

# AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

*Promoting Excellence Through Certification*

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello ABC Certificants,

I wanted to start this newsletter off with a few important updates. First off, the Seized Drug Analysis exam is in the final stages of its journey to become a certification exam. We anticipate that this process will be completed in the next couple of months. Then, we anticipate working towards getting the exam added to our scope of accreditation this Fall. We had over 100 individuals sit for the field testing of this exam since September 2024. The ABC is also well on its way to having all accredited exams available in an electronic format. This transition should be completed by Summer 2025. The ABC will also be expanding who can proctor the exams in this new format allowing those that are certified to perform this task.

Next, I wanted to take some time to touch on why certification is important. Most people reading this are likely already certified and have your own personal reason(s) for taking the exam. Some of the reasons we believe that certification is important is to gain additional professional recognition of knowledge and skills to perform this type of work. It also may enhance your credibility during testimony. Certification promotes professional involvement through meeting attendance, training others, and through other professional development. It may also boost career opportunities through additional pay or advancement within your career path. Or perhaps, you sought out certification as a personal accomplishment. A commitment to yourself and the profession. No matter why you became certified, share your story with those around you.

Lastly, I wanted to answer a question we hear on occasion at the ABC. What do my annual maintenance fees go towards? The ABC is a nonprofit 501(c)(6) corporation. Most of the people that contribute time to the ABC are volunteers. We only have a couple of people that receive compensation for their services. This includes our Registrar who also serves as our Accreditation Manager. In addition, our Question Database Manager is also compensated. Your fees also go towards various items such as exam development and maintenance, accreditation, printing and shipping (for paper exams), electronic testing costs, as well as several electronic software fees for things like email, website, and electronic payments. The ABC strives to have a balanced budget every year.

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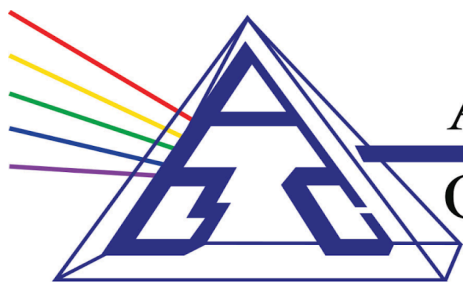
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# AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

## President's Message Continued

In closing, the ABC is always looking for ways to improve. Please don't hesitate to ask a question or provide feedback on our services. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer, we may be able to use your help to better our organization. Please reach out.

Respectfully,

Shawn K. West, ABC-GKE  
President

## COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Happy Summer 2025!

We hope the start of the summer season finds everyone well! Your Communications and Marketing team has been hard at work on this newsletter! I would like to give a special shoutout to Erin Tracy and Laurie Thonesen for their time and effort in putting these newsletters together.

I will be taking on a new role with ABC and will be transitioning out of the Communications and Marketing Committee. I would like to welcome Heather Harris to our team and introduce her to you all as the new Chair of the Communications and Marketing Committee. Heather will be taking over with the newsletter and the social media accounts. Please be patient with us as we transition her into this new role with ABC.

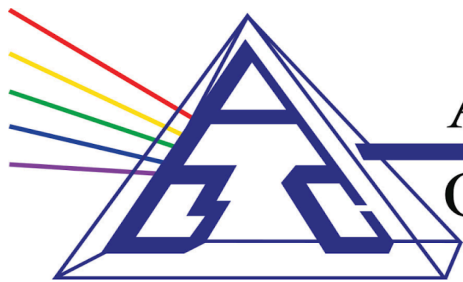
We have transitioned to one newsletter per calendar year. Other updates throughout the year will come via emails and postings on LinkedIn, Facebook, and X.

