



AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello ABC Certificants,

The American Board of Criminalistics continues to pursue ANAB accreditation for ISO/IEC 17024:2012. We will continue to keep you apprised of any new developments to our accreditation goals. We submitted our annual report for our current FSAB accreditation.

Our Exam Committee will soon have two new people trained in Developing a Curriculum (DACUM). In the near future, we will begin to develop our revised Drug Analysis Exam.

We have also decided to discontinue Affiliate status as of December 31, 2022. This will align with the work experience requirements in our new certification schemes.

Our new Communications and Marketing Committee has been working diligently to update our meeting boards to retractable banners, retain sponsors, ensure certificants receive timely communications, update our social media, and continue to generate our newsletter. I would like to thank the Chair, Cathy Savage, for her dedication and leadership.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me and or any of our Board Members if you have any questions. I hope everyone stays safe and enjoys the upcoming spring and summer months.

Respectfully,

Danielle N. Hankinson, MS, ABC-MB
President

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How to Become Involved in the ABC

Promoting Excellence Through Certification

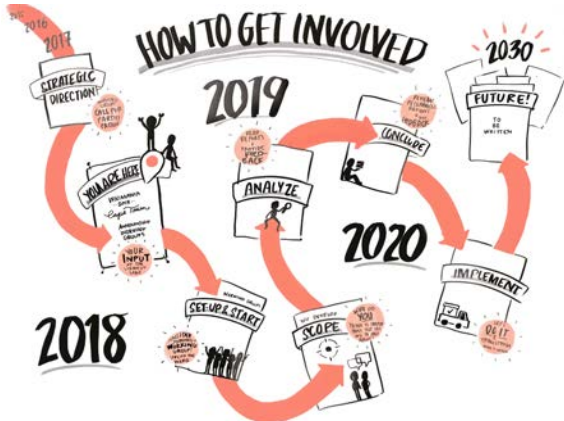
The ABC exists and is maintained through the Member Organizations and the hard work of its many volunteers. Being a volunteer in the ABC not only helps to complete the work of the ABC, it is also a great way for a criminalist to give back to our profession and achieve a level of satisfaction not always possible on the job alone.

There are several ways to get involved.

At the end of this newsletter is a listing of all the committees in the ABC and the current chair of each committee.

You can learn what each committee does by going to <https://www.criminalistics.com>, click on Bylaws. If you want more information, or are interested in volunteering, you can contact the committee chair or anyone on the Board of Directors.

https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcSY-koDpzXs6BZNIktw1CnG_8_J4C14E1KQX11fIjzbtXtXE68&s



Our Purpose:

The Forensic Science community has an obligation to:

- Establish professional levels of knowledge, skills and abilities;
- Define a mechanism for achieving these levels;
- Recognize those who have demonstrated attainment of these levels;
- Promote growth within the profession.

Why Volunteer for an ABC Committee?

While certification recognizes the knowledge and skills of practitioners in various disciplines of criminalistics, our organization would be very limited without its volunteers who help to establish and manage how certification is achieved and maintained. Since the ABC was the first certification body accredited by the Forensic Specialties Accreditation Board and is currently seeking ISO/IEC 17024 accreditation as it develops new examinations, it is an exciting time to participate during this growth and transition. As a member of the Examination, Quality Assurance, and Recertification Committees, I get to learn firsthand about the certification process, collaborate with like-minded professionals, and contribute to a well-respected organization within the forensic science community.

- Ruth Damaso Neely



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COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Since the last newsletter, the ABC Board formed a Communications and Marketing Committee. This committee combines the duties of the Newsletter editor, the social media presence, and the marketing of the ABC.

The ABC Twitter account and Facebook pages have been reactivated and you can expect to see news and updates on both platforms. If you were at AAFS in Seattle, you may have seen the new ABC banner in the registration area.

This is the committee's first attempt at a newsletter. If you have any suggestions for the format or content going forward, please let us know at:

communications@criminalistics.com



<https://encrypted-tbn0.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcRAsgoNitWRx34NkQ1Nuu1meNE2q1vYstjScMUcxk3jtAYHpr-&s>

RECERTIFICATION UPDATE

We have begun to perform abbreviated reviews during recertification- what does this mean? If you have claimed **over** the number of points needed to recertify for your 5 year cycle, the committee will only review enough points for you to reach the threshold for recertification. These point changes will be reflected and you may notice a difference in the points you claimed versus those awarded. This change will provide more efficiency for our recertification committee as we continually evaluate and improve our entire recertification process. If you have any questions, please reach out to the Recertification Liaison, Danielle Hankinson.

