LA
Blank, Charles	Consultant	Medellin, Steven	A2LA
Bosley, Michael	Assessor	Mettler, Dawn	Rockbridge Laboratory Services
Bowers, Ashly	A2LA	Miller, Robert	A2LA
Carbonella, Elizabeth	A2LA	Miner, James	QAMC, Inc.
Carnival, Roy	Consultant	Mlodzik, Charles	Consultant
Combs, Terry	Consultant	Moody, Harry	Consultant
Cowles, Douglas	Consultant	Munguia, Bertha	Consultant
DiGirolamo, Larry	Consultant	Murphy, John	Consultant
Doggart, Tom	Consultant	Norris, Janet	JTN Consulting
Drake, Kingsley	Consultant	Peverill, William	Consultant
Eberhard, Andreas	Assessor	Poore, Jason	A2LA
Evanson, Dave	Consultant	Royal, Patricia	Quality Systems Consultants, Inc.
Ewalt, Darla	National Veterinary Services Laboratory	Schaefer, Werner	Schaefer Associates
Fetterolf, Fred	FETTCO NDE SERVICES	Schiltz, Raymond	Engineering Matters, Inc.
Foncannon, Nancy	Quality Systems Consulting, Inc.	Scott, James	Scott Consulting Services
Fung, Siu Lin	Consultant	Shah, Dilip	E=MC3 Solutions
Gavin, Diana	A2LA	Shanklin-Selby, Elizabeth	A2LA
Goodson, Sheila	Quest Technologies Inc., a 3M	Smith, Elizabeth	A2LA
Gordon, Amanda	EG&G Technical Services, Inc.	Smith, Thomas	Metrologyhead Consulting and
Gouker, Adam	A2LA	Sorrells, Bill	Consultant
Gunning, Chris	A2LA	Stawick, Bradley	Stawick Laboratory Management,
Heberling, David	Consultant	Steiro, Steven	Consultant
Holcombe, Robert	Consultant	Suraci, J. Michael	Consultant
Jenkins, Robert	Consultant	Tang, Yi-Wei	Vanderbilt Univ. Medical Center
Johnson, Sandy	ExxonMobil Chemical	Torres, Matthew	A2LA

Kaveeshwar, Aruna	A2LA	Valentine, Daren	American Association for
Keep, Paul	Simco Electronics	Waite, David	Consultant
Klein, Alex	ArcelorMittal - Indiana Harbor	Watson, Kimberly	A2LA
Kletke, Ray	Consultant	Wheeler, James	Navy Primary Standards Lab.
Knake, Robert	A2LA	Wright, Pamela	A2LA
Kokal, Keith	Micro Laboratories, Inc.	Zerlaut, Gene	SC-International Inc.

Total number of attendees: 76

Summary prepared by Diana Gavin, A2LA Accreditation Officer.