President's Message

Dear Colleagues,

Members are the heart of our organization. Indeed, the central purpose of a professional organization is to provide value to its membership. ASCLD seeks to achieve its mission of “providing excellence in forensic science through leadership and innovation” by investing in crime laboratory leaders through training, equipping, educating, and mentoring. The impact of this mission is then multiplied by recruiting additional members and broadening our membership base. Do you know an emerging leader at your laboratory that could benefit from the mentorship, networking, and leadership education that ASCLD provides? Do you know a colleague who is looking for continuing forensic management training and resources to continue to improve their management skills? Do you know someone who wants to take a more active role in the forensic management community? If you said yes to any of these, we are asking you to let those individuals know how they can join the organization.

The key objectives of ASCLD include the fostering of professional interests, assisting the development of laboratory management principles and techniques; acquiring, preserving and disseminating forensic based information; maintaining and improving communication; and promoting, encouraging and maintaining the highest standards of practice in the field. Benefits to membership include networking opportunities with other forensic laboratory leaders, current news and updates via the weekly Crime Lab Minute newsletter, the annual Executive Education Digest, free access to the Forensic Science Policy and Management journal, discounts on symposium registration fees, and access to the Members Area of the website.

Anyone in a leadership position within a forensic laboratory is eligible to join ASCLD. This includes technical leaders, program managers, supervisors, quality managers, and directors.

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a member of ASCLD, please visit http://www.ascld.org/about-us/membership/ for an application. If you would like to talk to a current ASCLD member for more information, please contact the Membership Committee Chair Brooke Amone at Brooke.Amone@ascld.org

Have a great week!

Kindest regards,
Jeremy Triplett

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” —Aristotle
CALL FOR ABSTRACTS
44th Annual ASCLD Symposium, April 30 – May 4, 2017, Dallas, Texas

The symposium planning committee of the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) welcomes your abstracts for plenary talks, full and half-day workshops, and poster presentations for the 44th annual ASCLD Symposium in Dallas, Texas.

The theme for the 2017 symposium is “Continuous Improvement – Leading through Continuous Learning.” ASCLD is interested in presentations that focus on innovative techniques to permit managers to mentor and inspire their employees as they strive to continuously improve their organizations. The key goal of 2017 ASCLD presentations should be to provide crime lab leadership with actionable tools and transportable information that can be directly applied to improve their operation.

Presentations should fit into one or more of the following categories:
- Lab Performance
- Quality Operations
- Lab Efficiency
- Personnel Performance
- Technology
- Training / Mentoring
- Case Studies / Reviews

To submit your abstract, please visit: https://www.regonline.com/ascldsymposiumabstractsubmission2017

Abstract submission deadlines is October 31, 2016. 44th Annual ASCLD Symposium hotel room block for the 2017 Symposium is now available!

http://www.ascldsymposium.com/hoteltravel
Links can also be found on the ASCLD FACEBOOK page at https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100010477606575

Greetings from the Project FORESIGHT team.

We invite you to join us and submit data for the past fiscal year.

FORESIGHT is a business-guided self-evaluation of forensic science laboratories across the globe. The participating laboratories represent local, regional, state/provincial, and national agencies. Faculty from the WVU College of Business and Economics provide assistance, guidance, and analysis. We link financial information to work tasks and functions. Laboratory managers can use these functions to assess resource allocations, efficiencies, and value of services—the mission is to measure, preserve what works, and change what does not. FORESIGHT is open to any forensic laboratory that completes and submits a LabRAT form. There is no charge for participation. This link will provide an example of an individualized report prepared for a participating laboratory.

To participate, simply complete the LabRAT workbook and submit to Paul Speaker at email paul.speaker@mail.wvu.edu. Please send any questions to the same email address. For additional information, please visit the program web site http://be.wvu.edu/forensic/foresight.htm.

We are targeting a submission date of December 15, 2016.

Regards,
Paul J Speaker

An overview of Project Foresight and an Overview of LabRAT can be found at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LzgeKYqldPQ&feature=youtu.be
Research Reports

NIJ Forensic Science R&D Reports for ASCLD Crime Lab Minute Vol 7
These research reports have been submitted by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ) especially for their relevance to crime laboratory activities. ASCLD has not reviewed nor does it necessarily endorse the findings of this research.