We will also try to provide helpful tips for recertification in our newsletters. Although you have already submitted your recertification packets for 2021, please take note of the below tip on claiming organizational membership for 2022. I also recommend creating a folder in Google Drive or on your desktop where you can save documents throughout the year for your next recertification packet. I have found this to be a great way to stay organized and reduce the risk of submitting incorrect documentation.

When you submit your Organizational Membership documentation, please remember to submit the **year you are reporting for (i.e. the year prior) not your current membership documents**. This has been a common mistake for the past several years and we have been lenient with providing points. **Please ensure your documentation includes the year for the reporting cycle before you attach it electronically.**

Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or suggestions. We will continue to strive to create an efficient and high quality recertification process for our certificants.



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2022 proficiency Testing Program:

Chemical Criminalistics

- 2022-CC3 Automotive paint examination
- 2022-FDE2 Ink analysis
- 2022-CC4 Ignitable fluid residue analysis

Forensic Biology

- 2022-Bio4 Biological Examination (inc. Biological fluid ID) and DNA
- 2022-Bio5 Kinship and DNA

Inter-lab Collaborative Trials

- 2022-CT2 Personal lubricant analysis
- 2022-CT3 Forensic Drug Analysis

The 2023 Proficiency Test and Inter-lab Collaborative Trial flyer will be distributed July 2022

Forensic Foundations' Proficiency Tests and Inter-lab Collaborative Trials are designed to address:

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- ✓ Cost affordability

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or email admin@forensicfoundations.com.au



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APPEALS COMMITTEE UPDATE

This year is my first as Chair of the Appeals Committee, and I strive to provide clear, timely communication with the Board and all ABC members. Effective January 1, 2022, all appeals will be filed electronically. Please see the website for further instructions on filing an appeal. The goal of the appeals 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 of the ABC Board of Directors reviews all associated appellate documentation. Most commonly, appeals are associated with recertification documentation and the request for points that may have been denied. Typically, the appeals committee's final determination is in favor of the certificant when a good faith effort is made to provide appropriate information and documentation. When appeals situations are more ambiguous, the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) is notified for process improvements.

The appeals committee will continue to evaluate any new appeals in a judicious manner and note any significant issues that may be remedied by new recommendations to the Board. With each passing year, the number of appeals continues to decrease; the Board, the QAC, and Recertification Committee continue to make great strides in modernizing and simplifying the ABC recertification process.

Erin Tracy – Chair

EXAMINATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Happy spring everyone! Over here in the Midwest, I'm certainly ready for some warmer weather! Since the last newsletter, the Foundational Knowledge Exam (FKE) continues to be field tested. We will offer the FKE through the month of August. If we have reached the necessary number of test takers by then, we will close testing and begin the next steps of exam development.

ABC is looking towards the next exam we plan to develop, a new seized drugs exam. The first part of that development is sending two EC members, Tanna Brown and Chance Cline, to DACUM (Developing a Curriculum) training at the Ohio State University in May. Once they have completed this 40-hour course, they will be trained to facilitate a DACUM which is one of the first steps in exam development! In the next



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few months, we will be looking for seized drugs analysts who will be attending CLIC in Houston to participate as DACUM panelist members. Maybe that's you! Expect to see more information on this soon!

In the last newsletter, I discussed how we assigned existing questions in the database a new Knowledge-Skill (K-S) designation. After we know how many questions we currently have written that fall within our K-S categories, the next step is to conduct a gap analysis. First, we look to see how many questions for each K-S category we have in the database, and we compare that to how many questions we need for that category. The number of questions that we need is determined by the Frequency and Importance (Fxi) rating. To learn more about Fxi, refer to my newsletter article from Spring 2021. Now that we have identified the gaps in our database, we set about to writing questions to fill those gaps.

