



CONSORTIUM OF FORENSIC SCIENCE ORGANIZATIONS (CFSO)

FLASH BRIEF

FALL 2015

The mission of the CFSO is to speak with a single forensic science voice in matters of mutual interest to its member organizations, to influence public policy at the national level, and to make a compelling case for greater federal funding for public crime laboratories and medical examiner offices. The primary focus of the CFSO is local, state, and national policymakers, as well as the United States Congress.

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IMPORTANT NEWS

Priorities

The CFSO member organizations have established the priorities for CFSO in 2016. CFSO will be strategically planning various ways to accomplish these priorities:

- Federal Forensic Advancement Bill
- Federal Forensic Research Funding and Initiatives
- Accreditation Resources for Laboratories and ME Offices
- Certification Funding for Forensic Science Providers
- Federal Forensic Science Grant Reform
- Sexual Assault Kit Processing and SAFER Act
- Rapid DNA Legislation for Non-laboratory Applications
- Increased Resources for Forensic Education and Training
- Shortage of Forensic Pathologists
- Increased VAWA Support
- Addressing Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence on Campus

OSTP/PCAST

Congress established the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) in 1976 with a broad mandate to advise the President and others within the Executive Office of the President on the effects of science and technology on domestic and international affairs. OSTP hosted a meeting of the President's Council of Advocacy on Science and Technology- Forensic Science (PCAST) on October 22nd. Topics included the FBI hair review, bite mark evidence, latent print analysis, forensic science testimony, proficiency testing, and the role of human factors in forensic science work. The invited list of attendees included twenty-nine researchers, lawyers, policy advocates, educators, and

advocates. Of particular concern to CFSO is that only one forensic practitioner representing public crime laboratories was invited to the meeting. CFSO member organizations expressed immediate concern to OSTP/PCAST and requested more representation at this meeting. CFSO was promised additional meetings where practitioners would play a larger role in the discussion. CFSO will continue to monitor the activities of PCAST and keep you informed.

AAAS Forensic Science GAP Analysis

With funding from the [Laura and John Arnold Foundation](#), AAAS is conducting an analysis of the underlying scientific bases for the forensic tools and methods currently used in the criminal justice system. According to their website this project will “evaluate the quality of the studies the forensic community relies on to support its practices and, where the scientific underpinning of these practices falls short, recommend a research agenda for the field.” CFSO is carefully monitoring the activities of this group, especially given the concerns expressed to AAAS by CFSO regarding the number of practitioners on the review groups. CFSO has been notified that the first reports from this project will be released in the later part of 2015. More information is available on the AAAS website <http://www.aaas.org/page/forensic-science-assessments-quality-and-gap-analysis> and information is available below on the committees and members of these work groups:

1. Bloodstain Pattern Analysis
2. Digital Evidence
3. Fire Investigations--(meeting date: July 20, 2015)
4. Firearms and Toolmarks/Ballistics--(meeting date: August 20, 2015)
5. Footwear and Tire Tracks
6. Forensic Odontology- Bitemark Analysis
7. Latent Fingerprints--(meeting date: July 09, 2015)
8. Trace Evidence- Fibers
9. Trace Evidence- Hair
10. Trace Evidence- Paint & Other coatings

Fire Investigations Working Group

Jose Almirall, Ph.D (Chair) (Chemistry) Florida International University

Hal Arkes, Ph.D (Cognitive Psychology/Human Factors) Ohio State University

John Lentini, CFI, D-ABC (Forensic Science) Scientific Fire Analysis, LLC.

Frederick Mowrer, Ph.D (Fire Protection Engineering/Fire Science) California Polytechnic State University

Janusz Pawliszyn, Ph.D (Analytical Chemistry) University of Waterloo

Firearms and Tool Marks Working Group

Tom Busey, Ph.D (Chair) (Cognitive Psychology/Human Factors) Indiana University

Bruce Craig, Ph.D (Statistics) Purdue University

Chittaranj Sahay, Ph.D (Manufacturing Engineering/Metrology) University of Hartford

Christopher Schuh, Ph.D (Materials Engineering) MIT

Robert Thompson (Forensic Science) NIST

Latent Fingerprint Analysis Working Group

John Black (Forensic Science) Black & White Forensics, LLC.

