

AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

Promoting Excellence Through Certification

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello ABC Certificants,

The ABC is currently working on many exciting new tasks including electronic testing, the new seized drug exam, and continuing our transition from paper to digital formats. We will continue to keep you updated as to the status of these projects.

Please do not forget that we are transitioning our Registrar's Office. Please log into your account by **October/November** to check your recertification point status and ensure your contact information is correct. As we physically and electronically transfer our Registrar's Office from Mike and Debbie Healy in Florida to Gretchen Lajoie in Maine, we will not be as readily available to answer questions or provide assistance. **There will be no exam offerings between November 1st and AAFS in February and again between AAFS and April 15, 2024.** As we are continuing to test and validate the electronic testing format, the exams for early/mid 2024 will remain paper. We will give notice as soon as we have a potential start date for electronic testing.

Just a reminder that ABC will be raising the annual maintenance fee to \$100 for certificants effective January 1, 2024. In addition, the late fee and penalty fee will be raised to \$50 and \$175, respectively, for certificants and affiliates effective January 1, 2024. The change in fees comes after careful consideration by the Board of Directors and evaluation of the organization's finances. ABC has not raised fees in three years (2020) and the fee was dropped to \$80 from \$90 for Fellows when proficiency testing submissions were discontinued in 2021. Following the evaluation of other certification body fees and consideration of increased costs to continually improve our certification organization (i.e. ANAB accreditation, electronic testing, improved databases) we have decided this increase is appropriate.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Mike and Debbie Healy for their service to the Registrar's Office- please read the ABC tribute to their service found in this newsletter.

I would also like to thank the ABC Board Members, Exam Committee Members, Contractors, and all other committee members over the past three years who have worked to continue the success and improvement of the ABC and make my tenure as President smooth and enjoyable. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead this organization and work with so many great people and scientists.

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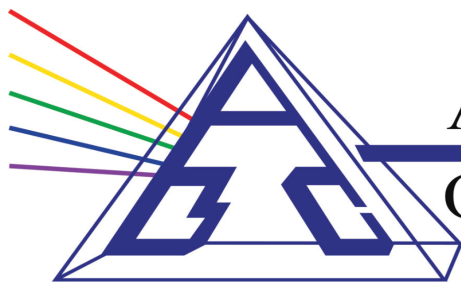
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AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

Please don't hesitate to reach out with any questions or concerns. **Please check the website and social media for updates.**

I wish everyone a happy and healthy holiday season!

Respectfully,

Danielle N. Hankinson, MS, ABC-MB
President

[Tribute to the Outgoing Registrar's Office Personnel](#)

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COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE UPDATE

As a newer committee with ABC, we're still figuring out to best serve our certificants and applicants. If you want to join the committee, please send an email with your interest to the committee.

Moving forward we will start to include some of the other ideas. You may see an email requesting current and retired ABC Certificants to tell us why it was important for you to become certified.

We may also start a "Weird and wild tales from the forensic lab" section for the newsletter. For this, no specific case information could be shared. However, we all have tales that seem unbelievable. You may find that something is more common than you think.

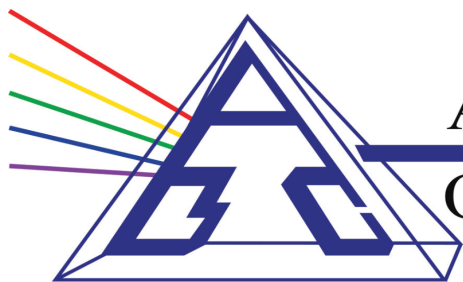
RECERTIFICATION UPDATE

Hello ABC Certificants,

The Recertification Committee continues to evaluate and improve the recertification process on a yearly basis.

For this newsletter, I would like to highlight course preapprovals. As you fill out your packets, please check the pre-approval of courses through the ABC website, and if a course does not appear on the list, please fill out the pre-approval request. This helps move the process along more quickly.

