



TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

*1700 North Congress Ave., Suite 445
Austin, Texas 78701*

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 October 24, 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: Andrew Greenwood
Michelle Paulson
Katherine Sanchez
Kelly Wouters
Angelica Cogliano
Carina Haynes
Jessica Frazier
Megan Rommel
Deion Christophe

The following Licensing Advisory Committee members attended virtually via Zoom: Jessica Frazier, Angelica Cogliano, Carina Haynes, Kelly Wouters.

Members Absent: None

Staff Present: Lynn Garcia, General Counsel
Leigh Tomlin, Associate General Counsel
Veena Mohan, Assistant General Counsel
Robert Smith, Senior Staff Attorney
Rodney Soward, Program Specialist
Maggie Sowatzka, Program Specialist
Steve Miller, Multimedia Producer

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 Staff appeared remotely and at the physical location set forth in this agenda.

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

Sanchez called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. New members Rommel, Christophe, and Frazier introduced themselves.

2. Review and adoption of minutes from the July 25, 2024 meeting.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to adopt the July 25, 2024 meeting minutes draft. Wouters seconded the motion. Frazier, Christophe, and Rommel abstained from the vote. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

3. Administrative update, including number of licenses issued and renewed. Discuss acquisition of new application management program (ALiS) including timeframe for implementation.

Licensing Program Specialist Soward updated members and staff on the current total number of licenses issued as of October 9, 2024 (1,310 total), as follows: non-interpreting, 251; provisional, 9; temporary, 3; uncommon 3; and regular analyst and technician licenses, 1,044; in addition to renewals processed to date.

The Commission currently utilizes a learning management system called TopClass that was customized to be an application portal for forensic licensing, while the Judicial Branch Certification Commission (JBCC) uses an application system called ALiS to process applications for interpreters, court reporters, process servers and guardians, all of whom must apply for some form of certification from JBCC. The Office of Court Administration, which is the parent agency for both JBCC and the FSC, decided to transition the application process for all OCA licensing programs to ALiS for efficiency and budgeting purposes, and because the platform is a dedicated application system. Staff will work with ALiS developers to fully customize the licensing platform and landing pages for the Commission's use, and eventually will transition all FSC applicants to ALiS.

4. Elect Chair of Licensing Advisory Committee.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Christophe moved to elect Katherine Sanchez as the Chair of the Licensing Advisory Committee. Paulson seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

5. Review any outstanding coursework evaluations.

There were no outstanding coursework evaluations this quarter.

6. Review any outstanding criminal history evaluations and/or licensee conduct reports from licensing applications.

There were no outstanding criminal history evaluations or other licensee application conduct reviews for the Committee this quarter.

7. Update on development of guidance document for intra/inter-agency proficiency monitoring programs, including discussion of forensic science service provider survey and responses.

Paulson gave an update on the development of a guidance document for intra/inter-agency proficiency monitoring programs. Paulson began the process by sending a survey primarily to law enforcement forensic science service providers to identify what their established proficiency monitoring programs were and what additional needs the entities may have. Paulson also sent out an email to offer guidance on preparing standard operating procedures and other quality programs for laboratories. Most laboratories already had an established proficiency monitoring program in place. Paulson found about a dozen individuals interested in forming a working group to create a formal guidance document for effective intra/inter laboratory proficiency monitoring. As a next step, Paulson will draft a guidance document based on existing proficiency monitoring programs. Garcia recommended collaborating with the Texas Division of the International Association for Identification to create a pilot program. The working group, in collaboration with TDIAI, will also discuss creating model standard operating procedures and other quality documents particularly aimed at smaller crime scene and friction ridge laboratories in an effort to help laboratories meet certain key quality standards.

8. 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 other voluntary licenses.

Tomlin gave an update on the addition of quality standards for employing laboratories of forensic anthropologists. The proposed required quality components for employing laboratories of licensed forensic anthropologists require standard operating procedures that include basic quality components such as technical reviews, documented disagreements, and other items covered by ANAB forensic science supplemental standard AR-3120. The quality components, if adopted, become effective January 15, 2025. Staff emphasized the working group of anthropologists who assisted in finalizing the proposed required standards ultimately recommended removing a referenced anthropology standard (Organization of Scientific Area Committees (OSAC) 2024-S-0001 Guidance Document for Understanding and Implementing the Minimal Components of a Quality Assurance Program) as a component, because the anthropology subcommittee of the OSAC removed the standard from the Registry for revisions and plans to replace it with a more robust document soon. The group plans to recommend the revised standard be included in the required quality components once it is published again on the OSAC Registry of Standards.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Christophe moved to recommend that the Commission adopt the proposed update in the standards chart with the omission of OSAC 2024-S-001 Document for Understanding and Implementing the Minimal Components of a Quality Assurance Program in Forensic Anthropology. Greenwood seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

9. Discuss issue of lack of available accredited firearms experts.

The Committee discussed concerns regarding the current lack of accredited firearms experts available to defense. The Committee directed staff to assemble guidance for resources to achieve accreditation in the discipline of firearms and toolmarks, including recommended grant applications for funding.

10. Update from the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors.

Garcia gave an update on behalf of the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (TACL D). Peter Stout, TACL D President, is working with legislative offices on an official apprenticeship program for forensic science students. The proposal includes a pilot phase including the participation of the Center for Human Identification (forensic biology) and Sam Houston State University (seized drugs and toxicology).

TACL D is also tracking legislation that would ban all forms of consumable Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), with a focus on the potential impact of legislation on forensic laboratories.

11. Consider possible agenda items for next quarterly committee meeting.

There were no additional agenda items suggested for the next quarterly committee meeting.

12. Schedule of future quarterly committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduled meetings for January 30, 2025, April 10, 2025, July 24, 2025, and October 23, 2025.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Christophe moved to instruct staff to schedule these meetings. Greenwood seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

13. Hear public comment.

Celestina Rossi gave an update on the statistics for law enforcement class being developed at Lone Star College. Rossi has communicated with the statistics professor at Lone Star College. They are working on development of the curriculum and authorization for the course to count as continuing education credits for law enforcement. The pilot class is scheduled for January 6 through January 10, 2025. The course will be held at the conference center across the street from the college. The class will be open to about 15 students. The first two courses will be taught in person, but the following classes will be available remotely.

14. Adjourn.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Haynes moved to adjourn the meeting. Wouters seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adjourned the meeting at 10:43 a.m.*