## RECERTIFICATION UPDATE

Hello ABC Certificants,

If you have been around the certification program for a while, you are familiar with the recertification paperwork and have likely seen it go through a number of changes. Throughout the years, one thing has stayed consistent, our reliance on a team of volunteers to complete the work of the packet reviews. Each year the volunteers are assembled to review recertification packets to ensure that they are being submitted in accordance with our policies and procedures. We have two Co-Chairs that divide the work of leading the committee: Amy Brodeur (Boston University) who has been a Co-Chair since 2022 and Justin Owens (Missouri State Highway Patrol Crime Lab) who is in his first year. Justin replaced longtime Co-Chair Jenna Crawford (Eli Lilly).

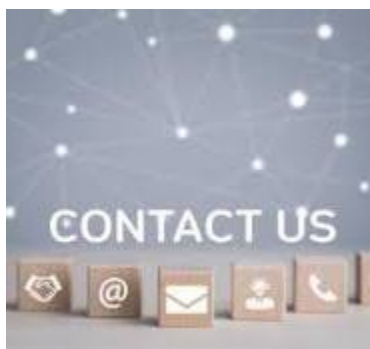
Recertification packet reviews can be more complicated than one would expect. With that in mind, we would like to express heartfelt gratitude to our committee members and chairs (current and former) who have sorted through these packets, communicated with the certificants, and diligently completed their reviews.



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## Communications and Marketing Update Continued

As always, if you have any ideas or suggestions for the committee, please feel free to send them to us at [communications@criminalistics.com](mailto:communications@criminalistics.com).



<https://www.vecteezy.com/photo/20804109-communication-and-technology-concept-hand-putting-wooden-block-cube-symbol-telephone-email-address-website-page-contact-us-or-e-mail-marketing-contact-us-in-customer-support-concept>

## Recertification Update Continued

### 2025 Recertification Committee

Co Chair: Amy Brodeur

Angela Barszczowski

Kevin Brewer

Brad Gibson

Trevor Gillis

Christina Henry

Lela Jackson

Sarah Kelley

Laura Lawrence

Cindy Lee

Beth Reagan

Caitlyn Taveira

Kyle Vircks

Cheryl Zakowski

Co Chair: Justin Owens

Lindsey Huhman

Misty Icard

Monica Joshi

Andrew Koeling

Karlie McManaman

Amanda Misencik

Catherine Neilson

Robert Orr

Holly Porter

Jennifer Regalia

Caitlin Rogers

Sabrina Seehafer

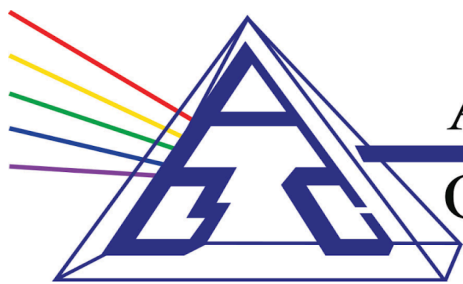
Kristen Thoms

Alternate

Cui Tracy Zeng

## UPCOMING MEETINGS

- **Midwestern Association of Forensic Scientists**  
August 25-29, 2025 - Columbus, OH
- **ASTM-E30**  
October 8-9, 2025 - Atlanta, GA
- **Southwestern Association of Forensic Scientists**  
October 19-23 2025 - South Padre Island, TX
- **Northeastern Association of Forensic Scientists**  
October 20-24 2025 - Lancaster, PA
- **American Academy of Forensic Sciences**  
February 9-14 2026 - New Orleans, LA



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## EXAMINATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

### Spring 2025 Update from the Examination Committee (EC) – Tanna Brown, Chair

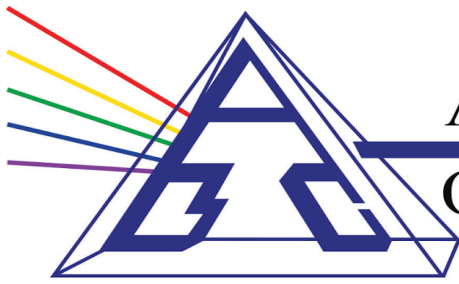
I became the Chair of the Examination Committee in January, and the Committee has really hit the ground running! Our major projects of finalizing the ISO Accredited Examinations for use on the new WebXam platform and completing field testing for the newest exam intending to be ISO Accredited, Seized Drug Analysis. Some of you may be wondering why ABC has chosen to update our examinations as the Legacy Examinations were working for years, and the new exams seem so much easier.

