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Draft Minutes
Scientific Advisory Committee Electronic Meeting
Department of Forensic Science
October 11, 2023 @ 10:30 a.m.

6 **Committee Members Present**

7 Randall E. Beaty
8 Jennifer Breaux
9 Christopher Bommarito
10 Kathleen Corrado, Ph.D., *Chair*
11 William E. Demuth, II
12 Erin P. Forry
13 Linda C. Jackson
14 Marc A. LeBeau, Ph.D.
15 George C. Maha, Ph.D.
16 Richard P. Meyers
17 Peter M. Vallone, Ph.D., *Vice Chair*

19 **Staff Members Present**

20 David Barron, Ph.D., Deputy Director
21 Mason Byrd, Chief Deputy Director
22 Deea Chakraborty, Legal Assistant
23 Sabrina S. Cillessen, Physical Evidence Program Manager
24 James W. Hutchings, Ph.D., Toxicology Program Manager
25 Amy Jenkins, Department Counsel
26 Bradford C. Jenkins, Forensic Biology Program Manager
27 Joshua Kruger, Northern Laboratory Director
28 Alka B. Lohmann, Director of Technical Services
29 Scott Maye, Central Laboratory Director
30 Jessica B. Norton, Sr. Legal Assistant
31 Elise Stroble, Grants and Administration Program Manager - Secretary
32 Rebecca Wagner, Ph.D., Chemistry Research Section Supervisor
33 Robyn Weimer, Chemistry Program Manager

35 **Call to Order**

36 Mason Byrd, Chief Deputy Director, stated for the record that a majority of the Committee was
37 present, and Dr. Corrado, Chair of the Scientific Advisory Committee (“Committee” or “SAC”),
38 called the meeting to order at 10:31 a.m. Dr. Corrado asked for introductions, as there was a new
39 Committee member present.

41 **Adoption of Agenda**

42 Dr. Corrado advised that the first order of business was the adoption of the draft agenda for the
43 meeting and noted that the agenda was previously shared with the Committee members via email.
44 Dr. LeBeau made a motion to adopt the agenda, which was seconded and passed by unanimous
45 vote of the Committee.

47 **Adoption of Minutes of the April 11, 2023 Committee Meeting**

48 Dr. Corrado noted that the draft minutes from the April 11, 2023 meeting were previously shared
49 with the Committee by Ms. Stroble and asked if there were any proposed changes. Being none,
50 Ms. Forry made a motion that the minutes be approved, which was seconded and passed by
51 unanimous vote of the Committee.

52

53 **SAC Chair's Report**

54 Dr. Corrado did not have anything to report, but thanked the previous Chair, Kristin Schelling, for
55 her service to the Committee.

56

57 **Review Subcommittee Report**

58 Dr. Corrado, Review Subcommittee Chair, provided a report on the meeting of the Review
59 Subcommittee that occurred virtually on October 10, 2023, at 10 a.m. The Subcommittee met to
60 review information regarding a podcast, entitled *Admissible: Shreds of Evidence*, produced by
61 Virginia Public Media (VPM) and Story Mechanics. The Subcommittee was formed at the request
62 of Director Jackson, pursuant to Virginia Code § 9.1-113(c). Department Counsel Amy Jenkins
63 provided a synopsis of the podcast and an explanation of the various DFS and VPM-provided
64 documents. The Subcommittee also heard an overview of serology testing from 1972 to 1994 by
65 Bob Scanlon, Forensic Scientist in Biology (1980-2022). Given the amount of information to be
66 reviewed, the Subcommittee agreed to meet again in person on January 9, 2024 to further discuss
67 the allegations and review the case file materials.

68

69 Dr. Corrado asked if there were any questions regarding the report. Being none, she called for a
70 motion to approve the Subcommittee report. Dr. Vallone made the motion to approve, which was
71 seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

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73 **Toxicology Subcommittee Report**

74 Dr. LeBeau, Toxicology Subcommittee Chair, provided a report on the meeting of the Toxicology
75 Subcommittee that occurred virtually on October 11, 2023, prior to the SAC meeting. The
76 Toxicology Subcommittee met to review five validation plans and summaries. He reported that
77 there were some recommendations for consideration for one particular validation summary on a
78 method to screen and confirm Xylazine. He concluded that the work reviewed was high quality
79 and that the Subcommittee was pleased with it.

80

81 Dr. Corrado asked if there were any questions regarding the Subcommittee report. Being none, she
82 called for a motion to approve the Subcommittee report. Mr. Bommarito made a motion to approve
83 the report, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote of the Committee.

84

85 **DFS Director's Report**

86

87 Dr. Corrado called on Director Jackson to provide her report to the Committee.

88 Director Jackson provided updates on the Central Laboratory capital project and shared photos of
89 the construction that has been completed to date, as well as a rendering of the completed project
90 for comparison. She spoke of the Governor’s Proclamation regarding Forensic Science Week,
91 September 17-24, 2023, and shared the DFS events that occurred during that week, including the
92 Leadership Retreat in Staunton, Virginia, and the statewide Service Awards Ceremony honoring
93 the service of 54 staff members. Director Jackson provided information related to the DNA training
94 for attorneys and judges that occurred during late September and early October in the Central and
95 Western regions and stated that additional training events will occur on October 20th and
96 November 3rd for the Eastern and Northern regions. She also introduced the new Directors for the
97 Eastern and Northern Laboratories, David Koppenhaver and Joshua Kruger, respectively, and
98 provided contact information for the Committee.