The Committee is working to increase efficiency in the review process so that the packets are completed sooner. Making sure that courses are pre-approved will help expedite these reviews. Additionally, the committee members will continue to reach out to certificants regarding missing or insufficient documentation. In order to avoid losing points, please respond with the requested documentation in two weeks or less. We hope that this process will benefit certificants by allowing them to correct mistakes made during the submission of the recertification packets.



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Communication Update Continued

As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions for the committee, please feel free to send them to us at communications@criminalistics.com.



<https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRv3yAeFtQZyWdg2hl1-3XRP0yXSFuMecuHPubzIYpj9B2BBGU&s>

Recertification Update Continued

A huge **Thank You to Danielle Hankinson**, our ABC President, who has served as the Recertification Liaison to the ABC Board of Directors. I really appreciate all of the support in the transition.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions regarding recertification.

Respectfully,

Alice Hilker, MFS, ABC-GKE, ABC-MB

UPCOMING MEETINGS WITH ABC EXAMINATIONS

American Academy of Forensic Sciences Annual Conference

- February 21, 2024 - Denver, CO

California Association of Criminalists Seminar

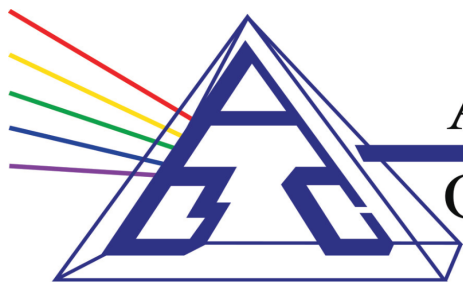
- April 15, 2024 - Los Angeles, CA

Southern Association of Forensic Scientists Annual Meeting

- April 24, 2024 - Chattanooga, TN

Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists Annual Meeting

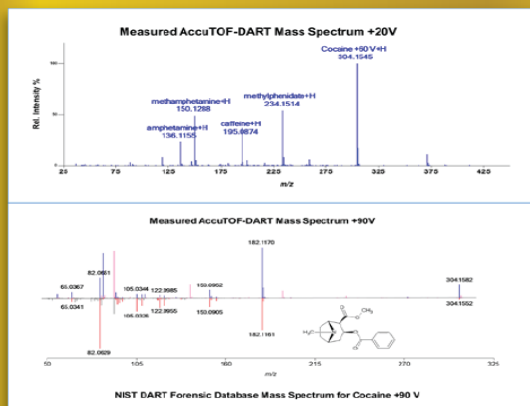
- May 6, 2024 - Pittsburgh, PA



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THE GOLD STANDARD FOR DRUG SCREENING

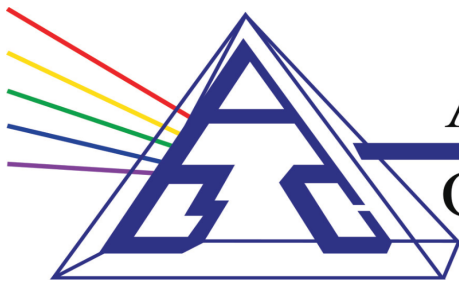


AccuTOF DART mass spectrum of a mixture of 5 stimulant drugs identified by elemental compositions (top) and fragment-ion mass spectra



Download the
Application Note





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EXAMINATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Fall 2023 Update from the Examination Committee – Audra Curry Yovanovich, Chair

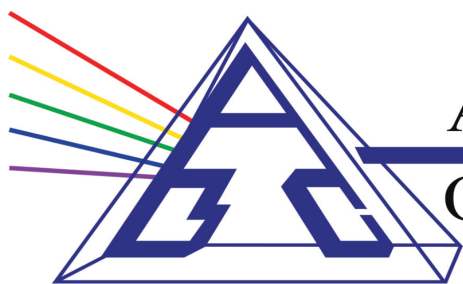
Fall is here and I'm looking forward to pumpkin spice, spooky season, and hopefully some slower times ahead as we move towards winter! We completed the last phase of exam development for our Foundational Knowledge Exam (FKE) and are happy to be able to offer it as an active examination! As with our Biological Examination Screening and Forensic DNA exams, we'll be applying for ISO17024 accreditation through ANAB. Congratulations to our FKE field test takers who are now (or will soon be) certificate holders!

