

Texas Forensic Science Commission – Licensing Advisory Committee Minutes from July 31, 2018

The Licensing Advisory Committee of the Texas Forensic Science Commission met at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, July 31, at the Stephen F. Austin Building, Room 172, 1700 N. Congress Avenue, Austin, TX 78701.

Members of the Committee were present as follows:

Members Present: James Miller
Robert Sailors
Thomas Ashworth
Michael Ward
Chris Heartsill

Members Absent: Greg Hilbig
Tim Sliter
Katie White
Keith Hampton

Review and adoption of minutes from June 20, 2018 meeting.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Sailors moved to approve the June 20, 2018 meeting minutes draft. Ward seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

Administrative update and report on roll-out of license application in TopClass. Discuss possible changes in application platform.

Garcia reported the forensic license application was rolled out in TopClass. All other licensing at the Office of Court Administration (“OCA”) is done in ALIS. Staff is working with OCA administration to identify funding for a move to ALIS for its application. Garcia also explained the coupon process implemented for individuals whose labs are paying their exam fees.

Update on Exam Evaluation Committee progress.

Garcia explained the Committee is working on 110 new questions in 10-question increments so that pilot questions are continuously under development.

Discussion of proposed statistic requirement for examiners applying after January 1, 2019 and development of financially accessible, online statistics course for forensic examiners through Texas A&M University.

Spiegelman is working on a statistics course that Garcia believes will be taken via Texas A&M’s Continuing Education Program. The FSC’s website will have a link to the course.

Discussion and Recommendations re: Waiver Applications for Laboratory Support Personnel.

Members reviewed and discussed the LAC's first waiver application under 651.206.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Heartsill moved to grant the waiver application based on information provided by HCIFS regarding the direction provided to the technician. Sailors seconded the motion. Ward abstained from the vote. The Committee adopted the motion with four in favor and one abstention.*

Discuss progress on setting up workgroups for establishing knowledge-based competency requirements by forensic discipline.

Garcia suggested reviewing OSAC and SWG documents for items to use in advising laboratories as to the content of their internal training programs. She asked members to ask their groups how they would feel about the FSC promulgating standards for use in developing internal training and competency testing.

Members and staff discussed possible development of discipline-specific exams and asking for volunteers from the pool of licensees to assist.

Discuss and make recommendations on continuing education requirements.

Members agreed that 24 hours of CE every 2 years is an acceptable requirement. Some of the required hours may be obtained from journal and conferences. Koehler volunteered to contact conference sponsors to determine which would like to be on the FSC's approved conference list. Garcia stressed the need for accountability on the part of conference sponsors to ensure individual attendance at conference activities before CE credit is given.

Members discussed the idea of drafting a pre-approved reading list and agreed that continuing education should be discipline-specific. Suggestions from TACLD will be presented at the next meeting. Staff will draft a rule concerning continuing education.

Report on Commission decision regarding postmortem toxicology.

Garcia reported no change to the rule was made.

Report on approval of appointments for Licensing Advisory Committee members.

TDCLA will send a list of interested persons who will serve a two-year term.

Update from the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors.

Commission staff believes notification to individual applicants concerning exam results can realistically be made within a week of taking exams. Miller brought questions that members reviewed and discussed.

Schedule and location of future meetings.

Staff will circulate a Doodle poll to determine members' availability for the next meeting.

Hear public comment.

There was no public comment beyond that referenced above.

Adjourn.