PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Continual improvement! A phrase that may be very familiar to you. The ABC has been in continual improvement mode over the last year. I know that there are still frustrations with the recertification process, but as you will see in this newsletter, the Recertification Task group has been busy! We are trying to approach changes to recertification with you, our certificate holder, in mind. One big challenge that we have had with the recertification program is consistency. Our attempts to fix this have resulted in unexpected consequences, and I am fully aware of how frustrating that can be!

I’m also excited for the upcoming year of field testing two new exams, the Biological Evidence Screening Exam and the Forensic Biology Exam. These two exams are a huge step towards our long term goal of ISO/IEC 17024 accreditation. The Biological Evidence Screening Exam is designed for forensic scientists who perform evidence screening on biological evidence. I am of the strong opinion that evidence screening is one of the most critical steps in obtaining a good, useful DNA profile. The Forensic Biology Exam will replace the current Molecular Biology Exam and is designed for scientists performing DNA analysis and interpretation. Field testing will begin at the 2020 AAFS meeting in Anaheim. If you have colleagues that are considering certification, this is a great opportunity for them. We will be sending out information on the details very soon.

A third exam is also in development that will be entitled the Foundational Knowledge Exam. This exam will serve as a pathway to certification for those who work in forensics, but do not currently have an option for certification.

As always, the ABC Registrar is there to help you through any questions you may have. You can reach them at ABCRegistrar@criminalistics.com or by phone at 941-729-9050.

Jason L. Linder, F-ABC
President
Approximately one year ago ABC developed a Recertification Task Group to review our recertification program. The purpose of the task group was to guarantee that the recertification program ensures the continued competency of our certificants. The recertification program will be reviewed approximately every 3-5 years. As a result of the large number of appeals received after last year’s recertification packet review, the task group has changed focus. We are now working to revise the recertification program to include the point distribution, required documentation and overall recertification process.

Two significant recommendations from the task group are:

- Changes to the recertification program will be publicized approximately one year before they become effective if the changes affect how the certificate holder will earn or document points. Our goal is that the certificate holders will be aware of any changes that affect their recertification points before they earn the points rather than after.

- Changes to the recertification program should be reviewed and implemented during the regular recertification review cycle. Our goal is to minimize the frequency of changes to the recertification program. If changes need to occur to make a correction, they will be made in a timely manner.

Our group has been working to develop a survey to be distributed to all certificants. This survey will allow certificants to review the proposed changes to the point structure and provide feedback. We anticipate this survey to be distributed in early October. You will have two weeks to complete the survey. Please be on the lookout for the survey and complete it. This is the certificants’ opportunity to have a say in the program. We are offering one recertification point for completing the survey. Please note that the changes proposed in the survey will not become effective until January 2020.

Gretchen Lajoie

Accreditation Manager
Introducing The ISHI Report

We are excited to bring you the newest magazine in the field of forensic DNA that we’ve developed with you in mind—The ISHI Report.

Each quarter, we’ll bring you a glimpse into the fascinating field of forensic science and the dedicated people committed to carrying out the important work of identifying the missing, exonerating the innocent and finding the truth in each DNA sample.

This publication was envisioned as a vehicle to bring stories to the forensic community on topics of interest to those engaged in the important work of DNA typing for human identification. Consider the magazine a supplement to the experience of attending the actual International Symposium on Human Identification, where you can hear about the latest trends in forensic science, meet others who share your passion for forensics and advance your scientific knowledge.

View previous issues and sign up to be the first to receive the November 2019 issue at: www.ishinews.com.
Communication is key. This is something I try to live by. In my personal life, I have recently been directly affected by regulatory changes to a process that is integral to my family. These changes were not communicated effectively to me or anyone in my community. It has been incredibly frustrating and has broken the trust between the agency and my community. As I have been thinking about these changes and the lack of communication, I have also been thinking about the changes that ABC has recently undergone to improve our organization and our processes. I have also been thinking about how those changes have been communicated to our certificants and how they have affected you. With that in mind, I wanted to try to address a couple of things as succinctly as I am able.

As we work towards ISO/IEC 17024 accreditation, some of our processes must change to meet the new accreditation criteria. I suspect many of you have been through the transition to ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation and the changes that are required of your laboratory. ABC’s transition is no different. We believe that achieving internationally recognized accreditation will improve our processes, improve our certification program and will provide our certificants with a certification that holds greater weight in the courts and the forensic community. Some of the more significant changes that will improve our program for you and future applicants involve routine review and revision of our certification examination and recertification programs. Approximately every 5 years each program will undergo a thorough review to ensure that our products are staying current and relevant to the community. While we have always reviewed our programs, this will be a more in-depth and more formal review process.

