



B199 Toward a Vision of a National Forensic Science Academy Specializing in Leadership and Management

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After attending this presentation, attendees will better understand how the concept of a leadership academy developed, the steps being undertaken to develop a curriculum, and future efforts to make the project a reality.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by providing a process for supervisors and managers to gain skills in leadership and management to assist them in becoming better leaders.

Forensic scientists are typically promoted into higher-level positions in a forensic science laboratory because the individual is good at casework and may volunteer for special projects; this becomes the basis of the promotion. Once scientists become supervisors, managers, or crime laboratory directors, they discover their new position requires a different set of skills, which they have not had the opportunity to acquire. “Flying by the seat of one’s pants” all too often becomes the solution to the problem.

Unlike police ranks, which may often have leadership and management training programs, mentorship programs, and colleagues in other command positions within the agency to provide guidance, forensic scientists placed into management roles may have little training or support.

One of the more sought-after programs for leadership/management training within policing is the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) National Academy (NA). The NA began July 29, 1935, and was created in response to a 1930 study by the Wickersham Commission that recommended the standardization and professionalization of law enforcement departments across the United States through centralized training. With strong support from the International Association of Chiefs of Police and with the authority of Congress and the Department of Justice, the “FBI Police Training School” was born.

A similar study for forensic science that recommends elements of standardization and professionalism is the 2009 National Academy of Sciences (NAS) Report, *Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Path Forward*, which stated, “First-line supervisors need training in quality assurance, case file review, and basic supervision skills; and managers need training in fiscal management, quality systems management, leadership, project management, human resource management, and customer service.”

The concept for a National Forensic Science Academy (NFSA) was proposed by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International and the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) to The Laura and John Arnold Foundation (LJAF), who agreed that a need existed and funded a start-up effort to develop the curriculum for the program.

There exists a number of leadership and management programs directed toward crime laboratory managers: ASCLD and West Virginia University are two of many. RTI decided that rather than start from scratch, they would work with existing programs with the intention of integrating the different efforts into an interconnected, national program of blended learning and certification with minimum standards and flexibility for individual student needs.



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This panel is made up of persons with broad expertise in the forensic science community and management/ leadership training program who will provide a context to the development and implementation of the NFSA.

Leadership, Management, Continuing Education