Even though the FKE just became an active exam, it has been five years since the Job/Task analysis was completed. That means you'll soon see an email with a survey that will help us determine if the knowledge, skills, and tasks on the exam is still relevant to your job! Be on the lookout for this email and please help us out by answering the questions in the survey!

We are progressing with our development of the Seized Drug Examination! We completed the verification of the DACUM thanks to those of you who filled out our survey. The blueprint has been made and the tasks have been aligned to the Knowledge-Skills (K-S). The next step is to assign existing items in our question database to our new K-S categories. Once that is complete we can begin writing new items to fill the gaps. We plan to begin field testing the Seized Drug Exam in 2024.

ACCREDITATION MANAGER UPDATE

As we enter fall, I find myself reflecting on my tenure with ABC. While not an original certificant, my certificant number is three digits and hails from the time of the GKE (and Trace core and specialty exams!). I joined the Board of Directors in 2013 and entered into my first contract as Accreditation Manager in November 2014. In January I will add Registrar to my plate. This is a significant transition for all parties. Not only will the office be physically moving from Florida to Maine, but we are also working to implement a number of significant improvements to our business practices. Most of these changes won't be obvious to our certificants or applicants. If changes are expected to have an impact on our certificants or applicants, we will be sure to provide adequate notice. As we have already noted, the Registrar's Office will be closing for the months of December and January to ease this transition. We ask that you please be patient with us during this time of significant change.



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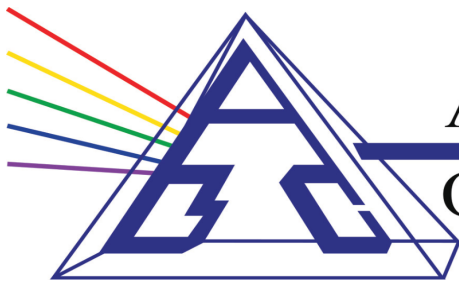
Accreditation Manager Update Continued

Fall also brings with it the time when I am to apply for our annual surveillance visit with ANAB. I submitted that application this week. We scheduled the surveillance visit / scope extension for November 29th. I have submitted our application for a scope extension for our Foundational Knowledge certification. Our goal is to have that certification assessed at the same time as the surveillance visit.

Finally, this time of year also allows me an opportunity to review the results of our customer satisfaction survey. We run the survey from July to July, to hopefully capture the attention of those submitting their annual Rules of Professional Conduct. Respondents of the survey are asked to provide us with a ranking of 1-5 (least to most satisfactory).

| Question | Average Ranking |
|--|-----------------|
| How satisfied have you been with your interactions with the Registrar's Office? | 4.46 |
| How satisfied have you been with the ease of use of our website? Are you able to readily find the information that you need? | 3.79 |
| How satisfied have you been with ABC's communication with you? Do you feel that we provide you with necessary information in a timely fashion? | 4.44 |
| How satisfied are you with the electronic submission of rules of professional conduct? Do you find the form easy to navigate and complete? | 4.45 |
| How satisfied are you with the recertification process? Have the revisions simplified the process for you? Is it a reasonable process? | 4.03 |

In all, the ratings were very positive. For any individual who provided a rating of 2 or 1, we asked for follow-up. The general theme in the comments is dissatisfaction with the recertification process. We have made significant changes in the process over the years to make improvements. Every year we hold a debriefing with our Recertification Committee to see what worked and what needs improvements. It will never be a painless process, but please know that we are continually working to make it better for our certificants. We are certificants too, and we must go through the same process every year. We also feel the pain. Thank you to those who gave us suggestions for our newsletter. We will work to incorporate those into future newsletters. I encourage everyone to complete the customer satisfaction survey next year.



