

March 9, 2016: Letter from the American Board of Criminalistics (ABC) President,

At the February 2016 annual meeting, the ABC Board (BoD) voted me, Meg Aceves the CAC BoD Representative, as their President and Erica Graham, the NWAFS "At-Large" representative, as their Vice President. Susan Blankenship, the MAAFS representative remains as Treasurer, and Chris Hamburg, the NWAFS BoD representative, remains as Secretary. Past President Chris Taylor, the ASCLD Representative, remains on the Board.

I remind you that we are you! Your ABC Board and ABC Examination committee are made up of representatives sent from the following organizations: the American Academy of Forensic Sciences - Criminalistics Section (AAFS); ASTM Committee E30 (Forensic Science); the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD); the California Association of Criminalists (CAC); the Mid-Atlantic Association of Forensic Scientists (MAAFS); the Midwestern Association of Forensic Scientists (MAFS); Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists (NEAFS); the Northwestern Association of Forensic Scientists (NWAFS); Southern Association of Forensic Scientists (SAFS); and the Southwestern Association of Forensic Scientists (SWAFS). Please review the "About Us" tab of the website for specific names of representatives from these member organizations.

Personally, I am very proud to be part of a group that is elevating our profession of Forensic Scientist/Criminalist through certification. Certification is an important component of our profession along with standardization, accreditation, and adherence to a code of ethics.

I am one of many to profess that professional certification (by an independent certification body) gives the public confidence that an individual has not only acquired specialized knowledge, skills, and abilities but also demonstrates proficiency in the standard practices necessary to execute the duties of his/her profession. Just as accreditation of a laboratory is the quality assessment of a forensic provider laboratory; Certification provides "quality assessment" (that is independent of the employer) of a forensic practitioner.

The ABC continues to pursue a path that was started in 2014 to attain accreditation under ISO/IEC 17024- "Conformity Assessment; General Requirements for Bodies Operating Certification of Persons." The ABC Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) and two part time contractors (the Accreditation Manager and the Question Data Base Manager) are actively working on revisions and drafting of new policies while the BoD as a whole reviews, edits and approves our new policy and procedures. The ABC Registrar continues in its key role of communicating with the certificate holders and maintaining the certification process. The Examination Committee is also working on drafting and/or completing any ISO 17024 tasks assigned to them. The costs associated with Job Task Analyses and Sensitivity Testing of the examination questions (psychometric work that has to be outsourced) and the time needed from our mostly volunteer organization have made this endeavor challenging but not insurmountable. We are seeking grant funds to help defray some of these costs. If all goes as planned (and we obtain the grant), our revised timeline puts ABC's ISO 17024 application submission in the fall of 2017.

I would like to thank all member organizations and their representatives for their personal dedication to certification and maintaining their certification through the recertification process. It truly takes a community to accomplish great things.

Sincerely,
Meg Aceves
ABC President