2016 National Sexual Assault Policy Symposium
The archival version of the "Looking Ahead: The National Sexual Assault Policy Symposium" that was hosted by The National Institute of Justice on September 8-9, 2016 is now available! The symposium focused on how the nation is moving forward and finding solutions to the complex issues that arise in sexual assault cases and in testing sexual assault evidence. Be sure to check out panels on the role of evidence in sexual assault cases, testing sexual assault evidence, and building an efficient laboratory using technology and innovative processes.

National Institute of Justice Invests $63 Million in Nation's Crime Labs
The National Institute of Justice announced awards of more than $63 million to 132 state and local jurisdictions to increase laboratory capacity and reduce the number of DNA samples awaiting analysis through its DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Program. NIJ awarded an additional $3.3 million to state and local governments through its new Sexual Assault Forensic Evidence – Inventory, Tracking, and Reporting program (SAFE-ITR).

Fiscal Year 2015 NIJ Funding for DNA Analysis, Capacity Enhancement and Other Forensic Activities
In FY15, NIJ received $17 million in appropriations to assist state and local crime laboratories with DNA analysis, lab capacity enhancement, DNA and other forensic R&D, and training and technical assistance. This report documents how the funding was awarded.

Video: Progress Testing Sexual Assault Kits
In this video, members from the Nevada Sexual Assault Kit Backlog Working Group describe the importance of using a multidisciplinary, victim-centered approach in addressing complex issues that arise while responding to sexual assault. The team also describes the importance of utilizing available resources, including research and federal support from the National Institute of Justice, in making progress towards processing untested sexual assault kits.
ASCLD Crime Lab Minute November 1, 2016

**Local cold case victims' buried remains puzzle pieces for renowned forensic expert**

The project, headed by State Police and Luzerne County District Attorney’s Office, wasn’t going to be cheap. Digging up one body from a single grave can cost upwards of $10,000, according to Chuck Heurich, a senior scientist and program manager of the Department of Justice’s forensics division [the National Institute of Justice]. That’s where NIJ and their resources come in. The NIJ has given more than $23 million to 32 law enforcement agencies since 2008, according to Heurich. The funding is awarded every other year and officials say it is integral to their efforts.

**Improving the confidence of “questioned versus known” fiber comparisons using microspectrophotometry and chemometrics**

NIJ-supported researchers from the Indiana University Purdue University Indianapolis recently published an article in Forensic Chemistry. Abstract retrieved 10/12/2016: Microspectrophotometry followed by chemometric data analysis was conducted on pairs of visually similar blue acrylic fibers, simulating the “questioned versus known” scenarios often encountered in forensic casework. The relative similarity or dissimilarity of each pair was determined by employing principal component analysis, discriminant analysis and Fisher’s exact test. Comparison of fibers from within each set resulted in a correct inclusion result in 10 out of 11 scenarios, with the one false exclusion attributed to a lack of reproducibility in the spectra. Comparison of fibers from different sets resulted in a correct exclusion result in 108 of 110 scenarios, with two sets that shared identical dye combinations being indistinguishable. Although the presented methods are not infallible, they may nonetheless provide a path forward for forensic fiber examiners that has a more scientifically rigorous basis on which to support their findings in a court of law.

**An Examination of the Conditions Affecting Forensic Scientists’ Workplace Productivity and Occupational Stress**

The NIJ-supported research team at Michigan State University surveyed 899 crime lab technicians and forensic scientists regarding work conditions, job satisfaction, and working relationships with police and prosecutors. By and large, forensic scientists exhibited very high rates of job satisfaction but also exhibited the similar stress levels as other criminal justice professionals. Also, many forensic scientists feel pressure from prosecutors and police to produce results quickly and a majority of scientists felt working relationships with police and prosecutors. By and large, forensic scientists exhibited very high rates of job satisfaction but also exhibited the similar stress levels as other criminal justice professionals. Nevertheless, little is known about how variation in specific regions of the genome relates to the kinds of distinguishing facial characteristics that give us our unique identities, e.g., the size and shape of our nose or how far apart our eyes are spaced. In this paper, we investigate this question by examining the association between genetic variants across the whole genome and a set of measurements designed to capture key aspects of facial form. We found evidence of genetic associations involving measures of eye, nose, and facial breadth. In several cases, implicated regions contained genes known to play roles in embryonic face formation or in syndromes in which the face is affected. Our ability to connect specific genetic variants to ubiquitous facial traits can inform our understanding of normal and abnormal craniofacial development, provide predictive models of evolutionary changes in human facial features, and improve our ability to create forensic facial reconstructions from DNA.