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Accreditation Manager Update Continued

One final note regarding recertification. Every January the Members Only site is hit with significant traffic, understandably. Our website host is aware of this and will be diligent in monitoring that site and correcting errors as they occur. If you run into issues getting onto the site, please just be patient and try again later. You may want to consider logging in before January to beat this traffic. Be cognizant that the Registrar's Office will be unavailable in December, so checking your points in November will give you an opportunity to reach out if you have questions.

Sincerely,
Gretchen Lajoie
Accreditation Manager

WHY I WANTED TO BECOME CERTIFIED

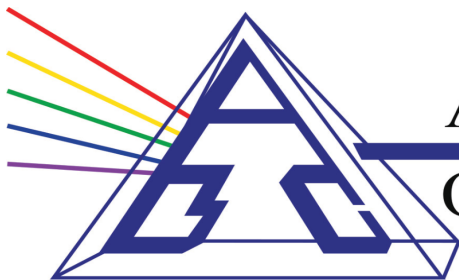
Certification is a voluntary process of peer review by which a practitioner is recognized as having attained the professional qualifications necessary to practice in one or more disciplines of criminalistics.

Why I wanted to become certified:

I decided to become certified after the NAS report indicated that it might be a necessity to become certified in my time as a forensic practitioner. I like to do things on my terms and on my timeline. Rather than be forced to take the exam by some deadline, I decided to pursue certification before it was forced upon me. It hasn't been the case yet that it's a requirement for forensic practitioners to be certified, but I am thankful for being ABC certified. It lends credibility to my testimony and performance as an analyst. I can say that I took and passed an independent organization's exam. I appreciate the added boost to my CV that certification provides. Now as a board member I help contribute to that organization and get to give back to it.

- Cathy Savage

We would like to spotlight our emeritus members and all of our certificants. If you would like to tell your ABC story and why certification was important to you, please email us at the following email: communications@criminalistics.com.



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ISO 9001
BUREAU VERITAS
Certification



Biological Criminalistics inc DNA
Chemical Criminalistics
Fingerprint Examination
Forensic Document Examination



2024



forensic
FOUNDATIONS
INTERNATIONAL™
ISO 9001 & ISO/IEC 17043

Proficiencytesting @ forensicfoundations

Declared, Blind & Bespoke Proficiency Tests

Validation Sets



<https://files.forensicfoundations.com.au/2024+Brochure.pdf>
admin@ffint.com.au



AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

APPEALS COMMITTEE UPDATE

If any of the following situations apply, you may file an appeal with the American Board of Criminalistics:

- Applicant: if you have been denied permission to sit for an examination
- Candidate: if you failed a certification examination and would like your examination rescored or examined
- Certificant:
 - If your recertification points were denied
 - If you failed to recertify due to lack of recertification points
 - If your certification was placed on probation, suspended, or revoked.

Since January 1st, 2022, all appeals have been filed electronically and must be done within 60 days of the notification of the communication regarding your concern.

The goal of the committee is to carefully review each certificant's appeal and make a determination as to whether the appeal shall be granted based on the information provided and by applying the established policies and procedures of the American Board of Criminalistics.

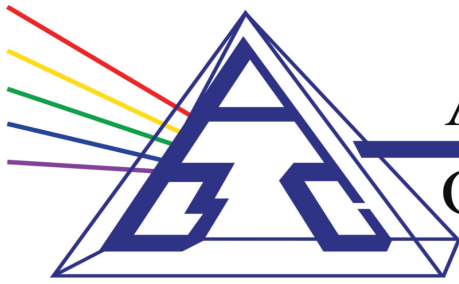
The Appeals Committee reviews all associated appellate documentation. Most commonly, appeals are associated with recertification documentation and the request for points that may have been denied. When appeals situations are more ambiguous, the Quality Assurance Committee is notified for process improvements.

The Recertification Committee has completed reviewing the 2022 packets and recertification points are now available. If for any reason, you believe the points awarded are not reflective of the points earned, please file your appeal in a timely fashion so the appeals committee can evaluate all appeals efficiently.