For the betterment of the certification process, the ABC wished to pursue ISO Accreditation. After much research, it was determined that the development process used to create the Legacy Examinations was not fit to obtain accreditation. This led to a need to develop new procedures for examination development that followed a competency-based process.

There is a great deal of time and effort that goes into developing new examinations, and the first step is always to poll our intended customers for improvement ideas to the examination process. This occurs both with candidates providing feedback on examinations immediately after taking their examination and with satisfaction surveys emailed to forensic professionals. The overall results were that potential certificants felt that the Legacy Examination format was too broad and a little outdated.

Individuals on or assisting the Exam Committee began training and research to revise the process for developing a new examination. This started with a Job-Task Analysis entitled "Developing A Curriculum (DACUM)". This process utilizes a diverse group of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) to determine the duties, tasks, knowledge-skills (K-S), and tools that are performed or needed for that job. The duties and tasks are surveyed out to the larger population of SMEs for ratings of Frequency and Importance (F&I). Then another group of SMEs collectively evaluate the criticality (C) of a K-S category needed to perform the most frequent and important tasks.

The tasks are organized into their most critical K-S by their F&I. This same data is used to calculate the total FxIx C of the entire examination. The percentage of each K-S category is determined and translated into the number of test items (questions) per K-S on the examination. These two steps create the framework (Blueprint) for the examination. After the Blueprint is developed, yet another group of SMEs is tasked with writing and assigning a K-S and at least one task with a high FxIx C to every test item seen on the examination. This ensures that each test item a candidate sees on their examination is related to an important task that a forensic scientist performs frequently with their critical knowledge and skills. The examination is field tested, and those results are processed by a group of SMEs to choose the best overall items. Then the final form of the examination is adopted into certification schemes. This process has been completed for three examinations now leading to ISO Accreditation for those three examinations.



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## Examination Committee Update Continued

The test items on ISO Examinations are not any easier than the items on the Legacy Examinations; they have been researched by multiple layers of SMEs and backed by data to show they are frequent, important, and utilize critical knowledge and skills for work truly performed by the individual obtaining certification.

## APPEALS COMMITTEE UPDATE

The Appeals Committee of the ABC Board of Directors has only received just 1 appeal in 2025! Thanks to the combined efforts of the Registrar's Office, the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC), and especially the Recertification Committee, appeals continue to remain at a minimum.

The goal of the Appeals Committee is to carefully review each certificant's appeal and make a determination as to whether the appeal shall be granted based on the information provided, by applying the established policies and procedures of the American Board of Criminalistics, and consulting with the Board as needed.

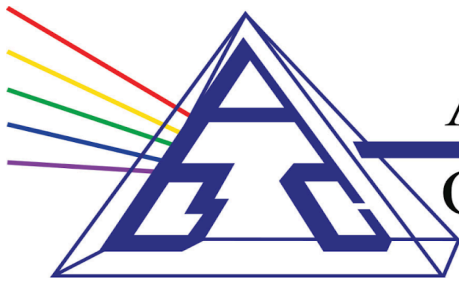
Pay close attention as points from the 2025 recertification cycle are now available for viewing. If for any reason, you believe the points awarded are not reflective of the points earned, please file your appeal in a timely fashion so the appeals committee can evaluate all appeals efficiently. The Appeals Committee will continue to evaluate any new appeals in a judicious manner and note any significant issues that may be remedied by new recommendations to the Board.

Please see the [website](#) for further instructions on filing an appeal and do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Erin Tracy – Chair



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## QUESTION DATABASE MANAGER UPDATE

We are quickly approaching a new era in testing for certification, electronic testing. Much work has gone into this necessary change, and ABC is still working on making the system seamless to both the candidate for certification and the various ABC personnel that need to access to the records produced through our testing service.