Other times ABC identifies a concern that we want to correct or prevent. We work diligently to ensure that all certificants are treated equally and that rules and requirements are consistently applied. One significant change that we recently implemented to improve consistency was the requirement that contact hours must be recorded on continuing
education certificates or other paperwork utilized as proof. We know this has caused an enormous amount of frustration for our certificants. This change was implemented to improve fairness; it was not intended to be a punitive change. We did not anticipate that it would cause so much dissatisfaction. We are also acutely aware that our communication regarding this change was not at all sufficient. We are working to correct that.

We are constantly working to balance the needs of our certificants, the accreditation requirements and our workforce. That can be a very tenuous balance. Often the policy or procedure changes that affect you are a result of this balance. The ABC has three contractors that work for the organization, two are part time. The majority of our workforce is made up of volunteers. Our volunteers include the following numbers of volunteers (approximately):

- Board - 14
- Examination Committee - 10
- Proficiency Review Committee - 30
- Recertification Committee – 50
- Credentials Committee - 3
- Others assist as needed

Each of these volunteers give up a significant portion of their time to help the ABC function. We are both small and large. There are a small number of individuals making policy decisions that can be understood and equally applied by a large number of volunteers. Most of the time these decisions go unnoticed by our certificants. Sometimes, however, we unknowingly miss the mark. All I can say is that we are doing our best for the organization when we make these changes.
Accreditation Manager Update - Continued

We appreciate your patience as we continue to work through our accreditation transitions and as we try to improve our policies and procedures regarding certification and recertification. I would also encourage you to provide constructive feedback when you have a concern or potential issue. Often times we identify a need for a procedural change as a result of a contact by a certificant or applicant. Contact information is available on our website. We do review those contacts and address them as we are able.

Gretchen Lajoie
Accreditation Manager

Ice Cream Social

Don’t forget to visit the ABC Ice Cream Social at the 2020 AAFS meeting in Anaheim California. It’s a great opportunity to meet and network with other ABC Certificates, meet the ABC Board of Directors, and get your mid week sugar rush.

Date: Wednesday evening, February 19
Location: Sheraton Park Hotel, Room TBA
American Board of Criminalistics

Solutions for Forensic Analysis

Shimadzu Scientific Instruments delivers a full line of analytical instrumentation, from AA, ICP-MS, GC, and FTIR to UHPLC, LC-MS/MS, GC-MS/MS, and UV-Vis, to meet all your forensic science needs. Shimadzu’s instruments offer superior sensitivity and analytical precision to provide the consistent, accurate results that are critical to your lab.

Whether you work with illicit drugs, seized materials, criminalistics, trace or toxicology, Shimadzu can deliver the high-quality solutions and the expert support that you need for continued success.

www.InvestigateYourLab.com
Shimadzu Scientific Instruments, 7102 Riverwood Drive, Columbia, MD 21046, 800-477-1227
How Courses Are approved for Recertification points

The maintenance of competency and the requirement to document it through a defined recertification process is a cornerstone of any good certification program.

One of the ways ABC certificants can meet their recertification point requirement is by attending approved courses. Continuing education and being current in one’s profession is essential.

The ABC takes very seriously the job of determining if a particular course or event meets the requirements for continuing education that helps maintain competency in the field. The ABC also understands that as a body we may not be aware of all appropriate coursework which is available should be on the approved list so there is a mechanism whereby certificants can request course approval.

To accomplish this the ABC follows the general rules for approving courses and web-based education as education institutions that offer Continuing Education Units (CEUs) and International Learning Units (ILUs). The following information is essential for appropriate evaluation.

1) Topic or Title;

2) Curriculum Vitae or short biography of course instructor(s);

3) Course outline, syllabus, or learning objectives.

If all information is not provided, the event will not be considered. Additional information may be offered in support, such as a web-link, but should not be a substitute for the above requested information. If a course has already been approved for CEU and ILU credit AND the credit is notated on the certificate, no approval is necessary.

Certificants are encouraged to submit courses for approval prior to submitting the annual Recertification Professional Development Report (09-0601F)

The list of approved courses is updated and posted annually on the ABC
How Courses Are approved for Recertification points - continued

website at www.criminalistics.com for reference. Certificants are encourage to review the approved course listing prior to submitting recertification paperwork

List of approved courses as of June 2019 can be found at Criminalistics.org at Resources, Forms, Recertification, Approved Courses

The full text of the policy for “Approval of Courses and Web-Based Education (09-0613S v2.0)” can be found on the Criminalistics.com web site at Recertification, Course and Web Based Education Approval. http://www.criminalistics.com/course-and-web-based-education-approval.html

Examination Committee Chair Retires from Work and from the ABC

Marie Samples recently down as the Chair of the Examination Committee in anticipation of her retirement from the New York Office of the Chief Medical Examiner. The work of the Examination Committee is essential to the continued operation of the ABC. Without tests there would be no certification. Being a member of the Examination Committee is a significant commitment of time and expertise. Being the Chair, and a successful one, at that takes a special person.