In all honesty, when I first joined the EC, I thought "how hard can writing questions be?" Well, I've since learned that it's a lot harder than just slapping a question down on the page. When we write a new question, we must consider not only the content of the question but also the form and structure. All our questions must also have a reference where the correct answer can be found. Once a question has been written, it is reviewed by three different people. They are checking it for correctness, form, structure, clarity, and verifying the reference contains the correct answer. Often, changes are made based on these reviews and then the final version of the question is put into our database to be available for piloting.

You might be asking yourself, "what does she mean by looking at the questions form and structure?" I have taken an example from our FKE study guide and altered it to illustrate the point.

Example of a poorly written item:

What physical property of the drug, methamphetamine, is utilized when conducting a liquid-liquid extraction?

- A. the melting point
- B. The concentration is the physical property utilized.
- C. chromatography
- D. solubility

The issue with the above item is that the question itself is worded awkwardly and isn't concise. The answer being asked for (physical property) is at the front of the question instead of towards the end of the question where it is fresher in a test taker's mind. It also contains extraneous information (the drug methamphetamine) that does not help the test taker answer the question. A test taker may miss this question, not because they don't know the answer, but because they are having difficulty understanding what the question is asking. Also notice that the four choices are not consistent in their form. Option A has the unnecessary article "the" in front of it and that does not appear in any of the other options. Option B is much longer than the other options making it stand out to a test taker. Option C isn't even a property of



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matter, so it also will stand out to a test taker. All of these may inadvertently draw attention to or away from the correct answer D. The intent of a question is not to trick a test taker into getting it wrong but instead to assess ***what*** the test taker knows.

Example of well written item:

Liquid-liquid extractions utilize what physical property of a compound?

- A. melting point
- B. concentration
- C. oxidation state
- D. solubility

This question has been rewritten to be more concise, to have all the options appear similar in form, and for each option to be reasonable while still having only one, unambiguously, correct answer.

Audra Yovanovich - Chair

Meet the Examination Committee

Chance Cline – SWAFS EC Representative

Hello! My name is Chance Cline. I have been a member of Southwestern Association of Forensic Scientists since 2013 (SWAFS). It was through this organization that I came to be a member organization representative on the EC a little over a year ago. I have enjoyed getting to know all the members on the committee and look forward to attending the Developing a Curriculum (DACUM) training at the Ohio State University this Summer and being able to use these skills at the Clandestine Laboratory Investigating Chemists Association (CLIC) meeting later this year. I started my career as a seized drug, then controlled substance, analyst with the Texas department of Public Safety in 2005. After 10 years I became a section supervisor and for the last 3 years I have served as the Seized Drug Program Coordinator. While I miss casework, I like that I get to help with our validations, policy setting, training program, and hopefully make our Forensic Scientist daily tasks easier. I live in the rose capitol of Texas, Tyler. If you have ever seen the Pasadena Rose Parade, then you have seen some of the over 2000 varieties of roses we supply to them every year. I have a lovely wife named Katy and a video game addicted thirteen-year-old son named Dashiell. For Father's Day last year, they gave me pottery classes and I have been making mugs, bowls, and plates ever since!

Esmeraldo Gorecho III – CAC EC Representative

I'm the Drug Analysis Unit Supervisor at the Oakland Police Department Criminalistics Division. Luckily at my laboratory, certification and involvement in professional organizations are supported and highly encouraged by the department and lab management. I'm the representative for the California Association of Criminalists



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(CAC) and I've been an EC member since 2020. I've learned that there's a lot more work put into developing and maintaining the examinations than I had imagined. I hope to continue the work with the committee to put out high quality documents and exams for the forensic science community. I live in California with my wife, Jeanette, and son, Emerson, who is 2 years old. I am a semi-retired break dancer that sometimes is known to attempt old moves despite continued loss of body strength and flexibility.

ACCREDITATION MANAGER UPDATE

The ABC is continuing to work towards accreditation under ISO/IEC 17024 through ANAB (ANSI National Accreditation Board). We are working on completing our final application, with a goal of submission by June of this year. This is exciting progress and has been years in the making. While I am tasked with completing the actual application, much of the work has been completed by a large number of volunteers who have dedicated their time to improving forensic certification. Our volunteers include individuals who assist with the website management, review and revision of our policies and procedures, managing the quality system, managing the examinations, examination development, credentialing our applicants, reviewing recertification packets, and much more. We also have three contractors who provide services to the ABC: me, the Question Database Manager, and the Registrar's Office. We would not have gotten to this point in the accreditation process without the dedication of all of our volunteers and contractors. I am hopeful that by the next newsletter we will be able to report that we have completed our onsite assessment!

