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Final - Minutes
Scientific Advisory Committee Meeting
October 9, 2012
Department of Forensic Science, Central Laboratory, Classroom 1

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Committee Members Present

8 Randall E. Beaty
9 John M. Butler, Ph.D.
10 Jo Ann Given
11 Pete Marone
12 Richard Meyers
13 Alphonse Poklis, Ph.D.
14 Thomas L. G. Price
15 Carl Sobieralski
16 Jami J. St. Clair, Chair
17 Kenneth Zercie

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Committee Members Absent

21 Jose R. Almirall, Ph.D.
22 D. Christian Hassell, Ph.D.
23 John Planz, Ph.D.

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Staff Members Present

27 Wanda Adkins, Office Manager
28 Jeffrey Ban, Central Laboratory Director
29 David Barron, Ph.D., Technical Services Director
30 Sabrina Cillesen, Physical Evidence Program Manager
31 Susan Greenspoon, Forensic Molecular Biologist
32 John Griffin, Northern Laboratory Director
33 Linda Jackson, Chemistry Program Manager
34 Gail Jaspen, Chief Deputy Director
35 Bradford Jenkins, Biology Program Manager
36 Alka Lohmann, Training and Calibration Program Manager
37 Stephanie Merritt, Department Counsel
38 Steven Sigel, Deputy Director
39 Lisa Schiermeier-Wood, Section Supervisor, Central Laboratory Forensic Biology
40 Carisa Studer, Legal Assistant

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Call to Order

45 Chairman St. Clair called the meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee (“Committee”) to
46 order at 10:30 a.m.

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Adoption of Agenda

Chairman St. Clair asked if there were any additions or changes to the draft agenda for the meeting. Being none, Ms. Given moved to adopt the agenda, which was seconded by Mr. Zercie and adopted by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Adoption of Minutes

Chairman St. Clair asked if there were any changes or corrections to the draft minutes from the May 8, 2012 meeting. Mr. Meyers asked that on line 109 a correction be made from Drug Enforcement Agency to Drug Enforcement Administration. Mr. Butler moved to adopt the minutes of the May 8, 2012 meeting with corrections to line 109, which was seconded by Ms. Given and adopted by unanimous vote of the Committee.

Chair's Report

Chairman St. Clair welcomed the Committee members and welcomed Mr. Randall Beaty to his first meeting. Mr. Beaty is the Deputy Scientific Director of Breath Alcohol Laboratory at the Texas Department of Public Safety, and a member of the International Association of Chemical Testing (IACT). Additionally, each SAC member introduced themselves. Chairman St. Clair reported to the SAC that on September 14, 2012 she attended the meeting of the White House Subcommittee on Forensic Science with Ms. Caroline Juran, Chair of the Forensic Science Board (FSB) and Mr. Marone. The purpose of the meeting was to share information about work that the Subcommittee on Forensic Science has been doing and to analyze the various processes, implementations, strategies, authorities, enforcement mechanisms, and compliance regulations that are employed by the state and local governments. The subcommittee discussed working on proposals based on National Forensic Science recommendations. Ms. St. Clair informed the SAC that there was concern by the subcommittee about all the layers of recommendations. Ms. Given had questions about the role of working groups with the recommendations. Mr. Meyers explained how the subcommittee of Forensic Science is under the President of the United States and gave the SAC a brief explanation of the system. The SAC discussed concerns they have and questions they would bring to the subcommittee. Ms. St. Clair assured the SAC that many of the same concerns were expressed during the subcommittee meeting.

DFS Director's Report

Regarding facilities, Director Pete Marone described the laboratory space renovations in each of the Department's regional laboratories. The Eastern Laboratory is in the final phase, the parking lot has been fixed to meet proper standards, and the contract has been awarded for the fifth floor. The Western Laboratory is in the planning stage for expansion. Design money has been awarded to develop plans for the expansion. The Central Laboratory is currently working on a 6 year plan for expansion.

93 Director Marone informed the SAC that positions are being filled as needed. Part-time positions
94 have been added to the Controlled Substances and Toxicology section. Director Marone
95 announced Steve Sigel, Deputy Director, will be retiring on December 31, 2012.

96
97 Regarding instrumentation, 2 Gas Chromatography-Solid State Infrared Spectroscopy Detectors (IR)
98 were purchased last year and 2 more IRs will be purchased, therefore each laboratory will have
99 an IR. The Department is not planning on asking for additional funding for the next year. The
100 Department is beginning to look purchasing more AccuTOF-DART is Time of Flight Mass
101 Spectrometer-Direct Analysis in Real Time (DARTs).

102
103 Regarding the 30-60-90-120 day workload summary report, Director Marone summarized
104 average days in the lab system for cases in several different sections and reported on progress
105 being made on old cases. Director Marone noted that all Forensic Biology cases are included in
106 the overall backlog number. It includes cases in special projects such as the post-conviction
107 program, the Familial DNA program, and mitochondrial cases. Director Marone also discussed
108 the continued efforts in the Toxicology section to reduce the number of cases in the backlog.
109 Personnel and instrumentation has been added to the laboratories, and the Toxicology section has
110 re-structured how case work is handled.

111
112 Mr. Marone updated the SAC on Synthetic Cannabinoids. The problem of synthetic
113 cannabinoids is constantly changing and laboratories in many states are facing the same
114 problems. The Department received one case in August 2012 that had 544 samples. Every other
115 month there has been a stable rate coming into the Department. The Department has been
116 keeping track of the substances identified and the how often each laboratory is receiving the
117 substances. Laboratories across the country are facing the issue of standards not being made fast
118 enough for these new substances and the expense of the standards. The SAC discussed with
119 Linda Jackson, Chemistry Program Manager, the Virginia Code and what the Toxicologists can
120 testify to in Court. Mr. Poklis pointed out that much research is needed but research does take
121 time. Mr. Marone suggested to the SAC the ability to learn what other laboratories across the
122 country are doing to solve the problems and working together.

