



**Department of Forensic Sciences
Science Advisory Board WebEx Meeting Minutes
October 22, 2021**

The Department of Forensic Sciences (DFS) Science Advisory Board (SAB) meeting was called to order by Board Chairperson Dr. Jeanne Jordan at 9:05 a.m. Roll call of SAB members present, in addition to Chairperson Jordan, included: Mr. John P. Jones II, Dr. LaKeisha McClary, Dr. Michael Pentella, Mr. Henry Swofford and Mr. Robert Thompson. A quorum was established to conduct board business.

Motion to Approve July 16, 2021, Meeting Minutes: Board Member McClary
Seconded: Board Member Pentella
Motion to Approve Minutes Passes

Director's Update

Since the July 2021 Science Advisory Board meeting, DFS leadership has focused significant attention to reinforcing administrative operations as well as instituting personnel changes.

After several years of dedicated work with DFS and the Metropolitan Police Department, Christopher LoJacono, Crime Scene Sciences Division (CSSD) director has retired. Alesia Wheeler-Moore, Crime Scene Manager, has been appointed to serve as CSSD interim director. Ms. Wheeler-Moore is knowledgeable and well-respected across the law enforcement community, having also served nearly 30 years with the Metropolitan Police Department.

Mr. Arturo Weldon has joined the team as Interim Chief Information Officer to oversee the department's architectural IT platforms, amid the rebuild for accreditation, ensuring optimum performance of DFS IT operating systems. Identified among Mr. Weldon's key initiatives are network security measures to include ransomware safeguards, offsite data security hygiene, JusticeTrax/LIMS upgrades, enhancements and the built-in 2-way portal. There will be support designed to ensure functionality by end-users.

Ms. Quiyana Hall has been named DFS Human Resources and Labor Relations Director. A proven seasoned HR professional, Ms. Hall provided an overview on the department's HR hub, its design, team elements and the path ahead.

Members of the DFS executive team attended the 2021 American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) symposium in Boston, Massachusetts, August 24 to 25 during which opportunities to network with leaders of the forensic science profession and convening an audience with ANAB were made possible. Another opportunity to interact with experts of the discipline occurred October 12 to 14 when Hillary Hoffman-Peak (General Counsel), HR Director Hall and Forensic Science Laboratory interim director Brandy Cramer attended the 20th Annual Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers (AFQAM) training in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Director Crispino did not accompany the DFS team to the Pittsburgh training conference, as he appeared before the Council of the District of Columbia's Committee on the Judiciary and Public Safety, chaired by D.C. Council



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member Charles Allen, during an October 14 public oversight roundtable on DFS operations. The executive team plans to visit the Houston Forensic Science Center in Houston, Texas in January to observe first-hand the best practices and experiences of one of the nation's largest, successful, independent, and accredited forensic laboratories. The Board recommended and DFS leadership agreed to convene the next SAB meeting after the DFS executive team's visits to the Houston Forensic Science Center.

Director Crispino reported that the projected release of the SNA report is the end of November 2021, and that a root cause determination of each DFS unit by SNA is anticipated. Based on conversations with SNA and larger Firearms Examination Unit (FEU) issues expressed by stakeholders, the DFS executive team made what was considered a difficult decision in conducting a reduction in force (RIF) of the FEU staff of 11 employees. No decision has been made regarding what's next for the FEU and likely to remain undetermined until after the release of the SNA report as well as consultations with the District's chain of command and the SAB. However, potential options may include a reconstitution of the unit, a smaller hybrid unit supplemented by contracting or complete outsourcing. Additional conversations with stakeholders (Office of the Attorney General, Public Defender Service, and others) are expected to collectively assess and advance the reaccreditation project.

The Director briefly identified the leadership team's future goal relating to LIMS and discovery parity facilitated by a two-way built-in discovery portal that would enable equal access to information for all stakeholders involved in the criminal justice system.

Dr. Luke Short, Public Health Laboratory (PHL) interim director, announced that a formal report received from the Division of Select Agents and Toxins (DSAT) contains three minor findings which were quickly resolved. Given PHL's work with the District's Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), there have been discussions to bring a clinical toxicology program to the laboratory. Standard SARS CoV-2 testing is continuing. The laboratory has the capacity for testing 8,000 specimens per week. The PHL will give a presentation that includes aspects of the laboratory's toxicology work (drug testing, syringe exchange program, toxicology surveillance program) during the District's scheduled Opiate summit. The discovery of a new bacteria was reported by the laboratory, most recently recognized as having ranked among the top ten in sequencing (currently at 250 per week) in the nation per capita.

The Quality update was reported by Mr. Abdel Maliky, Senior Deputy Director. Issues described included the Public Health Laboratory DSAT audit and results reported by Dr. Short, closeouts of Forensic Science Laboratory QCARS, finalizing the progress report, preparing for the Annual Management Review (AMR) in December and fulfilling document requests from the D.C. Auditor and SNA. SAB member Jones recommended that during the AMR the senior deputy director and Quality team look at standards listed on the OSAC registry of recommendations for implementation and consider making the assessment of the recommended standards a part of the Annual Management Review each year. Board member Jones further sought clarification about when the SAB enters the



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QCAR process and whether SAB involvement occurs before or after decisions are made by DFS. Senior Deputy Director Maliky stated that DFS is capable of reopening QCARS to incorporate the Board's recommendations after the body conducts its QCAR review. The senior deputy director added that there are plans to post QCARS, available by hyperlink and sent to the SAB enabling real-time access.

SAB member Swofford proposed that SAB notification of an investigation be made at the time an incident occurs, meets the criteria, and necessitates a QCAR so that the SAB may also begin thinking through the Quality issue.

Interim Director Crispino described his position concerning the integration of names into QCAR reporting and his willingness for SAB and stakeholder input and compromise on the issue as SAB members weighed in on both sides, agreeing to the use of analysts' names in postings, based on stated conditions and circumstances, and opposing the procedure, recommending the use of a unique identifier instead of names. The Interim Director also reported that based on past discussions with SNA and an FBI counterpart, the DFS Executive team is of the opinion that to move the Latent Fingerprint Unit (LFU) forward in the right direction, determining the baseline technical capability of current LFU analysts is needed. Given the enduring rollout of new technologies, the DFS executive team wants to ensure that analysts have all the training support needed to meet proficiency standards. Ron Smith and Associates are currently under contract and reportedly has the capability and resources to administer a technical audit to obtain a better understanding of the LFU analysts' performance. Board Member Swofford expressed support of the performance assessment of LFU analysts but recommends that the laboratory "first establishes what is the minimum standard for competency by which the laboratory and stakeholders are comfortable allowing analysts operate in the criminal justice system." In accord with the Board Member's recommendation, Board Member Thompson suggested that the recommendation also apply to other disciplines and include developing minimum qualifications. Board member Jones advised that DFS leadership not use Ron Smith and Associates for the assessment phase and the restoration phase of the LFU project. DFS leadership reassured the Board Member of having engaged multiple conversations to prevent the appearance of impropriety regarding the services of Ron Smith and Associates.

Interim Director Crispino agreed to forward to SAB Chairperson Jordan the link to the Mayor's Office of Talent and Appointments (MOTA) to submit recommendations for potential appointment to serve on the Science Advisory Board.

The Senior Deputy Director and Board Members Swofford and Thompson spoke briefly about the importance for competency of and compliance by contractors.

The SAB will convene the next meeting Friday, January 28, 2022. The meeting adjourned at 11:11 a.m. An audio recording of the meeting is available upon request.