



**Department of Forensic Sciences  
Science Advisory Board WebEx Meeting Minutes  
March 3, 2022**

The Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS) Science Advisory Board (SAB) meeting was called to order by Board Chairperson Dr. Jeanne Jordan at 9:03 a.m. Roll call of SAB members present, in addition to the Board Chair Jordan, included: Mr. John P. Jones II, Dr. LaKeisha McClary, Dr. Michael Pentella and Mr. Henry Swofford. A quorum was established to conduct Board business.

**Motion to Approve October 22, 2021, Meeting Minutes:** Board Member McClary

**Seconded:** Board Member Jones

**Motion to Approve Minutes Passes**

Director's Update

Interim Director Anthony Crispino began the director's update reporting that restructuring work, inspired by SNA recommendations, has been initiated and includes the redefining of the deputy director and senior deputy director positions with creation of a chief forensic officer position. While there are plans for additional reporting restructuring of the organizational chart, the Board encouraged Quality's direct reporting to the department director, who reassured the body that no changes are to be expected until after obtaining SAB guidance and receiving approval by the Council of the District of Columbia.

Recent key personnel announcements include Dr. Luke Short's appointment to Interim Chief Science Officer and the selection of Jocelyn Hauser serving as Interim Public Health Director. Ms. Brandy S. Cramer is the department's Chief of Staff and Dr. Stephen Milligan has accepted the role of Interim Quality Manager.

The Interim Director provided a review of DFS's strategic plan, also in conjunction with SNA recommendations, identifying action steps both taken to date and pending. Included among the action items are diverse management as well as code of ethics training, primarily a requirement for all District employees. Efforts are underway in establishing a statement of work, identifying the funding source, and issuing a solicitation to secure the services of an external Quality consultant to support the DFS Interim Director through the reaccreditation process. It is not yet known how long it will take to achieve accreditation.

SAB member McClary requested identification of the District's custodian of SAB ethics compliance records.

Ratings of DFS' performance were obtained from Stakeholders responding to a customer service survey distributed in January 2022. The Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) yielded a total of 19 survey responses from the Metropolitan Police Department (14), the United States Attorneys' Office (1), Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Emergency Management Services (1), United States Secret Service (1), and the Capitol Police (1). 22% of the respondents rated the laboratory's overall service as excellent; 56% rated the laboratory good, while 22% considered



Page 2 of 3  
Science Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
March 3, 2022

service insufficient. Although rated the most utilized, the Firearms Examination Unit was also rated the most poorly. Similarly utilized, the Forensic Biology Unit (FBU) and the Latent Fingerprint Unit (LFU) were rated much higher, the Digital Evidence and Forensic Chemistry units were rarely utilized by the respondents and the services of the Crime Scene Sciences Unit (CSSU) was found most often utilized. An increase in staffing and providing faster results were the respondents recommended top two goals for DFS customer service.

The Public Health Laboratory received 16 customer service surveys. None of the respondents rated DFS service as insufficient; 7% of the respondents considered the service good and 93% considered the service excellent. The department is projected to survey stakeholders twice annually. DFS leadership agrees to forward to SAB members the survey, survey recipients and respondents, the analyses, and survey results.

Board member Swofford cautioned DFS leadership of the potential downside of triage and prioritization for the purpose of improving efficiency and to obtain faster results while risking Quality. The board member offered to identify strategic considerations that may be of interest to the laboratory and to further engage in the laboratory's conversation on this issue as it progresses.

The Interim Director reported having recently sat with District officials reviewing a panel of candidates considered for appointment to the SAB. There will be an inquiry with the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments (MOTA) about the term expirations of current Board members and gain further clarification of eligibility requirements for Board reappointment. The Interim Director and the SAB Chair will continue discussions offline concerning collective efforts to fill Board vacancies.

A briefing was provided by the Interim Director following the DFS executive team's February 28<sup>th</sup> visit to the Houston Forensic Science Center in Houston, Texas, where observations of the laboratory's technology and workflows and discussions of stakeholder interactions and board reporting were all made possible by the host lab.

DFS Interim General Counsel, Hillary Hoffman, updated the Board concerning mock trial training of on-boarding crime scene scientists and the impending hiring of additional DFS attorneys who will perform work for the forensic science and public health disciplines. The project involving QCARS and QPARS containing names is ongoing and only applies to the Forensic Laboratory. In the future, there will be a database containing names to be provided, dependent upon the nature of the request and based on the distinction of the non-conformity or non-conformity of the scientist.

Board member Jones recommended that DFS legal explore national standards, addressing various legal issues, promoted by OSAC from NIST, about the types of training that examiners should be receiving while training for competency, thereby ensuring the lab's examiners are receiving at least minimum baseline standards in rules of evidence, deposition, and legal obligation to disclose.



Page 3 of 3  
Science Advisory Board  
Meeting Minutes  
March 3, 2022

Included among the Quality Assurance activities reported by Interim Quality Manager Stephen Milligan, were 14 testing unit internal audits, establishing routine participation of Quality Assurance Specialist in DFS unit meetings, training oral boards and mock trials, completion of Annual Management Review of units in the Directorate, Forensic Science Laboratory and Public Health Laboratory divisions and establishment of the department's consolidated QCAR, QPAR and Risk-Assessment trackers. For the period covering Q1-2021 to Q2-2022, Quality completed 85 QCARS with 64 in progress. During the same period, 45 QPARS were completed and 47 are in progress.

Referencing SNA's report recommendation, Board Chair Jordan inquired about when the SAB can anticipate receiving details associated with QCARS and QPARS beyond the summaries referred to the Board. DFS leadership assured the Board Chair that the SAB will be engaged during the primary phase of the QCAR/QPAR process.

Board member Jones questioned what happened when, in the past, DFS labs were able to highlight and present to the Board lab work by scientists in the most favorable and complimentary terms, purportedly in contrast to information presented in the SNA report. The Interim Director acknowledged that training methodologies were not effective or current, did not meet industry standards and could be attributed to the combination of failure in quality and internal unit supervision.

During a briefing on the Forensic Intelligence Unit (FIU), Brandy Cramer, DFS Chief of Staff, recognized the unit's work (evidence evaluation and plans for testing, status update reporting etc.), having received 1,235 requests this fiscal year to date, resulting in a 23% reduction from prior years. However, a monthly average comparison suggests that the unit is on track with the monthly averages of previous years.

Forensic Biology Unit (FBU) Manager Kristy Hopkinson reported that FBU's work in outsourcing has been constant. At present, the unit is working Bode Technology for the processing of sexual assault kits (Physical Evidence Recovery Kits (PERK), working with Signature Science for non-PERK cases and recently initiated a new contract with Signature Science for the testing of fired cartridge casings, at the request of DFS stakeholders. The FBU is also considering bringing Sorenson Forensics online to assist with the unit's caseload and meeting turnaround. Ms. Hopkinson also reported on the fired cartridge casing validation plan and partnership with Marshall University.

Dr. Luke Short provided a brief update on the PHL COVID-19 response and a summary of the forensic chemistry activities and the division's Biowatch audit.

The SAB will convene the next meeting at 9:00 a.m., Friday, April 1, 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 11:11 a.m.

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.