As many of you have likely experienced, we streamlined our recertification form submission process this year, with mostly positive feedback. I understand that it is not a perfect process, but we feel that there were dramatic improvements this year over past years. Additionally, we are making changes in how we review the packets, hoping that the reviews will be completed faster than in years past. Unfortunately, we do have limitations on what we are able to accomplish because of limitations of technology, time, and budget. It is very helpful for us to hear feedback, both good and bad, and I would encourage everyone to complete the [customer satisfaction survey](#), not just for the recertification process, but for all of our processes. We review the submissions and do try to be responsive to the comments when possible. In the past, we received some great feedback on the recertification process that we were able to implement this year. Specific suggestions and comments are always helpful.

Early this year we updated the Members Only portion of our website. This was a complete database overhaul and a change to a new host. There were some hiccups initially. If you tried to visit the Members Only side in early January and were getting frustrated because the system was slow, we believe that has been addressed. As part of this transition, we also switched to using Mail Chimp to deliver our mass emails. If you have not received mass communications from ABC this year, please email the Registrar's Office



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(abcregistr@criminalistics.com). Additionally, you should check your email address on the Members Side of the website to make sure we have the most current information.

As stated earlier, we are primarily an organization made up of a number of volunteers, with three paid contractors, who add up to approximately 2 full-time positions. We do rely on third-party vendors for most of our web-based processes. At times those vendors have service outages that are beyond our control, but we do work to keep on top of these situations. If you run into technical issues, please contact the Registrar's Office to make sure that we are aware of the problem so we can try to address it.

Finally, one comment that comes up occasionally has to do with fees and what they are going towards. We do routinely review comparable certification programs (forensic and other similar professions) and try to ensure that our costs are in line with the community. Please keep in mind that it does cost to administer the certification program: contractor salary, website hosting, document control software, organization emails and digital storage, the platform for developing electronic forms, exam booklet printing, etc. Additionally, the cost for accreditation and maintenance of exams is significant. I wrote a bit about that in our Spring 2020 newsletter, which can be found [here](#). We do try to be as frugal as possible with spending and have implemented many cost-savings measures to avoid raising fees unless it is absolutely necessary.

Sincerely,
Gretchen Lajoie
Accreditation Manager





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QUESTION DATABASE MANAGER UPDATE

One of my duties as the Question Database Manager is to collate demographic information of our test candidates. This information is collected from candidates before the examination is taken. Following the examination, the demographic forms are grouped in 6-month intervals and provided to the respective Examination Coordinator. This information is ultimately utilized during review of examination performance to test for potential bias in our examinations.

With the recent release of the 2020 Census information, I thought it might be interesting to group the various examination demographics over the past 5 years (2016 – 2020, inclusive) and give a bird’s eye view of our applicants. Here goes – This first table shows the number of candidates per examination*, with subsequent tables breaking down selected demographic questions and responses.

Dave Stockwell

| | | | |
|---|-------|---|-----|
| Examination | Count | What is the education major of your highest degree? | |
| Biological Evidence Screening (Field Test) | 98 | I decline to Answer | 1 |
| Forensic DNA (Field Test) | 105 | Forensic Science | 334 |
| Comprehensive Criminalistics | 77 | Chemistry | 89 |
| Drug Analysis | 151 | Physical Science | 5 |
| Fire Debris | 16 | Biological Science | 165 |
| Molecular Biology | 168 | Medical Technology | 5 |
| Total | 615 | Other | 16 |
| *Limited to one demographic form per candidate per examination. | | What is your highest degree? | |
| How many years of experience do you have in Criminalistics? | | I decline to Answer | 3 |
| I decline to Answer | 6 | Bachelors | 244 |
| <=1 | 43 | Masters | 342 |
| >1 to 3 | 123 | Doctorate | 26 |
| >3 to 5 | 114 | What is your gender? | |
| >5 to 10 | 127 | I decline to Answer | 12 |
| >10 to 15 | 115 | Female | 480 |
| >15 | 87 | Male | 123 |



