



DELabCon – Interview with David J. Sutton – SEFA Executive Director

1) Please tell us about SEFA and its history.

The Scientific Equipment and Furniture Association (**SEFA**) was organized in 1988 to meet the needs of an important industry of lab designers and manufacturers of laboratory furniture. At that time SEFA's membership consisted of 13 North American manufacturers. Over its 29 year history, SEFA's membership eligibility has expanded to include dealers/installers; architects; lab planners; general contractors and other relevant consultants, not just in North America, but from all over the world.

SEFA's members work closely with laboratory owners, architects, contractors and others to advance the goal of creating a safe lab environment. The Association takes a leadership role in advancing the cause of good laboratory planning. **SEFA** provides an industry forum for addressing problems and crafting solutions in the areas of:

- architecture, construction, lab planning, engineering and customer relations;
- supplier issues;
- common manufacturing concerns

SEFA's Essential Purpose is to promote the use of "LABORATORY- GRADE" furniture, fixtures and related equipment. Laboratory Grade = Safe Labs.

2) Why SEFA felt the need to release it's own SEFA standards?

SEFA's "laboratory grade" standards ensure that the furniture, fixtures and related products used in laboratories throughout the world are suitable to meet the unique and harsh challenges, such as chemical exposure, found in the laboratory environment.

3) Which aspects of lab furniture are covered by SEFA standards?

At present **SEFA** “*Laboratory Grade*” standards have been established for:

- Fume hoods (**SEFA 1**)
- Installations (**SEFA 2**)
- Laboratory Work Surfaces (**SEFA 3**)
- Laboratory Fixtures (**SEFA 7**)
- Laboratory Casework - Metal (**SEFA 8-M**), Phenolic (**SEFA 8-PH**), Plastic Laminate (**SEFA 8-PL**), Polypropylene (**SEFA 8-P**) and Wood (**SEFA 8-W**)
- Ductless Hoods (**SEFA 9**)
- Adaptable Casework Systems (**SEFA 10**)
- Liquid Chemical Storage (**SEFA 11**)

4) Does SEFA test the lab furniture itself? If yes, where are the test labs located?

No, SEFA does not actually perform the testing. We currently have 17 approved test labs located in the U.S., Canada, India, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Italy. You can find a complete list of our approved test partners at www.sefalabs.com.

5) What has been the response of lab furniture manufacturers outside USA to the SEFA standards?

SEFA’s Standards and the importance of “Laboratory Grade” have been overwhelmingly accepted and specified throughout the world. These standards have been accepted by the lab furniture manufacturers, architects, lab planners and end-users.

6) What is SEFA international?

SEFA International is a SEFA Committee, currently co-chaired by Ingo Sternitzke (Trespa BV) and Eric Stimac (JeioTech). It was initially formed in 2006 to address the needs and concerns of the Global market. The SEFA International Committee supports SEFA programming throughout the world at tradeshow events like Jasis; Analytica China;ACHEMA, ARABLAB, and others.

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7) How does SEFA encourage its members to choose green materials and build sustainable lab furniture & fume hoods?

SEFA is a Member of the U.S. Green Building Council and has been a proponent of sustainable practices dating back to 2001. My first meeting as the Executive Director of SEFA was held in San Antonio, Texas and included a half day seminar titled “Green Day.” Our panel of speakers included Dr. Kath Williams, (USGBC) a recognized sustainability expert throughout the world.

SEFA was also a member/supporter of Labs 21 and for many years we co-located our Fall Conference at the site of the Labs 21 tradeshow. SEFA initiated and sponsored programming by sustainable manufacturers on the tradeshow floor at Labs21.

Labs21 now known as I2SL has distinguished several SEFA members with the presentation of a “*Go Beyond Award*.” Honorees include Punit Jain of Canon Design; Thomas Smith, Exposure Control Technologies and two of our Executive Member manufacturers, Lab Crafters and Waldner. The “*Go Beyond Awards*” honor organizations, individuals, products and projects advancing high-performance and sustainability.

SEFA has also organized and facilitated LEED Tutorials for its manufacturers to achieve LEED accreditation. At present SEFA shares membership privileges with EGNATON, the European Association for Sustainable Laboratories.

8) What is the way forward for SEFA?

SEFA, through its Board of Directors, Advisory Board and Committees will continue to update and improve the SEFA Standards as necessary. Our Lab Ventilation Design Management Committee, Co-chaired by Tom Smith (ECT) and Kevin Gilkison (Labconco) is currently working on SEFA’s Guide to Selection, Design, Operation and Management of Laboratory Exposure Control Devices, which we expect to publish later this year.

SEFA is presenting a **Lab Design Symposium at the ARABLAB Expo** in Dubai (March 21, 2017) which will feature SEFA Advisory Board Members. We are also co-sponsoring an **International Lab Design Conference** which will take place in Madrid, Spain, Sept. 20-23, 2017. The Madrid Conference will also feature Advisory Board Members and other notable architects and planners from the United States and Europe.