Please see the [website](#) for further instructions on filing an appeal and do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Erin Tracy – Chair





AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

QUESTION DATABASE MANAGER UPDATE

ABC recently passed a milestone anniversary. Thirty years ago, in July 1993, 193 individual Certificates of Professional Competency in Criminalistics were awarded. The records I am allowed to review provide only cursory information about the individuals themselves. By name, I would estimate I recognize about a quarter of names of what I have come to call the Class of '93. Many I came to know through work and professional associations, while others I met at various meetings through the years. If there is one thing that stands out in my mind about this cadre, it is their commitment to the profession and integrity of their life's work. I would like to share just a few thoughts on several individuals for whom I have developed everlasting respect.

Two that lead my list were taken from us far too early. Ed, you were the true torch bearer to Certification among criminalists. ABC rightly honored you with its only named award, yearly scholarships to each member organization that is a credit to your passion to promote certification. Jan, you were a mentor to so many criminalists, and you inspired professional growth above and beyond the laboratory setting. AAFS did well to name its Graduate Thesis Assistance Grant in your honor.

Twenty-six of the class have concluded their careers with the honor of ABC-Emeritus designation. Rick, Marie, Kary, Steve, Greg, Frank – you earned ABC Certificates among the first minted, Certificate numbers that befit your efforts in getting ABC off the ground and then guiding it to where it exists today. May you all enjoy well deserved retirements.

Incredibly, 23 of the class are still actively Certified. If you do the math, counting the 5-year recertification cycles, each just earned their seventh(!) Certificate of Professional Competency, many with multiple specialties. Mike, Larry, Marty, Desirée, Dan, Gary, Mary – I wish there were some type of award I could bestow for such durable service. (Maybe the President will get an idea reading this column...) For now, I hold all of you in great admiration. Well done!

Dave Stockwell



AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

MESSAGE FROM THE ABC REGISTRAR

When I became the ABC Registrar in January 2011, I had been off the Board of Directors for over a year. By the Fall of 2010, a couple of people had already turned down the job. Then ABC Board President Desirée Reid plead her case to Debbie and two weeks later, we were in Wausau, Wisconsin for training with Mike and Kathy Haas. Debbie and I thought we would run the day-to-day operation of ABC for a few years. Thirteen years later, we have decided it is time to move on to another chapter. We have the utmost confidence that the new ABC Registrar, Gretchen Lajoie, will do well .

The reason we stuck around so long was that we wanted to maintain stability within ABC by staying on as ABC Registrar until ABC attained ISO 17024 accreditation. We are very proud that ABC accomplished this goal. Mission Accomplished!!

To give you an idea how ABC has grown, the first Applicant/Certificate number we assigned was # 2051 and recently Applicant # 3343 was assigned. The number of certificants today does not reflect how many individuals have been ABC certified during the 13 years. We have had 81 certificants convert to Emeritus status and lost many due to retirement, resignation, and a few wonderful people who God brought home.

Debbie and I have had the great pleasure of working with many outstanding forensic scientists. Many, not all, have become great friends. We recognize and appreciate their dedication to this organization. Since I wanted to become more involved with ABC, I said yes in 2001 when SAFS asked me to replace Terry Mills as their representative on the ABC Board and later wound up on the payroll. Albeit a small payroll. We have enjoyed traveling throughout the US for ABC Board of Directors meetings and administering examinations all while seeing the country and meeting many nice people in this profession.

I would be remiss if I did not formally thank Debbie for all her hard work in running the administration of this office these past 13 years. She has always tried to help candidates and certificate holders, like a mother hen, by sending email reminders, offering suggestions, and answering multiple questions so they can correctly submit their paperwork. She has done this all while being visually handicapped due to an accident during her Nursing career which forced her to leave her profession in 1998. Debbie found a new dedication when the ABC Board of Directors took a chance on us as a team. We are both grateful for the opportunity.