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| | | | |
|--|-----|---------------------------------|-----|
| What is the jurisdiction of your employer? | | What is your race/ethnicity? | |
| I decline to Answer | 21 | I decline to Answer | 27 |
| City | 94 | African American (non-Hispanic) | 46 |
| County | 185 | Asian | 62 |
| State | 276 | Caucasian (non-Hispanic) | 421 |
| Federal | 8 | Latino or Hispanic | 42 |
| Other Government | 7 | Native American/Alaskan Native | 0 |
| Private | 24 | Pacific Islander | 6 |
| City | 21 | Other | 11 |
| What is your geographical region? | | How many hours did you study? | |
| I decline to Answer | 11 | I decline to Answer | 45 |
| California | 99 | <=10 | 83 |
| Mid-Atlantic | 79 | >10 to 50 | 178 |
| Midwest | 53 | >50 to 100 | 147 |
| Northeast | 103 | >100 to 200 | 102 |
| Northwest | 21 | >200 | 60 |
| South | 172 | | |
| Southwest | 54 | | |
| Canada | 1 | | |
| Other | 22 | | |



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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 the Members Only side of ABC website when necessary. Current email address assists our office to get important information out to you.
- ABC Registrar's Office has a limited printing budget. If a document cannot or should not be submitted electronically via ABC website, please mail it to our PO Box.
- To avoid **suspension** of your certification or Affiliate status, minimally submit Rules of Professional Conduct and applicable fees by **June 1, 2022**.
- To avoid **revocation** of your certification or Affiliate status, submit Rules of Professional Conduct and applicable fees by **September 1, 2022**.
- Year 2021 Recertification packets will be distributed to Recertification Committee members in mid-May for review of points. ABC Registrar hopes to start entering approved recertification points onto the Members Only side of ABC website by late July/early August.
- Please **do not staple** any documents. Our office must scan many documents and staples will interfere with the operation of the scanner.
- 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.
- Certification exam application deadline is 75 days prior to exam date. This means our office **must receive** your application by application deadline.
- If your agency is interested in hosting a certification exam offering, contact our office. If there are less than 7 exam candidates, there may be additional expenses.

Although this office works for ABC, we are here to help **You** as best we can. Stay healthy and be safe.

Mike and Debbie Healy



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Missing In Action
(as of April 15, 2022)

The ABC has lost contact with the following individuals:

Focke, Chris
Green, David
Hayden, Jennifer
Heath, Lorraine
Jacobson, Stuart
Kern, Kristopher
Kimoto, Wayne
Koussiafes, Perry

Neith, Susan
Olofson, Stephanie
Piwowar, Michael
Pope, Wendy
Sanders, Derek
Schulman, Tammi
Stenzel, Jason
Tysor, Shannon

Several of these certificants' certifications expire July 31, 2022.

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

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Palmetto, FL 34220



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ABC - ABOUT US

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Danielle Hankinson

Vice President
Shawn West

Secretary
Jason Linder

Treasurer
Angelica Noyola

Directors for Member Organizations (10)

AAFS Criminalistics Section
Shawn West (Vice President)

ASCLD
Jason Linder (Secretary)

ASTM-E30
Jennifer Remy

CAC
Alice Hilker

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Danielle Hankinson (President)

MAAFS
Catherine Savage

NEAFS
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NWAFS
Stacy Guess

SAFS
Erin Tracy

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At-Large Directors (3)

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

Christine Pinto - Supported by CAC
Term Expires - Feb. 2023

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

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
Testing Site Manager Task Group - Chair Shawn West
Electronic Exams Task Group - Chair Jennifer Remy



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Committees

Examination Committee

Audra Yovanovich (Chair)

Stephanie Lambert

Ruth Damaso Neely

Amy Duhaime

Chance Cline

Tanna Brown (Vice-Chair)

Esmeraldo Gorecho III

Amy Reynolds

Tammy Jergovich

Quality Assurance Committee - Chair Christine Pinto

Credentials Committee - Liaison Christine Pinto

Recertification Committee - Liaison Danielle Hankinson

Appeals Committee - Chair Erin Tracy

Ed Rhodes Scholarship - Coordinator Christine Pinto

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