

Jennifer D. Naugle

Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory—Division of Forensic Sciences



Education

- Bachelor of Science, Biology, The Pennsylvania State University

Employment Experience

Almost immediately upon graduation, I started my 17-year career in forensics in the DNA sections within a private company in Lorton, VA (Bode Technologies). In 2009, I moved to Wisconsin where I took a position in the DNA Databank/CODIS Unit at the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory in Madison. I transitioned to the DNA Casework section and then eventually moved into a supervisor position for Criminalistics section in 2013 at the Madison Crime Laboratory. I transitioned into a supervisor position for DNA Databank when the Wisconsin State statute collection laws were updated to include collections from misdemeanor convictions as well as a subset of felonious arrestee charges. This update included many transitions, including new staff (hiring and training), building, program objectives, equipment, and software solutions. After another transition to DNA Casework as a supervisor, I was promoted to Deputy Director for the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory system in November 2017 (to include oversight of operations, policies, and administrative procedures for the Madison, Milwaukee, and Wausau site locations). In 2019, I was placed into the Deputy Administrator position for the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratory system when we became our own Division for the Wisconsin Department of Justice. This was a pivotal moment for forensic science in the state of Wisconsin and one that I was proud to be a part of. As part of my role for the state, I have found it important to rely on external partnerships for our state forensic science system to continue on the path of success. Thus, I have also committed to participate on different committees externally, including the ASCLD Advocacy Committee, OSAC FS Working Group, and (most recently) the IGG Working Group.

Prior ASCLD Experience

Aside from being an active member for ASCLD (including encouraging my colleagues to join!), I have served on the Opioid Task Force (2017) and the Advocacy Committee (2017 to present). I have gone through the Leadership Academy (2017), and I have held a half-day workshop for the ASCLD Symposium on Visionary Leadership in 2018.

If elected, I am interested in working on the following ASCLD issues/committees:

Currently, I would like to continue working as a member of the Advocacy Committee. I value the wonderful perspectives from this group and the insight from the leadership on the committee. Of course, I am willing to assist the ASCLD community in whatever capacity I am needed from assisting/motivating laboratories to pursuing accreditation to assisting with policy and membership.

As a member of the Board, you may be asked to represent ASCLD at speaking engagements or develop written statements on behalf of the Board. How would you describe your ability to communicate ideas verbally and in writing?

My skills to communicate verbally and in writing have grown exponentially in the past 17 years. My current role requires me to communicate consistently and effectively to the entire team of directors, supervisors, technical unit leaders, scientists, and technical staff who I am responsible for leading for the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories—about 190 individuals. The Crime Laboratories in Wisconsin are the “one-stop-shop” for forensic science services, and we serve 72 counties (529 law enforcement agencies). I not only need to communicate effectively with law enforcement but also attorneys (district and defense), judges, and various other stakeholders. In my current role, this also includes the legislature and other community leaders in our state.

As part of my role, I deliver a number of messages in writing whether via policy directives, updates, or changes in service and technology. I have found that I have grown as an effective writer and have truly honed my skills in this area.

In addition to my continuous communication in writing, I have grown to fully appreciate delivering messages verbally. Whether it is presenting our Crime Laboratory Submission Guidelines to law enforcement and attorneys at the various conferences in our state or answering media questions, I have worked to ensure I have a clear and concise message while conveying a level of professional confidence and candor.

One of the Wisconsin State Crime Laboratories strategic goals for 2019 was to hold a statewide multidisciplinary symposium specifically for law enforcement, attorneys, university partners, and so forth. This was a risk, as we had never accomplished this before and were uncertain as to whether it

would be received well. The symposium was extremely well received by the attendees, and we will be continuing to hold this symposium on an annual basis. Another strategic goal in 2019 was to also host a Midwest conference for crime laboratories. My boss and I both hosted—and I must say we had a lot of fun doing so. It was truly a rewarding experience, and we were very pleased with the feedback from our forensic science partners.

I am dedicated to effective communication as part of my job and feel I convey a level of confidence and poise while also employing a bit of humor (when appropriate, of course).

How committed are you to serving on the ASCLD Board? What skills will you bring to the table?

I wholeheartedly believe in the mission of ASCLD and view its role in the forensic community as critical; therefore, I am very committed to serving on the Board. I believe that ASCLD is the organization looked to for guidance in the forensic leadership community and to be a part of that critical mission would be an honor.

I have a collaborative spirit, which I feel is an imperative skill to make our community better. It is only by working and learning in concert that we can progress as a scientific community. I enjoy hearing different perspectives and using these data points to encourage my colleagues to the right path. I have strong communication skills, and I am a proven team player—these are a few reasons I have been successful in my career. I recognize that I have a full time challenging job as a leader within my own agency, but I have proven over the course of several years that I can take on those additional duties via effective time management skills and pure passion for this field.

What role should ASCLD play in developing a strong future for forensic science laboratories?

Forensic science laboratories have been in a crucial and transformational time period for a number of years. ASCLD has the greatest number of leaders and practitioners (current and former) and should therefore have the largest voice when advocating for the future of forensics within the criminal justice communities. The scientific practitioners in this field are some of the most intelligent, innovative, and engaged professionals within the breadth of the scientific community. It is the role of ASCLD to support and guide these laboratories in accreditation, engagement, and adoption of the OSACs, educating the public and other scientists on what it is forensic scientists actually do, challenging the courtroom to expect better in their expert witnesses (both sides), engage universities to strengthen their courses/programs for the future, challenge laboratories to refresh their training and competency objectives, and challenge legislators within the states and federally to work with labs to increase capacity on a fiscal level. It would be an honor to be a part of shaping this strong future as a member of the board, and I hope I will be considered.