Her service to the ABC was varied. She served as the NEAFS Representative to the ABC BoD from fall of 1990 through 1995. She was Chair of the Recertification Committee from 1993-1999. She rejoined ABC as the ASCLD Representative to the Exam Committee in the summer of 2013 and subsequently named the Chair of the committee. She’s a Diplomate in General Criminalistics and a Fellow in Molecular Biology.

We wish her the best in her new role as retiree.
EMS has it!

A comprehensive selection of the finest hand-made tweezers for every research requirement, including...

- Medical Tweezers
- High Precision and Ultra Fine Tweezers
- Thin and Long
- Ergonomic
- Flat Tip
- Ceramic and Ceramic Tipped
- ESD Safe
- General Purpose Tweezers
- Fiber and Fiber Tipped
- EMS Synthetic Fiber Tweezers
- Surface Mount and Optoelectric
- Wafer

now also available in medical grade...

EMS Tweezers

NEW EMS High End Medical Tweezers

EMS is proud to introduce this new category of tweezers. They are all handcrafted to perfect tip symmetry and balance and the surface has an electropolish finish. With high precision fine tips and dot-serrated handles for a perfect grip. All of these tweezers can be sterilized and they are all made from Inox.

and our newest additions:

EMS Gold Coated Tweezers

Finely crafted, high precision tweezers made from anti-acidic, non-magnetic stainless steel, plated with 2 microns of pure 24-carat gold.

EMS High Precision, Diamond Like Carbon (DLC) Tweezers

Feature tips covered in a pure diamond film grown directly on the exposed metallic substrate via an innovative plasma-assisted deposition technique.

CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION...

Electron Microscopy Sciences

P.O. Box 550 • 1560 Industry Rd.
Hatfield, Pa 19440
Tel: (215) 412-8400
Fax: (215) 412-8450
email: sgkcck@aol.com
or stacie@ems-secure.com
www.emsdiasum.com

ESD SAFE TWEEZERS

ERGONOMIC TWEEZERS

SUPER SLIM TWEEZERS

FLAT TIP TWEEZERS

CERAMIC TIP TWEEZERS

WAFER TWEEZERS
Message from the ABC Registrar

Our office would like to take this opportunity to remind and/or inform everyone about several important topics.

• Update contact information on members side of website when necessary. Current email address assists our office to get important information out to you.

• ABC Registrar’s have a limited printing budget. If a document cannot be submitted electronically via ABC website, please mail it to our PO Box. This includes all application forms with enclosures, Request for ABC Examination Seat, Application for Conversion of Certification, Request for Promotion from Affiliate to Certified, and Proficiency Testing Certification Form and Review Documents.

• Please do not staple any documents. Our office must scan many documents and staples will interfere with operation of scanner.

• When mailing more than one person’s documents in a mailing package, please separate each person’s packet with a paper clip.

• If results from a proficiency test are not available at the time PT form is submitted, please send another PT form reporting only the pending PT when results are available. The ABC policy is reporting of PT is required within 60 days of receiving results.

• In Test Identifier column on PT form, please do not enter participant code or webcode. Enter Manufacturer’s Test Identification Number. Such as for CTS: 18-501, 18-5702.

• Notify our office when you want to resign your certification. If you are retiring from the forensic field, you might be eligible for Emeritus status. Visit ABC website for information regarding this status.

• As of November 1, 2019, application deadline will be 75 days prior
Message from the ABC Registrar

to exam date.

- If your agency is interested in hosting a certification exam offering, contact our office. If there are less than 5 exam candidates, there may be additional expenses.

Although, this office works for ABC, we are here to help You as best we can.

Mike and Debbie Healy

Past ABC President Retires

On June 14, 2019, Jennifer Mihalovich retired from the Oakland Police Department Criminalistics Laboratory. Throughout her career she has volunteered many hours to several professional forensic science organizations, including the ABC. From 1995 to 2005 she was the CAC representative to the ABC BoD. During her tenure as President, from 2001 to 2005, she was instrumental in the ABC being the first certification body to be accredited by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board in 2004.