I would like to focus on just one record for the moment, the critique survey that we ask each candidate to complete at the end of the examination. Our traditional paper-based testing had these critiques completed by hand, forwarded to the Registrar who compiled the critiques by examination, then the compiled critiques were forwarded to the respective examination coordinator every six months. Not only was this tedious and time consuming, but for the coordinators the periodic nature of the delivery process meant comments were not reviewed in a timely manner. Now with electronic testing, those critique comments are available nearly instantaneously, the comments are tied to the candidate – sorry, no more anonymity in this environment – and the process allows the candidate to flag specific questions during the examination to return later and provide constructive comments on issues they felt the specific question merited. All this information is neatly bundled and ready for review as quickly as the Database Manager can download and forward these reports to the examination coordinator.

As we transition our examinations to this new venue, I hope the exam coordinators will find their review tasks better aligned for their needs, allowing better time resource management, and improving the final product.

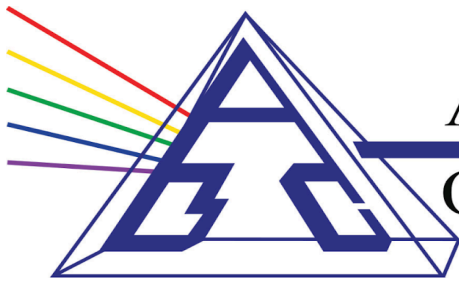
Dave Stockwell

## ABC REGISTRAR/ACCREDITATION MANAGER UPDATE

2025 looks to be another year of significant change for ABC. I can only hope that these changes are for the good of our certificants and potential certificants. I am looking forward to things settling into a 'comfortable' place, but I am also excited about the new possibilities that these changes bring about.

This spring we transitioned our FSAT (Forensic Science Assessment Test) to an electronic-only format. These examinations are offered to graduating forensic science students throughout the country. Last year they were willing (or maybe unwilling) "crash test dummies," which allowed us to troubleshoot, revise, and move forward with electronic examinations. Due to the diligent work of our FSAT Committee and our Question Database Manager, we also rolled out a new version of the FSAT. If you are affiliated with a university that offers a degree in forensic science, and they are not familiar with the FSAT examination, I would encourage you to share information about the examination with them. You can find more information on the [FSAT](#) page of our website.





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## ABC Registrar/Accreditation Manager Update Continued

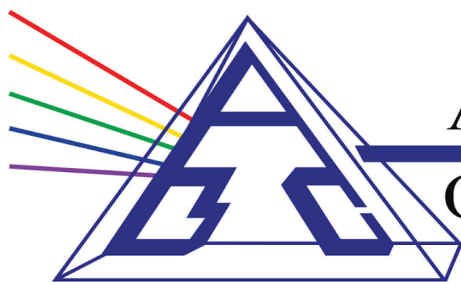
The certification program has implemented a number of changes over the past several months that I think are worthy of highlighting:

