

National Commission on Forensic Science
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Technical Merit Review Panel

Technical Merit in the OSAC Process

Jeremy S. Triplett

Chair, Forensic Science Standards Board (FSSB)

President, American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD)

About me – a few hats

- Education
 - BS – Chemistry – University of Kentucky
 - MS – Pharmacy – University of Florida
- Day job – Kentucky State Police
 - 13 years
 - Currently - Drug chemistry supervisor
- OSAC Forensic Science Standards Board
 - Chairman
- American Society of Crime Lab Directors
 - President





Technical Merit:
FSSB

OSAC Technical Merit Initiatives

- OSAC Leadership Strategy Session (OLSS) Recommendations
- Strengthening the Technical Merit worksheet
- Principles of Professional Responsibility (PPP)
- OSAC membership staffing



OSAC Leadership Strategy Session (OLSS)

- FSSB identified need in April meeting
- June 22, 2016 in Dulles, VA
- 3 representatives from FSSB, RCs, STG, all 5 SACs
- Developed 25 recommendations
 - Structure (10)
 - Foundation (7)
 - Process (5)
 - OSAC Affairs (3)



<http://webs.dvrlists.com/strategy/>

OLSS Recommendations: Structure

- Statisticians on every OSAC subcommittee
 - STG chair has been working diligently on this.
- Resource Committee members should be embedded in OSAC committees
 - Place a member from each Resource Committee onto each SAC
 - Place Resource Committee chairs on FSSB

OLSS Recommendations: Process

- Eliminate confusion that exists related to standards vs. guidelines
 - FSSB moving toward a single OSAC Registry
 - Documents to “self-define”
- Comment period optimization
 - FSSB is currently evaluating when is the optimal time for public commenting (and OSAC unit commenting)
 - Earlier is better

OLSS Recommendations: Foundation

- Identify and eliminate confusion in terminology
 - “20 Terms” exercise
- “State of the Discipline” exercise and documents
 - OSAC should perform a foundational exercise to develop a “state of the discipline” document
 - Uniform OLSS agreement
 - FSSB concurs

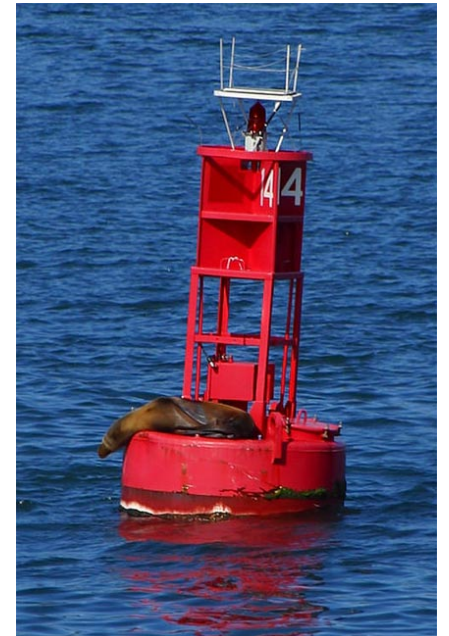
“State of the Discipline” exercise and documents

- Foundational Exercise
- Develop “state-of-the-discipline” documents to describe current:
 - Training, equipment use, methods, processes, measurements, traceability, reporting, potential for bias, etc.
- Ask:
 - What are the questions we ask in this discipline?
 - What products do we generate?
 - How well can we currently answer those questions?
 - How are our answers validated today?