**Genome-Wide Association Study Reveals Multiple Loci Influencing Normal Human Facial Morphology**

NIJ-supported researchers from the University of Colorado Denver recently published an article in PLOS Genetics. Author summary retrieved 10/12/2016: There is a great deal of evidence that genes influence facial appearance. This is perhaps most apparent when we look at our own families, since we are more likely to share facial features in common with our close relatives than with unrelated individuals. Nevertheless, little is known about how variation in specific regions of the genome relates to the kinds of distinguishing facial characteristics that give us our unique identities. We experimentally demonstrate that the resulting cooperative-binding split aptamer (CBSA) exhibits higher target binding affinity and is far more responsive in terms of target-induced aptamer assembly compared to the single-domain parent split aptamer (PSA) from which it was derived. We further confirm that the target-binding affinity of our CBSA can be affected by the cooperativity of its binding domains and the intrinsic affinity of its PSA. To the best of our knowledge, CBSA-5335 has the highest cocaine affinity of any split aptamer described to date. The CBSA-based assay also demonstrates excellent performance in target detection in complex samples. Using this CBSA, we achieved specific, ultra-sensitive, one-step fluorescence detection of cocaine within fifteen minutes at concentrations as low as 50 nM in 10% saliva without signal amplification. This limit of detection meets the standards recommended by the European Union’s Driving under the Influence of Drugs, Alcohol and Medicines program. Our assay also demonstrates excellent reproducibility of results, confirming that this CBSA-platform represents a robust and sensitive means for cocaine detection in actual clinical samples.

**A cooperative-binding split aptamer assay for rapid, specific, and ultra-sensitive fluorescence detection of cocaine in saliva**

NIJ-supported researchers from the Minnesota Department of Public Safety recently published an article in Chemical Science. Abstract retrieved 10/12/2016: We have generated a split cocaine-binding aptamer that incorporates two binding domains, such that target binding at one domain greatly increases the affinity of the second domain. We experimentally demonstrate that the resulting cooperative-binding split aptamer (CBSA) exhibits higher target binding affinity and is far more responsive in terms of target-induced aptamer assembly compared to the single-domain parent split aptamer (PSA) from which it was derived. We further confirm that the target-binding affinity of our CBSA can be affected by the cooperativity of its binding domains and the intrinsic affinity of its PSA. To the best of our knowledge, CBSA-5335 has the highest cocaine affinity of any split aptamer described to date. The CBSA-based assay also demonstrates excellent performance in target detection in complex samples. Using this CBSA, we achieved specific, ultra-sensitive, one-step fluorescence detection of cocaine within fifteen minutes at concentrations as low as 50 nM in 10% saliva without signal amplification. This limit of detection meets the standards recommended by the European Union’s Driving under the Influence of Drugs, Alcohol and Medicines program. Our assay also demonstrates excellent reproducibility of results, confirming that this CBSA-platform represents a robust and sensitive means for cocaine detection in actual clinical samples.

**Dried Blood Spot Analysis as an Emerging Technology for Application in Forensic Toxicology**

Investigators often encounter dried blood spots as they examine a crime scene, but such evidence often isn’t collected because very little work has been done in the analysis of dried blood for forensic applications. Researchers at RTI International, noting that dried blood spot analysis is well established in newborn testing, conducted this NIJ-supported project to see if newborn testing of dried blood has broader applications in forensic toxicology. After analyzing dried blood samples for 28 drugs, the researchers showed it was comparable to more routine blood tests and useful in forensic investigations.

**ANSLASQ National Accreditation Board (ANAB)**

ANAB provides accreditation for ISO/IEC 17025 forensic test laboratories and ISO/IEC 17020 forensic inspection agencies and a wide variety of training, workshops, and academic programs.

