



**Department of Forensic Sciences
Science Advisory Board Meeting Minutes
June 29, 2023**

The Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS) Science Advisory Board (SAB) meeting was called to order by Board Chairperson Dr. Jeanne Jordan at 10:02 a.m. Roll call of SAB members present, in addition to the Board Chair Jordan, included: Dr. LaKeisha McClary, Mr. Eugene Lien, Dr. Henry Swofford, Dr. Michael Pentella, Dr. Tracey Dawson Green, and Mr. Richard Tontarski. A quorum was established to conduct Board business.

The Board had an opportunity to address comments/corrections regarding the minutes from the previous meeting held on March 2, 2023. Dr. Swofford mentioned an omission regarding the progress made towards accreditation regarding the extent in developing policy/procedures alignment and a gap assessment published/proposed by OSAC. Krystyna Hopkinson (Deputy Forensic Science Lab Directory) mentioned that Dr. Simone Gittelson (Forensic Intelligence Analyst) is actively working on this and that her focus is FBU/OSAC and conducting comparisons against SOP's, etc. so the gap assessment is being completed.

Motion to Approve March 2, 2023, Meeting Minutes: Dr. Tracey Dawson Green

Seconded: Mr. Eugene Lien

Motion to Approve Minutes Passes

All were in Favor to approve the minutes

Additional Attendees Included:

Francisco J. Diaz, MD (DFS/OCME)	Jameel Harris (DFS)
Beverly Fields (OCME)	Christina Strain (DFS)
Andrew McArdle (OCME)	Renee Mims (DFS)
Hillary Hoffman (DFS)	Simone Gittelson (DFS)
Gretchen Brumley (DFS)	Kweku Toure (DFS)
Quiyana T. Hall (DFS)	Drew Sabatelli (DFS)
Tom Fontenot (DFS)	Andria Barbee (DFS)
Krystna Hopkinson (DFS)	Eric Smith (DFS)
Alesia Wheeler Moore (DFS)	Veronda Hazleton (DFS)
Jocelyn Hauser (DFS)	Tim Scanlan (DFS/FACT)



Director's Update

Interim Director Dr. Francisco Diaz (Chief Medical Examiner for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner) introduced himself to the Science Advisory Board Members. He explained his background experience and the wealth of accreditation/board experience. Dr. Diaz explained that we're working diligently to re-apply for re-accreditation. He introduced our new Quality Assurance Manager Ms. Christina Strain. Dr. Francisco noted that Crime Scene Sciences and the Public Health Laboratory will remain within the FSL/Consolidated Forensic Laboratory.

Tom Fontenot (Chief Information Officer) – informed the Board that we released the latest update since our last meeting which provided additional functionality as we're moving toward phase 3 (biology) in FSL. We've started working on new dashboard product which will replace aging technology.

Hillary Hoffman (General Counsel) mentioned that the Amendment Act 2022 passed but will not move forward due to it requiring funding in total. Mr. Kweku Toure' (Attorney Advisor) was introduced as the POC assigned to work on SAB matters. His contact information is 202-727-6154 (Office) * 202-570-0877 (Mobile) * Kweku.Toure@dc.gov (Email).

Timothy P. Scanlan, Ph.D from Forensic Analysis Consulting Training (FACT) provided an accreditation update which confirmed that FSL is in good standing for re-accreditation. The FSL Team and FACT Teams have worked well together and within the FSL team alone to complete the necessary steps toward re-accreditation. Dr. Scanlan introduced the FACT Team and their qualifications. FACT recommended the Reaccreditation Process in Phases beginning with Phase 1 – Forensic Biology (FBU)/Forensic Chemistry Unit (FCU) and Phase 2 to expand the scope of accreditation. DFS/FSL engagement with ANAB to achieve accreditation is very close. Dr. Diaz expressed that our (DFS/FSL) number one goal is to work and execute the vision to ensure that we have the best laboratories and serve as best practices within the United States.

The Science Advisory Board (SAB) read a letter previously forwarded to Dr. Diaz. The letter stated the background information regarding the Board Members/positions and its creation along with its mission to provide high quality, timely, accurate and reliable forensic science services using best practices and best available technology; and focus on unbiased science and transparency; and the goal of enhancing public safety.

Dr. Swofford questioned to what extent can the board see the qualifications and potentially the identities of the re-accreditation team. Ms. Hoffman again reiterated that legally that information cannot be shared.