Her dedication to the certification process started before the creation of the ABC. Jennifer first receive a Certificate of Professional Competency in Criminalistics by the CAC in 1990. In 1996 she was certified as a Fellow in Molecular Biology by the ABC

Involvement in professional organizations by practitioners is essential for the improvement of any profession and forensic science is no different. The ABC would not be the professional organization it is without all the current and past volunteers to the Board of Directors, Examination Committee and the many other committees that keep it moving forward.
proficiencytesting
@forensicfoundations

2020 Proficiency Testing Program:

- **Forensic Biology / Crime Scene**
  - BPA
- **Forensic Biology**
  - Biological Examination (inc. BPA) and DNA
  - Biological Examinations and DNA
- **Chemical Criminalistics:**
  - Fibres
  - Glass
  - Architectural paint
  - Ignitable Fluid Residue
- **Forensic Drug Analysis Interlab Collaborative Trial**

Forensic Foundations’ Proficiency Tests are designed to address:

- ANAB requirements
- Relevance to forensic science facilities
- Limitation of any potential context information
- The end-to-end forensic process
- Knowledge of the ‘ground truth’ of the samples
- Cost affordability

For more information visit
forensicfoundations.com.au/proficiencytesting
or email quality@forensicfoundations.com.au
How to Help Your Co-Workers get Certified

As a certificate holder of the American Board of Criminalistics you have chosen to demonstrate your professionalism by seeking and achieving a Certificate of Qualification by the ABC. Though there are a few governmental agencies that require certification of its forensic scientists, they are still the minority. The majority of you have done it because you know that as a forensic scientist the demonstration of your competency is an integral part of participating in the profession. In addition, few agencies provide fiscal incentives to becoming certified. In too many instances there is just the opposite. They do not help by paying application, seating and recertification fees or even provide work time to prepare for the test. You have become certified in spite of the obstacles because you know its the right thing to do.

Unfortunately, because of the many obstacles, the number of certificants is still a too small percentage of practicing professionals. Until agencies wake up and recognize the importance of supporting certification, your participation in helping your coworkers understand the process and help them prepare for taking the examination is essential.

As the editor of this newsletter I reached out to my fellow Board members to find out how they have helped co-workers in their laboratories or prepared themselves for the examination. The following is a compilation of the suggestions.

Create an in-house study group

Getting together a group of people within your laboratory to work together to study for the test has proven to be successful in many laboratories. Every person has knowledge to impart about their area expertise. It can reduce anxiety and help promote laboratory camaraderie. This works best if management supports the concept and allows some on work time to meet.

Help your Regional Association put on an ABC Prep Course

For example, MAFS has given an ABC Prep workshop in the past that attendees have said really helped them. The workshop was developed
How to Help Your Co-Workers get Certified - continued

based on published ABC KSA’s. Discipline experts and a couple of general experts give presentations.

*Provide information about the ABC Study Guides*

Study guides for all the examinations are available on the ABC website. There has been some complaints that the study guides are too broad. However, the reality is every question on all of the tests can be sourced back to a study guide.

*Provide helpful hints and tips to help others learn what are the most effective way to prepare for the examination. These include:*

The ABC has determined that the people with the highest success rate averaged about 100 hours of preparation time in the three to four months preceding the exam.

Start preparation slowly about six months before the test, increasing the study time as the test approached has shown to be effective.

Re-read all of the Forensic Science Handbooks, a basic criminalistics textbook, or anything else that covers the KSAs (available on the ABC website) - if you're in Biology/DNA, re-read Butler's text books; take notes in a notebook as you do this and organize by discipline. Highlight your notes and tab important information or information you really need to study because you're not familiar with it; make sure you study historical information for your discipline.

Go over your notebook and study up until you take the exam.

*Consider a commercial preparation course*

The ABC does not endorse any outside commercial preparation courses but they exist.
Fast Investigation
Real-time Analysis ➤ High Throughput Imaging

Hair, fibers, inks
Duct tapes
Gunshot residue
Powders, explosives
Accident reconstruction
Drugs
Trace evidence
Plant materials

Preserve the Evidence
High-resolution SEM with large sample chamber
Direct analysis time-of-flight Mass Spectrometer

www.jeolusa.com/forensics • salesinfo@jeol.com
American Board of Criminalistics

At Large Member of the Board of Directors
- What the heck is it?

When the ABC was incorporated in 1989, the Board of Directors was identified as consisting of 2 classes of directors, each having an equal vote. The two classes of directors are called “Membership” and “At-Large.”

A Membership Director is appointed by each member organization* and serves as a representative of that organization. The number of Membership Directors is equal to the number of Member Organizations. The number of Membership Directors can change as Member Organizations are either added or deleted from the ABC.