Anil Jain, Ph.D(Biometric Engineering) Michigan State University

Jay Kadane, Ph.D (Statistics) Carnegie Mellon University

William Thompson, J.D., Ph.D. (Chair) (Human Factors) University of California, Irvine

NAS Study on Effectiveness of NIJ Forensic Research Programs

NIJ asked the National Research Council to appoint a committee to examine its recent efforts to strengthen its role as a science agency and to advance forensic science research. The committee was also asked to recommend steps that would improve its research program. The committee was asked to review progress made by NIJ since the release of two prior National Research Council reports: the 2009 report, *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*, and the 2010 report, *Strengthening the National Institute of Justice*.

The report focuses on NIJ's existing research role in forensic science and identifies ways to strengthen the agency as a leader in both developing and guiding short- and long-term research agendas for forensic science in the United States. The committee believes the forensic science research and development (R&D) program of the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) has improved since 2009 and recent improvements made by NIJ have strengthened its functioning as a science agency; however, it needs to do more. Building upon NIJ's recent progress, this report includes a set of recommendations intended to strengthen NIJ's role, capacity, and commitment as a major science agency whose role is to improve and support high-quality forensic science research.

CFSO heavily supports the research efforts of NIJ in forensic science and appreciate all their work on our behalf. CFSO is committed to continue to work with NIJ and OIFS on forensic research and grant issues.

The full free PDF is available at <http://www.nap.edu/21772>

CFSO at the IAI Meeting

CFSO members presented to the IAI Board of Directors and also gave a general presentation to the IAI membership during the IAI 100th Annual Symposium in Sacramento California. The dialog with the IAI Board was very constructive and many positive developments came as a result of this meeting. CFSO is proud to represent IAI and hopes to be able to present at each member organization annual meeting in 2016.

NEW CFSO ADVOCACY DOCUMENTS

- [Request for increase in CJS302b Allocation — November 5, 2015](#)
- [Final Rapid Letter of Support — October 1, 2015](#)
- [FBI Letter on Allelic Frequency Tables — May 27, 2015](#)
- [Notice of Amendment of the FBI's STR Population Data Published in 1999 and 2001 — June 3, 2015](#)

GENERAL COMMENTS

The National Commission on Forensic Science (NCFS) will hold meetings in Washington D.C. December 7th and 8th. It is important that individuals and organizations take the time to review documents being offered for public review. Among the documents up for review is the Code of Professional Responsibility.

CFSO is making an effort to respond to each document and we would appreciate your feedback so that we can represent you effectively. CFSO has asked each member organization to send a representative to the meeting and prepare public comments to offer to the NCFS.

FEDERAL BUDGET/APPROPRIATIONS

The President has signed into law a two-year budget deal passed by Congress last week. That deal increases both domestic and defense spending above the levels set under sequestration for FY16 and FY17. The deal will bring domestic spending (such as the Department of Justice) up to the level of the Presidents FY16 budget request but it leaves defense spending \$5b below the request. In the meantime, the House and Senate appropriations staff have been working to complete the 12 spending bills and it appears that there has been progress. The current thought in Washington is that all 12 bills will be passed in the form of a single Omnibus bill to pass before the continuing resolution expires. Keep your fingers crossed!