“State of the Discipline” exercise benefits

- Identify current “state”
- Identify documents currently in use in labs today
- Develop a “roadmap” for those evaluating documents coming from OSAC disciplines
- Inform research needs for grantors / grant applicants
- Identify commonalities across disciplines
 - Potential interdisciplinary collaboration efforts



OSAC Technical Merit Worksheet

- Iterative process / constantly improving
- New version released later this year
- Areas of focus:
 - References
 - Limitations
 - Uncertainty
 - Validation of methods

OSAC Principles of Professional Practice (PPP)

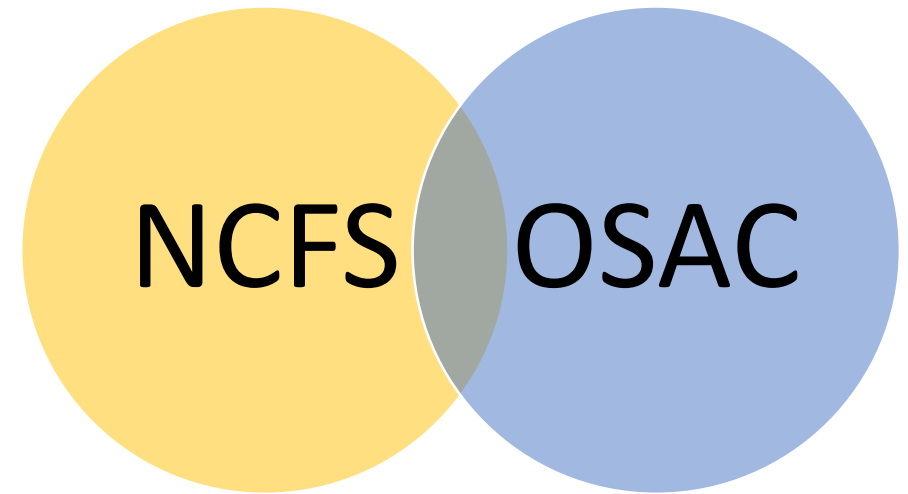
- Purpose
 - To identify overarching elements that define the practice of forensic science across the disciplines and the standards developing process itself
- Scope
 - Does not set standards or guidelines for individual disciplines
 - Provides general framework for the development of discipline-specific practices for Scientific Area Committees and Subcommittees.
- ***The PPP sets the bar for which OSAC will strive when supporting the development of discipline specific and interdisciplinary standards and guidelines.***

OSAC Membership – New Terms

- October 1, 2016 begins 2nd membership term cycle
 - Initial OSAC appointments drew straws for 2, 3, and 4 year terms
 - All new full terms beginning Oct 1 will be for 3 years
- ~65% (+/- 2%) of eligible members renewing
 - 51 new OSAC members
 - 15 open positions
- 5 new appointments to the Forensic Science Standards Board

New FSSB Appointments

- Jeff Salyards, PhD.
 - NCFS Commissioner
- S. James Gates, Jr., PhD.
 - NCFS Commissioner



NCFS Commissioners on OSAC = 8

NCFS Commissioners + subcommittee members on OSAC = 18



Technical Merit:
ASCLD

American Society of Crime Lab Directors (ASCLD)

“ASCLD is a non-profit, professional society of crime laboratory directors and forensic science managers dedicated to providing excellence in forensic science through leadership and innovation.”

- More than 600 laboratory leaders across the US and abroad
- Local, State, and Federal labs



ASCLD Board of Directors: Technical Merit

- Forensic science practitioners must be included
 - In validation efforts and Standards development
 - No one understands “fit-for-purpose” better than the practitioners
 - Practitioners are an integral component to the success of forensic DNA methodologies today, historically been pivotal in completing comprehensive validation studies – NCFS March 2016
- OSAC has the composition of expertise necessary to coordinate among research, practitioner, measurement science, legal, and human factors communities
- Standards development process should not be halted for foundational studies, but be allowed to be iterative and continually improve

What is ASCLD doing for Technical Merit?

- Forensic Research Committee (FRC)
 - Doesn't fund or perform research
 - Act as a switchboard/operator to connect researchers with practitioners
 - “Crowd source” black box/white box studies
 - Firearms black box study – Baldwin, MFRC
 - Latent print white box study (ongoing) – Noblis, IU



Thank you for your attention