**ASCLD-LAB Training**

Training classes to help forensic laboratory personnel understand the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 General Requirements for the Competency of Testing and Calibration Laboratories.

**ASCLD-LAB-International Assessor Training Course for Testing Laboratories**

**ASCLD-LAB-International Auditor Training Course for Blood Alcohol Calibration**

**ASCLD-LAB-International Internal Auditor Training Course**

**ASCLD-LAB-International Preparation Course for Testing Laboratories**

**ASCLD-LAB-International Preparation Course for Breath Alcohol Calibration**

Amid Political Debate, How Is NC DPS Ohio University's Forensic Chemistry program ranked first in nation for second year in a row


A new method of detecting faint traces of blood in finger marks and stains could aid cold case crime investigations and cut down on potential ...

Fast blood identification method created from fingerprints

A chalk outline of the body is one of the cliches of popular culture, but they're harder to find at a crime scene today, in the age of instant photography.

Changing crime trends see cops turn to digital evidence to track criminals

In a step forward, though, the department has decided to set up an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). UP is among the five states in ...

UP Police to procure latest tech to improve fingerprinting detection

Delays at forensic science lab 'absolutely ridiculous'... Delays at the Forensic Science Laboratory were described by a district judge yesterday as ...

Delays at forensic science lab 'absolutely ridiculous'

Irish Examiner

Delays at forensic science lab 'absolutely ridiculous'... Delays at the Forensic Science Laboratory were described by a district judge yesterday as ...

UP Police to procure latest tech to improve fingerprinting detection

Timelines of India

In a step forward, though, the department has decided to set up an Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS). UP is among the five states in ...

Changing crime trends see cops turn to digital evidence to track criminals

A chalk outline of the body is one of the cliches of popular culture, but they're harder to find at a crime scene today, in the age of instant photography.

Fast blood identification method created from fingerprints

Police Professional

A new method of detecting faint traces of blood in finger marks and stains could aid cold case crime investigations and cut down on potential ...


http://www.bna.com/facebook-rant-costs-n5792078908/


Forensic Conferences

WVU Forensic Management Academy
Six days on-site in Pittsburgh, PA
Click here for course description and registration.

Oct 16-21, 2016: Society of Forensic Toxicologists – Dallas, TX
Oct 2016: Southwestern Association of Forensic Scientists – Galveston, TX

Training

Fighting Bias - Self-Paced Online Professional Training

This self-paced online professional training program focuses on Minimizing bias in Forensic Decision Making. This program covers brain and issues relating to...
bias and cognitive processing. It then connects the cognitive science issues to practical and specific issues in forensic decision making. In addition to knowledge about the cognitive factors in forensic decision making, the program also provides practical solutions to address weaknesses as well as best practices to enhance forensic practices.

This program is directly relevant to the document recently adopted by the National Commission on Forensic Science (NCFS). The practical implementation of this document ("Ensuring That Forensic Analysis Is Based Upon Task-Relevant Information") is presented and discussed, as are the recommendations of the National Academy of Sciences report on forensic science.

Minimizing Bias in Forensic Decision Making

Learning Objectives:

- Describe background information regarding the human mind and cognitive system
- Describe how information and knowledge is acquired, processed, represented, encoded, stored, utilized, retrieved, compared, and evaluated
- Describe how decisions are made
- Demonstrate the connection between information and a variety of forensic decision making processes that forensic examiners typically use
- Describe how cognitive factors can be utilized to make forensic experts’ work more efficient
- Describe the pitfalls and errors that can occur in forensic decision making

http://concept.leadpages.co/minimizing-bias-forensic-science/

Ron Smith & Associates Training
National Latent Print Examiner Training Academy
APPLY NOW!

Ron Smith & Associates National Forensic Quality Manager Training Academy
March 20, 2017 - March 31, 2017 in Pearl, MS

It is truly amazing that, until now, there has never been a national training academy specifically designed for Quality Managers. Forensic Quality Managers have been expected to learn from "on the job" training that they may receive from a variety of sources, but none of this training has been consistent in the industry. Organizations like the Association of Forensic Quality Assurance Managers have been huge in taking up the mantle of providing various workshops and classes, but it was never intended to take the place of a complete training program. With forensics being under such intense scrutiny these days, agencies who perform forensic analysis must ensure that their work is performed under the guiding principles and standards which are now becoming more clearly defined each day. We, in the forensic should.