FEDERAL LEGISLATION UPDATE

Rapid DNA Legislation for Non-Laboratory Applications

CFSO expressed concerns over drafts of the House Bill HR320. CFSO worked through the spring and summer to discuss the legislative approach with members of Congress, the FBI, instrument vendors, and other stakeholders. CFSO provided assistance to several Senators through the summer to draft and edit legislation. Ultimately Senator Hatch put forward a proposed draft for consideration by his Senate colleagues. CFSO encouraged discussions with other Senators and stakeholders and ultimately the CFSO member organizations made a formal endorsement of the proposed Senate legislation. CFSO continues to reach out to other Senators and answer questions that come up about the legislation. The legislation will give the FBI Director the ability to promulgate standards for processing of DNA using rapid instrumentation in a “non-laboratory environment.” CFSO continues to lobby for this legislation to be introduced and passed by Congress. CFSO members also continue to work with the FBI and CJIS on the infrastructure to support this technology. A letter of support for the legislation being proposed by Senator Hatch can be found on our website.

Forensic Reform (Advancement) Bill aka Cornyn Leahy: This process continues to move forward in the House and Senate with the intent on working in the OSAC structures to the legislation and determining how to address on-going efforts with the Presidents Commission on Forensic Science and the new President’s Council on Science and Technology. The CFSO continues to provide input and comment.

Coverdell Authorization: We have recently been contacted by the House and Senate to provide changes that may need to be made to update Coverdell. We will be providing our thoughts in the next week. We anticipate that this may be a component of the Justice For All Act. We are also in dialogue with the House to determine their path forward for re-authorization of legislation such as Coverdell.

Rockefeller Bill/Forensic Research: CFSO has been in active dialogue with the new Members of the Science Committee discussing edits that should be made to the last draft of the Rockefeller Bill. We will keep you apprised of this activity.

Billy’s Law: CFSO is working with NAME, the College of American Pathologists, and several medical examiners to provide information and edits to Congress on this bill. This is a Representative Poe bill related to NamUs. We will continue to keep you updated on this proposed legislation.

NATIONAL COMMISSION ON FORENSIC SCIENCE

The 8th commission meeting will be held in Washington D.C. December 7-8, 2015 at the House of Sweden. Check the NCFS website for periodic updates of documents or register with federal register to

receive notification. The next CFSO newsletter will contain a breakdown of the documents approved by or in process at the NCFS.

ORGANIZATION OF SCIENTIFIC AREA COMMITTEES

The OSACs continue to meet on a regular basis and work hard on forensic science standards. The FSSB and Resource Committees worked hard and finalized the process to get standards to the Registry. Most of the processes for a document to get through the OSAC process have now been published by the FSSB and the process of OSAC working with an SDO was recently approved. Further, OSAC has developed research priorities, added a crime scene subcommittee, worked out the process for multi-disciplinary standards, and defined the process for OSAC member comments. OSAC is publishing a regular newsletter of their events.

MEMBERS CORNER

[American Academy of Forensic Sciences \(AAFS\)](#)



The AAFS is continuing to position itself as an ANSI standards developer (SDO). The SDO steering group and AAFS executive leadership has been interviewing for a Secretariat and hope to make an announcement soon. AAFS is near finalization of the incorporation document to position the SDO effort as a wholly-owned subsidiary corporation. The Academy's Humanitarian and Human Rights Resource Center has received several excellent proposals that will surely do good in this world. More information about these initiatives will be coming soon.

[American Board of Forensic Toxicology/Society of Forensic Toxicologists](#)



SFT held another successful scientific meeting in Atlanta, GA the week of 19th Oct, with over 1000 attendees from all over the world. There were approximately 200 papers/workshops presented touching on new analytical techniques for traditional and alternative matrices, as well as the interpretation of the toxicological results. Interim meetings of the ABFT and the National Safety Council were held during the week and a presentation updating the membership on OSAC progress was included. At the meeting a new president was elected; Ms. Jennifer Limoges.

