**FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION**

**LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**MEETING MINUTES**

The Licensing Advisory Committee of the Texas Forensic Science Commission (Commission) met in person and via videoconference on April 25, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., at the Barbara Jordan State Office Building at 1601 Congress Avenue, Room 2.034, Austin, Texas 78701.

**Members Present:** Calli Bailey

Andrew Greenwood

Carina Haynes

Michelle Paulson

Katherine Sanchez

Kelly Wouters

Ed Wallace

**The following Licensing Advisory Committee members attended virtually via Zoom: Calli Bailey, Andrew Greenwood, Dr. Kelly Wouters, Ed Wallace**

**Members Absent:** Angelica Cogliano

Sandy Parent

**Staff Present:** Lynn Garcia, General Counsel

Leigh Tomlin, Associate General Counsel

Veena Mohan, Assistant General Counsel

Steve Miller, Multimedia Producer

Rodney Soward, Program Specialist

Maggie Sowatzka, Program Specialist

**Members conducted this meeting of the Texas Forensic Science Commission’s Licensing Advisory Committee (Committee) as a videoconference and in-person meeting pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Government Code section 551.127. Members of the Committee and appeared remotely and at the physical location set forth in this agenda.**

**During this meeting, the Committee considered and took action on the following items. The Committee took breaks as necessary.**

1. **Call meeting to order. Roll call for members. Excuse any absent committee members.**

Sanchez served as the presiding officer at this meeting. Committee members were present as indicated above.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Paulson moved to excuse Parent’s absence. Wouters seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Paulson moved to excuse Cogliano’s absence. Haynes seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

1. **Review and adoption of minutes from the January 25, 2024 meeting.**

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Paulson moved to adopt the January 25, 2024 meeting minutes draft.  Haynes seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

1. **Administrative update, including update on number of licenses issued and renewed. (Associate General Counsel Tomlin/Program Specialist Soward).**

Licensing Program Specialist Soward gave an update to members and staff on the current total number of licenses issued as of April 5, 2024 (1,304 total), as follows: non-interpreting, 257; provisional, 12; temporary, 2; uncommon 4; and regular analyst and technician licenses, 1,029; in addition to renewals processed to date.

1. **Review any outstanding coursework evaluations, including review and evaluation of statistics courses geared towards law enforcement.**

There were no outstanding coursework evaluations to review. Tomlin shared information about the lack of statistics courses geared towards law enforcement personnel. Celestina Rossi has been working with Lonestar College (College) to develop a course to fill this gap. One of Lonestar’s statistics professors who is also a former Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) certified peace officer is willing to teach the course. The College plans to launch the first offering of the course in late summer 2024. The course will provide a certificate of completion for licensing purposes and TCOLE credit for continuing education. The course will be held online, but the university is also exploring the possibility of a mobile classroom that would allow the course can be offered in person across the state. Rossi plans to submit a formal syllabus for review before the Committee and Commission’s next meetings in July 2024.

1. **Review any outstanding criminal history evaluations or other licensee application conduct requests.**

There were no outstanding criminal history evaluations or other licensee application conduct requests this quarter.

1. **Discuss and vote on recommendation that the Forensic Science Commission (Commission) adopt rule changes that further develop the voluntary licensure program including, but not limited to, changes and additions to §§ 651.202 and 651.222.**

The rule before the Committee proposes changes to the document examiner voluntary license that raise the education level requirements for the license to a bachelor’s or advanced degree in a chemical, physical, biological science, chemical engineering or forensic science from an accredited university and create new license categories for crime scene disciplines. Staff asked the Committee to review and recommend that the Commission adopt the proposed rule.

**MOTION AND VOTE:** *Paulson moved to recommend to the Commission to propose amendments to §§ 651.202 and 651.222, subject to suggested non-substantive revisions from the Office of the Governor, Texas Register, and Commission Staff.  Haynes seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

1. **Discuss and vote on recommendation that the Commission adopt updates to published, required quality standards for employing laboratories of voluntary licensees including, but not limited to, the addition of quality standards for forensic anthropologists and any changes to the requirements chart related to voluntary licenses for document examination analysts and crime scene disciplines.**

Tomlin explained quality standards currently listed for voluntary licensure do not include forensic anthropology. Mark Ingraham, Associate Director of the Forensic Anthropology Unit at the University of North Texas Health Science Center – Center for Human Identification, has been assisting staff with developing the quality standards for anthropology. Ingraham addressed the Commission and shared a summary of his discussions with anthropologists across the state. All the laboratories with anthropologists are either accredited or working towards accreditation. He also shared information about a guidance document for quality programs for anthropology laboratories, which is currently being evaluated by the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Science (OSAC) Subcommittee on Forensic Anthropology. The document focuses on laboratories that cannot or will not become accredited. Staff and the working group of anthropologists led by Ingraham plan to bring a proposal of recommended quality requirements for employing laboratories of licensed anthropologists to the Committee’s July meeting.

1. **Discuss and vote on recommendation that the Commission adopt rule changes to license expiration dates including, but not limited to, changes to §§ 651.207 and 651.208.**

Tomlin explained that this is a proposed rule that changes the birth month expiration policy to only apply to current licensees who were initially licensed before January 1, 2024, and are renewing on or before December 31, 2026. Anyone who applies for a new license under the proposed rule will expire two years from the date they are initially granted the license.

**MOTION AND VOTE:**  *Paulson moved to recommend that the Commission adopt the proposal that includes changes to Sections 651.207 and 651.208, subject to suggested non-substantive revisions from the Office of the Governor, Texas Register, and Commission Staff.  Wallace seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

1. **Update from the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors.**

Peter Stout, Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (TACLD) President, was absent from the meeting. Celestina Rossi shared that TACLD has filed their taxes.

1. **Consider possible agenda items for next quarterly committee meeting.**

Garcia shared that there will be agenda an item next quarter related to guidance for intra/inter agency proficiency monitoring programs particularly for latent print and crime scene disciplines.

1. **Schedule of future quarterly committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduled meetings for July 25, 2024, October 24, 2024, and January 30, 2025.**

The next Committee meetings will be held on July 25th, 2024, and October 24th, 2024, and January 30th, 2025.

**MOTION AND VOTE***: Paulson moved to direct staff to schedule these meetings. Wouters seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

1. **Hear public comment.**

Staff noted no public comment other than that noted throughout the agenda.

1. **Adjourn.**

**MOTION AND VOTE:**  *Paulson moved to adjourn the meeting. Haynes seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adjourned the meeting at 10:47 am.*