There are three At-large Directors on the ABC Board of Directors. The Articles of Incorporation do not provide information regarding the position other than they are elected by the board members at the annual meeting and serve for three years.

The ABC By-Laws clarifies that the At-Large Directors are elected by the Membership Directors only, solicitation for nominees for the position is made to qualified organizations and the person must be a certificate holder of the ABC.

But what role does the At-Large Director serve on the Board of Directors?

Neither the Articles of Incorporation nor the By-Laws of the ABC directly describe the philosophy or the purpose of At-Large Directors. Clarification comes from two sources, the description of Membership Directors in the ABC By-Laws and on-line references.

In the ABC By-laws, the role of the Membership Directors is clearly identified as the Member Organizations’ representative of record who shall exercise the Member Organization’s voting rights and represent the Member Organization. In other words, regardless of what the Membership Director may think personally about an issue, their vote is to reflect the opinion and philosophy of their organization.

Since the By-Laws are silent regarding the representative duties of the At-Large Director, it is logical to presume their role is to vote their conscious
for what they believe is best for the ABC and its certificate holders as a whole.

Though there appears to be no standard definition online of an At-Large Director, a general definition is offered by Wikipedia, which is in line with the definitions in the by-laws of many organizations, both profit and non-profit.

At-large is a designation for members of a governing body who are elected or appointed to represent the whole membership of the body, rather than a subset of that membership.

This definition appears to be consistent with the inferred role of an At-large Director by the ABC By-Laws.

Unfortunately, since the ABC does not have the financial resources to support the three At-Large Directors, the member organization nominating an At-Large Director nominee is expected to financially support the expenses of the At-Large Director as necessary. The important thing the Member Organization must understand is that though their member who is elected to the At-Large Director position may have similar philosophies to the organization, the At-Large Director is in no way required to vote in support of the Member Organization if a different view is deemed by the At-Large Director to be better for the ABC as a whole.

* The members of the ABC are forensic science organizations who represent a substantial number of individuals who practice in a geographical area or who represent a substantial number of individuals who practice within a specific field or fields of criminalistics.
MISSING IN ACTION

The ABC has lost contact with the following individuals:

Andree, Barbara          Johnson, Janine
Baumgartner, Chase       Kobojek, Kimberly
Bennett, Staci           Langenburg, Glenn
Buszka, Jeffrey          Luft, Brian
Dieu, Waliana            Maucieri, Louis
Duda, Nicole             McGill, James
Dunn, Catherine          Meyer, Kristin
Elwell, Jennifer          Morales, Carlos
Erdei, Linda             Pollpeter, Amy
Garcia, James            Poole, Leslie
Goldman, Anthony          Ray, Tracey
Hammer, Lesley            Sicher, Shavonne
Harris, Howard            Singh, Harpreet
Hayes, Jr., Donald        Somolinos, Cristina
Hiers, Laurie             Tucker, Sharonda
Hill, Patrick             Warren, Dana
Jacobson, LaMonte         Yamauchi, Collin

If you know anyone on this list, please help them get in touch with the ABC Registrar as soon as possible!
If they have retired, remind them of the ability to seek Emeritus status!

ABC Registrar
abcregistrar@criminalistics.com
P. O. Box 1358
Palmetto, FL 34220
American Board of Criminalistics

Officers of the Board of Directors

President
Jason Linder

Vice President
Chris Taylor

Secretary
Shawn West

Treasurer
Susan Blankenship

Membership Directors (10)

AAFS Criminalistics Section
Shawn West (Secretary)

ASCLD
Jason Linder (President)

ASTM-E30
Chris Taylor (Vice-President)

CAC
Greg Matheson

MAFS
Danielle Hankinson

MAAFS
Susan Blankenship (Treasurer)

NEAFS
Peter Diaczuk

NWAFS
Stacy Guess

SAFS
Desiree Reid

SWAFS
Angelica Noyola

At-Large Directors (3)

Christine Pinto - Supported by CAC

David Koppenhaver - Supported by MAFS

Open

Public Member - Open

Member Organizations (10)

American Academy of Forensic Sciences - Criminalistics Section (AAFS)
ASTM Committee E-30 (Forensic Science)
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (AAFS)
California Association of Criminalists (CAC)
Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS)
Midwestern Association of Forensic Sciences (MAFS)
Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists (NEAFS)
Northwest Association of Forensic Scientists (NWAFS)
Southern Association of Forensic Scientists (SAFS)
Southwestern Association of Forensic Scientists (SWAFS)