[American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors \(ASCLD\)](#)



ASCLD continues to be active on the US TAG and have been considering two new work proposals. The first is to a develop crime scene specific international standard and the second is to develop an international forensic science vocabulary standard. ASCLD recently submitted several proposals to the Arnold Foundation for management training and education and a second proposal for

development of FORESIGHT metrics into commercial LIMS systems. ASCLD continues to prepare for the spring symposium in Bellevue Washington and recently closed the submissions for abstracts for that meeting. The symposium will again serve as the capstone to the Leadership Academy that will run again in early 2016. ASCLD continues to be active participants in all levels of the OSAC structure and NCFS. The ASCLD Board of Directors has already started to prepare for the next NCFS meeting and plans to offer written and oral comments to the Commission. President Jodi Wolf and Past President Brady Mills recently returned from the ENSFI meeting in Prague. President Wolf serves as the President of IFSA and offered opening remarks at the meeting. The IFSA partnership is very important. ASCLD started a new website for IFSA at <http://www.ifsa-forensics.org/> ASCLD has started a Facebook page where information is available about upcoming events and the Crime Lab Minute is posted weekly. In addition to the Facebook page, ASCLD is also active on LinkedIn and Twitter. Click on the images below to join us.



[International Association of Forensic Nurses \(IAFN\)](#)



IAFN is pleased that the OSAC has opened a crime scene subcommittee and responded to the IAFN request for inclusion by forensic medical practitioners including forensic nurses. OSAC is currently recruiting members to sit on this subcommittee. This Crime Scene Investigation subcommittee will focus on the standards and guidelines related to the investigation of crime scenes including the search for, documentation of, collection of, and preservation of evidence associated with a crime scene. The Subcommittee will report to the [Crime Scene/Death Investigation Scientific Area Committee](#). Prospective members should complete the [OSAC Application Form](#). The initial application period will be open until November 30, 2015 and all non-selected applicants will remain in the application pool and be eligible to fill future membership vacancies and to serve as an affiliate on OSAC Task Groups.

[International Association of Identification \(IAI\)](#)



August 2015 marked the IAI's Centennial Celebration. Meeting in Sacramento California, the IAI celebrated 100 years of a rich past with an eye towards the future. CFSO Chairman Matthew Gamette, CFSO Lobbyist Beth Lavach, along with IAI-CFSO representative Ken Martin made presentations to both the IAI Board of Directors along with its general membership concerning CFSO's ongoing efforts. Most recently, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) awarded a five-year, up to \$20 million grant to establish a Forensic Science Center of Excellence to be based at Iowa State University. The new center will be the third NIST Center of Excellence. The IAI is working with Iowa State University in developing a collaborative partnership. The IAI looks forward with great anticipation to this all important opportunity.

National Association of Medical Examiners (NAME)



The recent meeting of NAME was in Charlotte, NC and was a huge success! The 2015 meeting was entitled: Dissection, Certification, Asphyxia, and Intoxication. Attendees from across the US and Canada and other countries attended. The meeting was the largest national annual meeting dedicated exclusively to the forensic pathologist and the medicolegal death investigator. NAME has developed a list of NAME members who speak other languages so that we can better assist our international visitors at the meetings. So far NAME has over 40 members who speak 23 languages other than English. The meeting also hosted an International Relations Reception and paired current NAME members with international attendees. NAME wants to reach out to forensic pathologists and medicolegal death investigators in other countries, welcome them as potential members, share knowledge, and open lines of communication. For all upcoming International Associations, the International Academy of Legal Medicine is having the Intersociety and Justice conference in June 21-24, 2016. Professor Santo Davide Ferrara is the President. The WAML is working together with the IALM for the June 2016 meeting. NAME is also busy with standards and accreditation and is exploring the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) options. It is very important to develop consensus professional standards and guidelines and to promote excellence in medicolegal death investigation. Being ISO accredited will further convey that individual NAME laboratories adhere to an additional external quality management system. Again, NAME is still in the exploration stages of ISO accreditation.

CLOSING

We hope you have enjoyed the newsletter. CFSO will do its best to keep you abreast of the most important news in the forensic community that we represent, as well as important legislation topics. Please see the next section for important state legislation.