- Effective July 1, 2024, we began issuing only digital certificates. This is in line with other certifying bodies and accrediting bodies.
- If you need to replace a certificate or if you wish to purchase a paper certificate for framing or presentation, please complete the [Certificate Replacement Request](#). Paper certificates will be generated for a fee of \$15/certificate. The fee was implemented as a means to cover the costs of producing and shipping the certificates.
- Effective January 1, 2025, all applicants must have an approved application prior to submitting a Request for Examination Seat. This change was implemented to improve the turn around time for individual applicants as well as to assist the organization with application management.
- Beginning in January 2025, invoices for Annual Maintenance Fees were sent out using QuickBooks. If you did not receive an invoice, you may need to add [quickbooks@notification.intuit.com](mailto:quickbooks@notification.intuit.com) to your Safe-Senders list. If your agency pays for your certification fees, I can send a bulk invoice. I do that for a number of agencies, but I believe that there are more based on the payments that I see coming through. If your agency wishes to have a bulk invoice, please have them reach out to me if they are not already receiving one.
- Field Testing for the new Seized Drug Analysis examination ended March 28, 2025. We hope to have the new examination finalized and in place for certification offerings by the end of this year.
- Effective July 1, 2025, our new examinations (Biological Evidence Screening, Foundational Knowledge, and Forensic DNA) will be offered electronically only. This change was implemented as part of our greater goal of making certification more accessible. With this change, any ABC certified individual can act as Proctor for these examinations.
- Effective July 1, 2025, ABC will no longer be offering examinations at regional or national meetings. This change was implemented along with the transition to electronic testing. Meeting sites have too many technology variables to ensure successful electronic examinations.
- The Comprehensive Criminalistics Examination will be retired late this summer, when our last current application for certification expires.
- We do expect to phase out the current Drug Analysis examination, once the new Seized Drug Analysis examination is approved. We will communicate our plans for the Drug Analysis examination when the details are finalized.
- Once the new Seized Drug Analysis examination has been finalized, we will be applying for a Scope Extension to add that examination to our list of accredited examinations.

As always, if you have any questions, please reach out to me. We make every effort to communicate effectively with our certificants and applications, but I understand that there will always be questions.

Gretchen Lajoie

ABC Registrar



# AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

## ABC - ABOUT Us

### Officers of the Board of Directors

President  
Shawn West

Vice President  
Danielle Hankinson

Secretary  
Jennifer Remy

Treasurer  
Angelica Noyola

### Directors for Member Organizations (9)

AAFS Criminalistics Section  
Shawn West

ASCLD  
Dave Koppenhaver

ASTM-E30  
Jennifer Remy

CAC  
Alice Hilker

MAFS  
Danielle Hankinson

MAAFS  
Catherine Savage

NEAFS  
Heather Harris

SAFS  
Erin Tracy

SWAFS  
Angelica Noyola

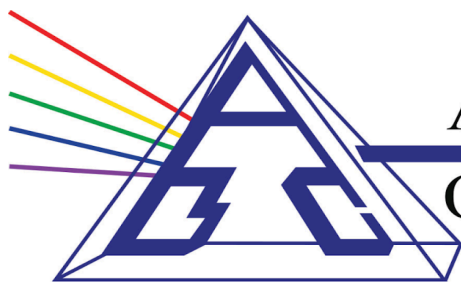
### At-Large Directors (3)

Rebecca Williams - Supported by MAFS  
Term Expires - February 2028

Stacy Guess  
Term Expires - February 2026

Public Member - Vacant





# AMERICAN BOARD OF CRIMINALISTICS

## Individuals Assisting the ABC

Justin Owens  
Recertification Committee Co-Chair

Amy Brodeur  
Recertification Committee Co-Chair

Sara Roper  
Technology Advisor

Ralph Ristenbatt III  
FSAT Committee Chair

Julie Sikorsky  
Credentials Committee Chair

## Committees

### *Examination Committee*

Tanna Brown (Chair)

Crystal Oeschle

Esmeraldo Gorecho

Tamar Craine

Michelle Madrid

Allison Galassie

Ruth Damaso Neely (Vice Chair)

Donna Eudaley

Deandra DaCosta

Monica Kupsco

Amy Reynolds

*Quality Assurance Committee* - Chair Stacy Guess

*Credentials Committee* - Liaison Catherine Savage

*Recertification Committee* - Liaison Alice Hilker

*Appeals Committee* - Chair Erin Tracy

*Exam Committee* - Liaison David Koppenhaver

*Ed Rhodes Scholarship* - Coordinator Catherine Savage

*Ethics Committee* - Chair Stacy Guess

*Communications and Marketing Committee* - Chair Heather Harris

## Contractors

Registrar/Accreditation Manager - Gretchen Lajoie

Question Database Manager - David Stockwell