On April 13-14, 2016, the Philadelphia section combined meeting/training event was hosted by Cory Peters, Exelon PowerLabs in Coatesville, PA. Prior to our first speaker, Marcus McNeely, NCSLI Northeastern Division VP addressed membership opportunities and NCSLI update information. The meeting included three expert speakers: Henry Zumbrun, Morehouse Instrument Company, Dr. Cesar “Jun” Bautista, Masy BioServices, and Dawn Cross, National Institute for Standards and Technology (NIST).

Henry is the President of Morehouse, with 17 years’ experience with force calibration, and was the first speaker of the meeting. His presentation, “Measurement Traceability and Errors Related to Force Measurement,” provided the attendees information on common force measurement errors, how to identify these errors, and the importance of calibrating the instrument in the manner it is being used.

Dr. Cesar “Jun” Bautista was our second meeting speaker with his presentation on “New Concept in the Calibration of Climatic Chambers (Specifically Humidity Chambers). Jun has over 35 years of combined experienced in Metrology, 16 years of which are Biotech, Bio-Pharmaceutical and Biomedical Device related. He is currently the senior Director of Laboratory Operations for Masy BioServices, one of the East Coast’s premier metrology services provider. Jun’s presentation highlighted measurement uncertainties that may, necessarily, be considered when calibrating climatic chambers. He also demonstrated the concept of 0% RH as a reference (not a measurement) point and the rationale behind its usage.

Dawn Cross was the final meeting speaker with a presentation on “Transitioning from Mercury Thermometers to Alternative Thermometers”. Dawn has worked at NIST in the Thermometry Group since 1994. She is responsible for the Industrial Thermometer Calibration Laboratory (ITCL) calibration of industrial platinum resistance thermometers, thermocouples, thermistors, and liquid-in-glass thermometers over the range of -196 °C to 550 °C. As part of her responsibility for the ITCL, Dawn maintains the NIST quality system documentation and measurement assurance to maintain compliance with the NIST QMs and ISO/IEC 17025. She started being a NVLAP assessor in 2005 for NIST and 2008 for outside laboratories.
Dawn’s presentation addressed the ways that NIST has actively participated in several national and international phase-out efforts to identify alternative thermometers for a broad range of measurement applications. She outlined how the use of mercury thermometers has been virtually eliminated in routine hospital use, but a wide variety of regulations and test methods in the petroleum, concrete, and pharmaceuticals, to name a few, continue to specify mercury-in-glass thermometers. Dawn explained that NIST will continue to support stakeholders by providing technical and scientific support to find suitable alternative thermometers that meet their measurement needs. The presentation also examined how several U.S. government, state agencies, and international organizations are driving the removal of mercury thermometers as a means to reduce mercury in the environment.

The Trainer Event held on the second day went so well; we asked the attendees for training suggestions for the next meeting. And to our pleasant surprise, we gained a new NCSLI member by the end of the meeting!

Instructors for the training event included Kirk Marshall, Kayla Marriner, and Scott Davidson from Exelon PowerLabs along with Jun Bautista. Kirk taught two classes during the event, one in the laboratory on the topic of “Use and Calibration of Field Dead Weight Testers with Actual Cross Float Data” and the second he co-taught with Kayla covering the topic of “Rotameter Basics: Use and Calibration of Rotameters using Mass Flow Standards and NIST RefProp”.

Scott taught a “hands-on” class covering “Several methods for Building a Triple Point; including Mini Cells, Liquid Nitrogen Dip and Dry Ice.” Dr. Cesar “Jun” Bautista training class tackled the topic “Setting the Humidity Chamber to an Adiabatic Condition and Use of Isentropic Efficiency to Achieve Lowest RH% Attainable” and demonstrated the concept of 0% RH as a reference.

All attendees enjoyed the facility tour of Exelon PowerLabs and were amazed of the breadth and depth of Exelon’s capabilities. The information provided through the “hands-on” training, networking questions, and presentations will surely be used in respective laboratories going forward.
We even had the time to enjoy some “NCSLI Grooving at Lunch” with David Schurr, Exelon PowerLabs, Josh Gwinn, Measurement Instruments, and Marcus McNeely, NCSLI VP Northeast Division. The trio proved to be some incredible musicians as David made the banjo sing, Josh made the mandolin look easy, and Marcus rocked out on the guitar! Everyone agreed they would look forward to a scheduled Philadelphia section “annual training” with NCSLI.

We would like to thank our host as well as all the presenters and trainers. We would also like to thank everyone who assisted with the planning, preparation, and participation to make this meeting such a major success. This meeting provided an opportunity to learn and network with over 40 industry professionals in attendance.

I hope to see you all at the Fall Section Meeting October 20, 2016!