99
100 Director Jackson updated the Committee on the progress of the *Dashboards for Case Statistics*
101 project. This is a joint effort with the Office of Data Governance and Analytics (ODGA) to provide
102 interactive case statistics information to the public. The dashboards are being developed using
103 Power BI. Another project she shared with the Committee is the Framework for Addiction
104 Analysis and Community Transformation (FAACT) Project, where DFS shares various aggregated
105 case data through the Department of Criminal Justice Services.

106
107 Director Jackson informed the Committee about the agency notices to constituents regarding palm
108 prints in the NGI Palm Print Database that were not being automatically searched against new
109 prints that were added to the system. DFS relaunched those prints so that they would be
110 automatically searched going forward. In addition, Director Jackson updated the Committee on
111 the PC Project evidence return, where evidence that had been stored in the case files are now being
112 returned to law enforcement agencies.

113
114 Director Jackson provided Toxicology staffing and outsourcing updates. She stated that DFS
115 renewed its MOU with the OCME to allow for continued outsourcing of cases in the Eastern and
116 Western districts. Outsourcing will be reduced once new Toxicology staff complete their training.
117 She also provided a comparison of workload statistics for FY22 and FY23 and made note of the
118 fact that there has been an increase in submissions in every section. The backlogs are also up in
119 every section, with the exception of the Firearms & Toolmarks Section due to a significant
120 decrease in NIBIN submissions the year before. She then provided workload statistics for each
121 scientific discipline.

122
123 Director Jackson shared a chart summarizing the following for the various Sections (scientific and
124 administrative): number of subpoenas received, court appearances, times staff testified, and hours
125 and days out of the laboratory. She also shared information on the Department’s FY23 year-end
126 general fund balance and the budget categories where the funds were unspent, with a significant
127 portion being attributed to turnover and vacancy. She also provided information regarding the
128 FY24 budget, as amended, sharing the items that were and were not included, and noting that two
129 of the four positions requested for Forensic Biology were not included.

130
131 **Division of Technical Services (DTS) Updates**
132

133 Director Jackson and Dr. Becky Wagner provided an update on the Division of Technical Services
134 (DTS) on behalf of Alka Lohmann, DTS Director and Quality Manager. Director Jackson advised
135 the Committee that DFS successfully underwent its accreditation surveillance document review in
136 May 2023 and is scheduled for its next surveillance assessment the week of May 20, 2024.
137 Accreditation Certificates and Scopes are available on the DFS website. The current accreditation
138 cycle expires on September 30, 2026. She also spoke about the Quality Management System at
139 DFS and stated that Ms. Lohmann recently provided a quality system overview to each of the four
140 DFS locations and is forming a quality team with representatives from each lab to review quality
141 practices. She noted that the 109th Session of the Forensic Science Academy graduated on June
142 23, 2023, and that the 110th Session began on September 18, 2023. During the months of July and
143 August, six short courses were conducted by the Forensic Training Section. Finally, she shared
144 information about the various DFS staff who are representatives on the Organization of Scientific
145 Area Committees (OSAC) Subcommittees. Dr. Wagner shared information on new and current
146 research projects relating to the Toxicology Section. She also provided a staffing update within
147 the Chemistry Research Section.

148
149 Following the DTS Update, the Program Managers for each scientific program area, to include
150 Chemistry, Forensic Biology, Physical Evidence, and Toxicology, provided relevant updates on
151 research, staffing levels and training, grant awards, method development, expansion and/or
152 validation, and new instrument implementation. After the presentation, Dr. LeBeau asked if the
153 Department plans to increase the scope of testing to further align with all the compounds listed in
154 the Toxicology ANSI/ASB 119,120 and 121 standards. The resources needed for additional testing
155 and the potential uses for the testing information were discussed. In addition, the ability to utilize
156 different but comparable methodologies within the Standard Operating Procedures was discussed.
157 Dr. Corrado requested that staff present on this practice and disciplines in which it is being utilized
158 at a future meeting.

159
160 **New Business**
161 There was no new business for the Committee to consider.

162
163 **Public Comment**
164 There was no public comment.

165
166 **Confirm Future Meeting Date**
167 Dr. Corrado called on Ms. Stroble to provide suggested 2024 meeting dates for consideration. The
168 proposed dates are Tuesday, April 9, 2024 (in person) and Tuesday, October 8, 2024 (possibly
169 virtual). Dr. Corrado asked if there were any conflicts or concerns for those dates. There were no
170 conflicts, and those dates will be scheduled. Dr. Corrado also inquired whether the Committee
171 would have any issue with the October meeting being virtual. There were no objections.

172
173 **Adjournment**
174 Dr. Corrado then asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Maha made a motion to adjourn the meeting
175 of the Scientific Advisory Committee, which was seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

176
177 The meeting was adjourned at 12:11 p.m.