Ron Smith & Associates, Inc. is known as one of the premier forensic training companies in the world. Our teams of subject matter experts and support staff have successfully designed and offered hundreds upon hundreds of highly sought after training opportunities all across the United States and abroad. RS&A is now ready to take on the challenge of building a National Forensic Quality Manager Training Academy which will soon become the cornerstone of forensic training in this very critical area.

Academy tuition is $2,500.00 with only 25 seats available.

Click here for complete academy details and to complete an academy application today! (Link to: Ron Smith And Associates QMAcademy)

National Footwear & Tire Track Training Academy

OCTOBER 3 - OCTOBER 14, 2016 (2 weeks Footwear)
OFF (October 17 - October 28, 2016)
OCTOBER 31 - NOVEMBER 11, 2016 (2 weeks Tire Track)

RS&A now offers a Footwear and Tire Track Training
Academy which includes 4 weeks of footwear examination training followed by 2 weeks of tire track examination training. Applicants can elect to complete the entire 6 week footwear and tire track academy or break it up and choose only the 4 weeks of footwear training or the 2 weeks of tire track training. The academy graduates of this 6 week program will learn the skills necessary to complete supervised footwear and tire track casework and will be ready to apply for a IAI Footwear Certification once time requirements have been met.

It is scheduled to begin September 5, 2016 in Hattiesburg, MS at the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center. Only 20 academy applicants will be selected to attend.

The entire 6 week footwear and tire track academy the cost is set at $11,250.00.

The 4 week footwear only academy is set at $7,500.00.
The 2 week tire track only academy is $3,750.00.

Cost includes academy instruction, room and board, and 3 meals per day according to training selection.

Click here for complete details and to apply for admission today. (Link to: http://www.RonSmithandAssociates.com/Footwear)

Looking Ahead: The National Sexual Assault Policy Symposium

NIJ, through its Forensic Technology Center of Excellence, is hosting Looking Ahead: The National Sexual Assault Policy Symposium on September 8-9, 2016. The symposium focuses on how the nation is moving forward and finding solutions to the complex issues that arise in sexual assault cases and in testing sexual assault evidence.

NIJ expects more than 350 high-level government officials from national, state, and local levels, along with decision-makers from law enforcement agencies, the legal community, and criminal justice coalitions from all 56 states and territories. This unprecedented event will support our nation’s policymakers and practitioners as they drive future efforts to solve sexual assault cases, provide justice to victims, and ultimately improve public health and public safety.

Speakers include Pulitzer Prize winners T. Christian Miller and Ken Armstrong, co-authors of “An Unbelievable Story of Rape,” Alicia O’Neill from TNT’s Cold Justice: Sex Crimes, and victims advocate Natasha Alexenko, founder of Natasha’s Justice Project.

Learn more and read the agenda.

Register now.

Seating is limited and hotel courtesy blocks expire soon.

The 10th International Conference on Forensic Inference and Statistics will be organized by the South Dakota State University from September 5 through 8, 2017. The conference will be held downtown Minneapolis, on the campus of the University of St. Thomas. The aim of the conference is to bring together the diverse scientific communities involved in the various aspects of forensic interpretation and statistics. Attendees can expect presentations on DNA, pattern evidence, Bayesian inference, original research, statistical models, and other issues related to multi-disciplinary forensic topics. These are topics of interest to all stakeholders using forensic science: practitioners, forensic managers, researchers, attorneys, and judges.

Visit the website for registration or abstract submission: http://www.cvent.com/events/idfys-2017-international-conference-on-forensic-inference-and-statistics/event-summary-86d57a958322414866864f446e367a2.aspx or contact Glenn Langenburg (glenn.langenburg@state.mn.us) for more information.

The American Society of Crime Lab Directors, along with RTI, have made the below webinars available.
American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors

Forensic expert accused of perjury, mixing up lab tests

FOX4 News

One of the state's top forensic experts responsible for blood testing in several DWI cases is under scrutiny for mixing up lab tests. He's also accused of ...