123
124 Mr. Marone gave an update on clandestine meth laboratory submissions to the Department. The
125 majority of the cases have been submitted to the Western Laboratory. The Department is on
126 track with receiving the same amount of submission as last year. The number of submissions has
127 increased in the Eastern Laboratory. Dr. Poklis inquired if the primary drug in the
128 methamphetamine was pseudoephedrine; Mr. Marone confirmed that was the primary drug.

129
130 Director Marone updated the SAC on the continued effect of *Melendez-Diaz* on Department
131 witness subpoenas. A graph compared the total number of witness subpoenas received, the total
132 number of staff courthouse appearances, and the total number of times staff testified. Director
133 Marone discussed the efforts being made in the DFS Toxicology Section of the Department to
134 meet case and court demands.

135
136 Director Marone provided an overview on the status of grants that the Department is anticipating
137 receiving. Grants are becoming smaller and there are fewer grants than in the past. The majority
138 of grants that the Department expects to receive will go to the Forensic Biology section. The

139 grant for the Post-Conviction DNA Program has been extended to December 2012. The *Using*
140 *DNA Technology to Identify the Missing* grant was successful with three out of four cases
141 determining an identity of missing persons. This grant was not awarded for 2012. The four
142 grants that were awarded for 2012 and 2013 were the *DNA Backlog reduction Grant Program*,
143 *Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Program*, *Solving Cold Cases with DNA*, and
144 *Highway Safety Grant Program*.

145
146 Director Marone updated the SAC on the progress of the Post-Conviction DNA Program. The
147 Department has completed testing on all post-conviction cases, but will continue to work cases
148 as conviction information is verified. The next phase of the project will be to contact those
149 suspects that reports stated a known sample was needed.

150
151 Mr. Price asked for a clarification on the workload numbers. He inquired what the staffing
152 numbers were in each of the sections. Dr. Butler asked that the future workload reports show
153 staffing number in each section.

154 **Old Business**

155
156 Dr. Butler gave an update to the Committee on the DNA subcommittee meeting which occurred
157 prior to the SAC meeting. Staff members, Susan Greenspoon, Lisa Schiermeier-Wood and Brad
158 Jenkins, gave a presentation on mixture interpretations, “Truallele” software and “Armed
159 Expert.” Staff will present a final validation report to the SAC in the May 2013 meeting.

160
161 Ms. St. Clair called for a 10 minute recess at 11:40 a.m.

162
163 Ms. St. Clair reconvened the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

164
165 Dr. Poklis gave an update to the Committee on the Toxicology subcommittee validation review.
166 Dr. Poklis reviewed two procedures and validations for the new instrument to identify and
167 quantify cannabinoids and benzodiazepines, in the toxicology labs. As of this time validation is
168 a big issue in the field of Toxicology as there are not many standards in the field. Dr. Poklis
169 recommended the Department follow procedures from SWGTox. The Department will be in line
170 with anything the SWIG recommends. It is acceptable as a standard practice for the Department.
171 Ms. St. Clair inquired if the Department had not had procedures previously. Dr. Poklis explained
172 that the instrumentation is new to the Department and validations are becoming more stringent.

173
174 Ms. Given moved that the SAC accept both the DNA and Toxicology subcommittee reports,
175 which was seconded by Mr. Price and adopted by unanimous vote of the Committee.

176 **New Business**

177
178 Linda Jackson, Chemistry Program Manager, gave a slide presentation on Trace Evidence
179 Capabilities and Procedures. She provided an overview on the nine types of analysis which is
180 conducted in the Trace Evidence section. Analysis conducted includes hair, fiber analysis,
181 fracture math, paint, glass, vehicle lamps, primer residue, fire debris, explosives, and general
182
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184 chemicals. She also provided an overview on instrumental quality assurance and quality control.
185 There was discussion on verification and peer review on the trace examinations.
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187 Ms. Given presented the Committee with a preliminary Trace Evidence subcommittee report.
188 Dr. Almirall submitted questions to the Department in regards to glass (LIBS) examinations
189 being validated. The procedures have been sent to Dr. Almirall to review. Also, Dr. Almirall
190 asked for more detailed explanation of the interpretation of refracture index data. The FBI has
191 recently published data on the ongoing database and inquired about the Department's
192 procedures. A final report will be presented to the SAC after Dr. Almirall has had an
193 opportunity to review the Department's response to his inquires and when the LIBS is validated.
194

195 **Public Comment**

196
197 None
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199 **Additional New Business**

200 Mr. Zercie inquired about the next assignment the SAC will receive from the Department. Mr.
201 Marone explained that the Latent Prints section would be the next discipline the SAC would
202 need to review. Chairman St. Clair moved to establish a subcommittee to review the Latent
203 Prints manual, which was seconded by Mr. Marone and adopted by unanimous vote of the
204 Committee. Chairman St. Clair appointed Mr. Zercie as chair of the subcommittee, and
205 appointed herself and Ms. Given as members. The subcommittee will begin to review Latent
206 Print procedures. Comments by subcommittee members should be sent to either Gail Jaspen or
207 Carisa Studer.
208

209 **Next Meeting**

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211 The next meeting of the Scientific Advisory Committee will be Tuesday, May 14, 2013 at 9:00
212 a.m.
213

214 **Adjournment**

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216 Chairman St. Clair asked if there was a motion to adjourn. Mr. Marone moved that the meeting
217 of the Committee be adjourned, which was seconded by Ms. Given and passed by unanimous
218 vote.
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220 The meeting adjourned at 1:05 p.m.
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