Dr. Diaz informed the SAB that their service to advise along with their time is really appreciated. He will seek the advice of each Board Member and their specific subject matter of expertise and is willing to share information as it relates to Dr. Scanlan and FACT. Dr. Diaz further clarified and respectfully disagreed on a statement that Dr. Swofford mentioned regarding accreditation being the ultimate goal for DFS. Instead, the Interim Director explained that accreditation is nothing more than a reflection of



your operating procedures and the consonance between those procedures and what you do. He expressed that we need to be subjected to the review process regardless of the discipline that we're working, and it's not repetitious. The real work quality is in-house and if you don't have that, can you be accredited? However, we are very close to accreditation.

Rick Tontarski agreed with Dr. Swofford regarding conducting gap assessments in the initial phase.

Krystyna Hopkinson was able to address the question raised by Dr. Swofford to determine if Dr. Simone Gittelson is solely leading the Gap Assessment which in turn an additional technical leader has been hired totaling two technical leaders in all. The FSL update included currently validating a method for quantitation of Heroin Based Purity using Gas Chromatography-Flame Ionization Detection (GC-FID) This method was previously validated for determination of Heroin Hydrochloride purity and is now being extended to use for Heroin Base. The validation is currently still in progress, but Selectivity, Matrix Effects, Linearity, Repeatability, and Reproducibility studies have been completed.

LFU Training Program is currently working with Forensics to include Suitability and Moot Court and IAI Certification Preparation. Dr. Tracey Dawson Green questioned the type of Symphony (Forensic Biology) samples are being used. Confirmation will be made by Krystyna Hopkinson. Dr. Tracey Dawson Green also questioned the placement of prob Gen software which has been used since 2017 (StarMix).

Dr. Jocelyn Hauser (Public Health Director) stated that the Public Health Emergency officially ended in May. The Public Health Lab (PHL) has transitioned back to surveillance mode. Hosted Sultanate of Oman to view our laboratory for two days. Sentinel Laboratory Training (2 days) with a virtual portion has resumed. Currently lab cross-training (having multiple staff that can move between labs) are taking place. Approximately 27% of staff are cross-trained.

CDC has provided three (3) consultants whereas PHL meet once/week to assist in structuring the cross training plan initiative, developing a search testing plan whereas templates are developed. BT and Toxicology Units Capacity have increased in staff. Previously only 4 persons had credentials to be on the registration side to handle select agents. Currently, 9 persons are approved. Wastewater is up and running. Mosquito flu surveillance has been extended through the summer.

Homeland Security would like us to be a backup for Maryland in terms of toxin testing. So, currently all of the mail in the Brentwood Mail facility would get screened for toxins and Maryland Public Health Labs. We've received 4 new CTU Clinical Toxicology instrumentations. We have two new GCM's, one GC MSMS and one ICP. Thus, we've been able to expand our testing while seeking new technologies.

Dr. Hauser was able to confirm two questions from Dr. Jordan (Board Chair). Dr. Hauser first confirmed that COVID surveillance is still being conducted. She further explained that they are entering into the last year of the cooperative agreement with CDC.

Alesia Wheeler Moore (Crime Scene Sciences Director) informed the Science Advisory Board that Crime Scene Sciences are a 24/7 operation whereas they respond to all major crimes, process DNA,



collect/package evidence and much more. Although her team is short-staffed, she mentioned that 9 additional staff members will be hired by the end of July. They are currently seeking 25 additional members.

Ms. Moore was able to address the question regarding staff retainability and attrition by explaining that it was never discussed as to when MPD employees depart and how the manpower (usually every 7 years) would be recaptured. Ms. Moore was able to address Mr. Tontarski's question which explained that the Crime Scene Training Academy consisted of 8 weeks of training in Laytons, Photography, collecting DNA Packaging, and how to actually input evidence in two tracking systems which is filed in LIMS. Mr. Fontenot confirmed that they are currently working with vendors Justice Trax and Crime Pad to alleviate potential human error as entry is made. Systems are hoped to be in place early next year. Dr. Diaz confirmed that we will get the necessary positions as the number of deaths continue to rise.

During the Business Review, Dr. LaKeisha McClary inquired as to how to incorporate annual trainings. Gretchen Brumley (COO) was able to express that our leadership has made an significant investment in our training resources.

Krystyna Hopkinson was able to confirm Mr. Tontarski's question as to the type of toxicology or trace work (Drug Chemistry – dangerous controlled substances and the identification of any potential illicit drugs) which was being conducted.

The Quality Assurance Manager, Christina Strain expressed that getting to know her team, other quality specialists and determining their needs was currently the most challenging. However, good feedback has been received.

The SAB will convene the next meeting on Thursday, October 19, 2023. The meeting adjourned at 12:10pm.

An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.