I sat at the original ABC GKE offering in Boston in 1992. It took six months to get our results. Now we notify candidates in less than 30 days. ABC has come a long way in over 30 years because of many dedicated people. Walter McCrone was an early advocate of Certification. Ed Rhodes worked on the CAC exam. Leaders like Rick and Kary Tontarski, Peter DeForest and Robert Parsons in the early days. And some like me



AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

MESSAGE FROM THE ABC REGISTRAR CONTINUED

and my predecessor Mike Haas. Greg Matheson and Marie Samples came back a second time to help the ABC Board and EC move this organization along. David Stockwell as Question Database Manager. These are just a few of the names of ALL the individuals who have championed the idea of Professional Certification for Forensic Scientists. For ALL who have served on the Board of Directors and Exam Committee, we thank them ALL for their vision and dedication to this pursuit of quality in our field.

After 40 years in this field, I've seen a lot. I started before DNA was in Crime Labs and GC columns were 6 foot long, packed glass tubes. The field has changed, and mostly for the better. ABC Certification was one of those changes for the betterment of the Forensic Science field. At least in this old dinosaur's opinion.

Always remember, you are in this field to be an advocate for the evidence. Nothing more and nothing less.

It has been a distinct pleasure and honor for us to have served as the ABC Registrar Office these past 13 years.

We hope for nothing but the best for the future of ABC.

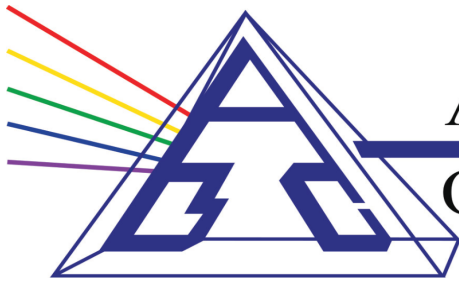
Be Kind to one another.

Best regards,
Mike and Debbie Healy

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happy retirement



AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

TRIBUTE TO THE OUTGOING REGISTRAR'S OFFICE PERSONNEL

Mike and Debbie Healy have been the invaluable personnel behind the ABC Registrar's Office for approximately 13 years. They have kept the ABC running with their due diligence to complete the many duties required of them in their role. They have been generally the first in line for communication relating to numerous reasons ranging from general inquiries to applications, recertification, and appeals. They perform all the exam scoring and prepare for every offering. The amount of work they have done with record keeping, database entries, and file organization is huge and only a part of their day-to-day activities. They have reviewed almost every document that has crossed their desks for accuracy before those documents reach their final destination. Suffice to say, the ABC would not be as successful if it were not for the efforts of Mike and Debbie Healy.

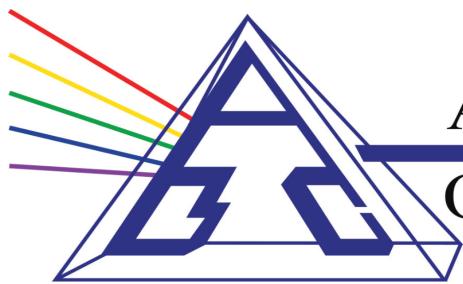
Prior to serving in the Registrar's Office, Mike Healy was heavily involved in the ABC organization. He was one of the first certificants, earning three certifications in General Criminalistics (1993), Drug Analysis (1994), and Fire Debris (1996). Mike served on the Board of Directors from 2001 to 2009 including at least two years as President. Mike was also a huge sponsor of exam development and obtained grant funding in the early 2000s for the development of several conversion exams that incorporated aspects of the General Knowledge Exam into Specialty exams. He also helped develop the Forensic Science Assessment Test (FSAT) with educators for college students.

Mike and Debbie have managed the FSAT since its inception. This has been no small task- in addition to preparing for every certification exam offering or field test offering, they have worked year after year since 2009 to ensure the availability of the FSAT to universities with forensic science programs. Mike has also worked with educators, Board members, and the Database Manager to revise the FSAT periodically to keep the test up to date with advances and changes in forensic science.

In addition to providing many dedicated years of service to the ABC organization, Mike and Debbie have also frequently opened their doors to gatherings and events for Board members and committee members. They have always hosted or attended the Board dinners and have provided invaluable historical perspective as well as great stories and camaraderie.

