



TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

*1700 North Congress Ave., Suite 445
Austin, Texas 78701*

FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION **LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE** **MEETING MINUTES**

The Licensing Advisory Committee of the Texas Forensic Science Commission (Commission) met in person and via videoconference on July 25, 2024, at 10:00 a.m., at the Barbara Jordan State Office Building at 1601 Congress Avenue, Room 2.034, Austin, Texas 78701.

Members Present: Calli Bailey
Andrew Greenwood
Michelle Paulson
Katherine Sanchez
Kelly Wouters
Ed Wallace
Sandy Parent

The following Licensing Advisory Committee members attended virtually via Zoom: Calli Bailey, Andrew Greenwood, Dr. Kelly Wouters, and Ed Wallace.

Members Absent: Angelica Cogliano
Carina Haynes

Staff Present: Lynn Garcia, General Counsel
Leigh Tomlin, Associate General Counsel
Veena Mohan, Assistant General Counsel
Steve Miller, Multimedia Producer
Rodney Soward, Program Specialist
Maggie Sowatzka, Program Specialist

Members conducted this meeting of the Texas Forensic Science Commission's Licensing Advisory Committee (Committee) as a videoconference and in-person meeting pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Government Code section 551.127. Members of the Committee and Staff appeared remotely and at the physical location set forth in this agenda.

During this meeting, the Committee considered and took action on the following items. The Committee took breaks as necessary.

1. Call meeting to order. Roll call for members. Excuse any absent committee members.

Parent called the meeting to order and took roll. Committee members were present, as indicated above.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to excuse Haynes's absence. Wallace seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to excuse Cogliano's absence. Greenwood seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

2. Review and adoption of minutes from the April 25, 2024 meeting.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to adopt the April 25, 2024 meeting minutes draft. Wallace seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

3. Administrative update, including number of licenses issued and renewed and review of Licensing Advisory Committee seats. Discuss the acquisition of new application management program (ALIS), including the timeframe for implementation and initial request for assistance with testing (Associate General Counsel Tomlin/Program Specialist Soward).

Licensing Program Specialist Soward updated members and staff on the current total number of licenses issued as of July 8, 2024 (1,305 total), as follows: non-interpreting, 262; provisional, 11; temporary, 3; uncommon 4; and regular analyst and technician licenses, 1,025; in addition to renewals processed to date.

Four seats are up for vote this quarter for the Licensing Advisory Committee, with only one of them being a reappointment. Cogliano is up for reappointment. Wallace, Parent, and Bailey are expiring and will require replacements. The Commission will vote on replacements at the July 26, 2024, meeting tomorrow.

The Commission currently utilizes TopClass as an application portal for licensing. TopClass is a learning management system modified to be an application program. The rest of the Judicial Branch uses an application system known as ALIS to process applications for thousands of court employees. The Office of Court Administration and Commission staff decided that everyone under the agency should move their applications to ALIS for efficiency and budgeting purposes and because the platform is a dedicated application system for licensees. Staff will work with ALIS software providers to fully customize the licensing platform and landing pages for the Commission's use.

4. Review any outstanding coursework evaluations, including review and evaluation of statistics courses geared towards law enforcement.

The Committee considered whether it should approve the curriculum from a statistics course geared towards law enforcement personnel offered through Lone Star College in fulfillment of the statistics requirement for licensure. One of the Committee members recommended adding some concepts that were not on the initial syllabus, including addressing likelihood ratios. Celestina Rossi from the Montgomery County Sheriff's

Office was instrumental in organizing this program for law enforcement officers and collaborating with the college. The course will be taught by a professor licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to approve the Lone Star College statistics course geared toward law enforcement personnel as equivalent to the required 3-hour college-level statistics component course required for licensure in the State of Texas. Sanchez seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

5. Review any outstanding criminal history evaluations or other licensee application conduct requests.

There were no outstanding criminal history evaluations or other licensee application conduct requests this quarter.

6. Discuss and vote on process for development of guidance document for intra/inter-agency proficiency monitoring programs.

Members discussed the challenges of monitoring the proficiency of crime scene investigation disciplines. There is an apparent need to develop alternative proficiency monitoring approaches. Garcia suggested the Committee form a task group to address this issue. She suggested engaging the expertise of the Texas International Association for Identification in the process. Garcia recommended that someone take the lead on putting a working group together to draft a proposal to the Committee at that provides guidelines for laboratories on the development of intra and interagency proficiency monitoring for crime scene and latent print disciplines. Committee member Paulson will take the lead on the group formation and report back at the October 24, 2024 Committee meeting.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Sanchez moved to assemble a task group led by Paulson to draft a proposal for the next meeting. Greenwood seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

7. Discuss and vote on recommendation that the Forensic Science Commission (Commission) adopt rule changes that further develop the voluntary licensure program including, but not limited to, changes and additions to §§ 651.202 and 651.222.

The rule adoption creates new license categories for latent prints processing technicians, crime scene processing technicians, and crime scene reconstructionists. It also increases the education requirement from a high school diploma to a bachelor's degree for licensed document examiners.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to recommend that the Commission adopt amendments to Sections 651.202 and 651.222, subject to suggested non-substantive revisions from the Office of the Governor, Texas Register, and Commission Staff. Wallace seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

- 8. Discuss and vote on recommendation that the Commission adopt updates to published, required quality standards for employing laboratories of voluntary licensees including, but not limited to, the addition of quality standards for forensic anthropologists and any changes to the requirements chart related to other voluntary licenses.**

Staff does not have a recommendation for this meeting. Staff plans on providing one for the next meeting after a group of forensic anthropologists has time to discuss the issues.

- 9. Discuss and vote on recommendation that the Commission adopt rule changes to license expiration dates including, but not limited to, changes to §§ 651.207 and 651.208.**

The rule adoption ends the birthday expiration rule. The rule will no longer be necessary, because the expiration dates will be more evenly distributed across all the months rather than a majority of licenses expiring at the same time each Fall of even-numbered years.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Sanchez moved to recommend that the Commission adopt amendments to Sections 651.207 and 651.208, subject to suggested non-substantive revisions from the Office of the Governor, Texas Register, and commission staff. Paulson seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

- 10. Update from the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (TACLD).**

TACLD reported the group discussed OSAC implementation limits and challenges faced by agencies trying to implement the standards. The group also discussed much recent court case decision) affecting laboratories (i.e., *Arizona v. Smith*). The Department of Public Safety gave an update at the TACLD meeting on the development of the statewide discovery portal. The statewide portal working group is currently in the vendor purchasing stages and has not yet selected a software vendor for the portal.

- 11. Consider possible agenda items for next quarterly committee meeting.**

Staff will add all items discussed throughout the meeting on the Committee's next agenda. Paulson requested an update on the lack of available, accredited firearms experts and whether the group should address the issue again. Staff will provide an agenda item for discussion at the next Committee meeting.

- 12. Schedule of future quarterly committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduled meetings for October 24, 2024, January 30, 2025, and April 10, 2025.**

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to instruct staff to schedule these meetings. Wouters seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

- 13. Hear public comment.**

Celestina Rossi noted that she updated the syllabus for the Lone Star College statistics course to include topics raised by Committee members. Rossi explained that she emailed it to Tomlin, Smith, and Garcia.

14. Adjourn.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to adjourn the meeting. Sanchez seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adjourned the meeting at 10:45 a.m.*