The Healys will be greatly missed, and the ABC appreciates the numerous hours of service and dedication to maintaining and improving the ABC organization. We wish Mike and Debbie the best on their path forward and hope it includes lots of travel, social gathering, and time spent with family and friends.

Thank you, Mike and Debbie!



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 **SHIMADZU**
Excellence in Science



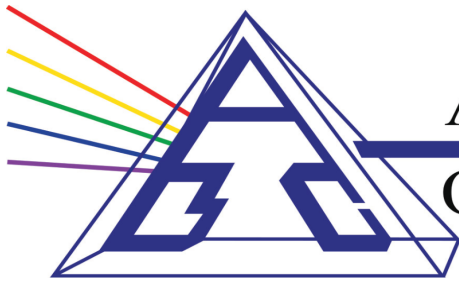
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Missing In Action
(as of October 11, 2023)
The ABC has lost contact with the following individuals:

Dupre, Melanie
Krug, Christopher

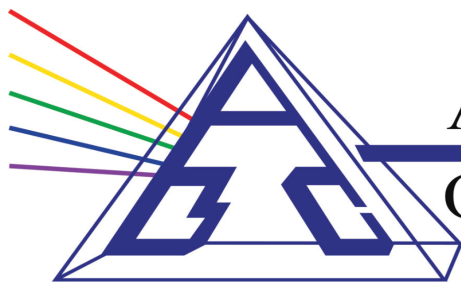
IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR ALL CERTIFICANTS:
Please contact the ABC Registrar if you need to resign your certification.
Please review the information on the ABC website
regarding Emeritus status; you might qualify.

ABC Registrar
abcregistrar@criminalistics.com

P. O. Box 1358
Palmetto, FL 34220

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AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

ABC - ABOUT Us

Officers of the Board of Directors

President
Danielle Hankinson

Vice President
Shawn West

Secretary
Jennifer Remy

Treasurer
Angelica Noyola

Directors for Member Organizations (9)

AAFS Criminalistics Section
Shawn West (Vice President)

ASCLD
Jason Linder

ASTM-E30
Jennifer Remy (Secretary)

CAC
Alice Hilker

MAFS
Danielle Hankinson (President)

MAAFS
Catherine Savage

NEAFS
Peter Diaczuk

SAFS
Erin Tracy

SWAFS
Angelica Noyola (Treasurer)



AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

At-Large Directors (3)

Dave Koppenhaver - Supported by MAFS
Term Expires - Feb. 2024

Rebecca Williams - Supported by MAFS
Term Expires - Feb. 2025

Stacy Guess
Term Expires - Feb. 2026

Public Member - Vacant

Individuals Assisting the ABC

Jenna Crawford
Recertification Committee Co-Chair

Amy Brodeur
Recertification Committee Co-Chair

Sara Roper
Webmaster of the ABC Website

Julie Sikorsky
Credentials Committee Chair

Task Group - Leads

Recertification Task Group - Chair Gretchen Lajoie
FSAT Task Group - Chair Alice Hilker



AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

Committees

Examination Committee

Audra Yovanovich (Chair)
Chance Cline
Esmeraldo Gorecho III
Stephanie Lambert
Michelle Madrid

Tanna Brown (Vice-Chair)
Amy Duhaime
Tammy Jergovich
Ruth Damaso Neely
Amy Reynolds

Quality Assurance Committee - Chair Stacy Guess

Credentials Committee - Liaison Catherine Savage

Recertification Committee - Liaison Alice Hilker

Appeals Committee - Chair Erin Tracy

Exam Committee - Liaison David Koppenhaver

Ed Rhodes Scholarship - Coordinator Catherine Savage

Ethics Committee - Chair Stacy Guess

Communications and Marketing Committee - Chair Catherine Savage

Contractors

Registrar - Mike Healy (Certificate Preparer)

Accreditation Manager - Gretchen Lajoie

Question Database Master - David Stockwell