



TEXAS FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION

*1700 North Congress Ave., Suite 445
Austin, Texas 78701*

FORENSIC SCIENCE COMMISSION LICENSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The Licensing Advisory Committee (Committee) of the Texas Forensic Science Commission (Commission) met in person and via videoconference on January 29, 2026, at 10:00 a.m., at the Barbara Jordan State Office Building at 1601 Congress Avenue, Room 2.035, Austin, Texas 78701.

Members Present: Katherine Sanchez, Chair
Jessica Frazier
Angelica Cogliano
Andrew Greenwood
Michelle Paulson
Ashleigh Berg
Celestina Rossi
Lauren Woolridge

The following Committee members attended virtually via Zoom: Angelica Cogliano, Michelle Paulson, Lauren Woolridge, Deion Christophe, Kelly Wouters, and Jessica Frazier.

Members Absent: Deion Christophe

Staff Present: Lynn Garcia, General Counsel
Leigh Tomlin, Associate General Counsel
Veena Mohan, Assistant General Counsel
Robert Smith, Senior Staff Attorney
Chelsea Estes, Commission Coordinator
Rodney Soward, Program Specialist
Jarrah Kennedy, Scientific Program Coordinator
Steve Miller, Multimedia Producer

Members conducted this meeting of the Committee as a videoconference and in-person meeting pursuant to the Texas Open Meetings Act, Government Code section 551.127. Members of the Committee and Staff appeared remotely and at the physical location set forth in these minutes.

1. Call meeting to order. Roll call for members. Excuse any absent committee members.

Sanchez called the meeting to order at 10:01 am. Committee members were present as indicated above.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to excuse Christophe's absence. Berg seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

2. Review and adopt minutes from the October 23, 2025 meeting.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Rossi moved to adopt the minutes as drafted. Paulson seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

3. Administrative update including, but not limited to, update on the number of licenses issued and renewed; status of the implementation of new license application management program (ALiS); introduction of new members Celestina Rossi, Lauren Woolridge, and Ashleigh Berg; and election of a Vice Chair. (General Counsel Garcia/Associate General Counsel Tomlin/Program Specialist Soward).

Berg, Rossi, and Woolridge introduced themselves.

Licensing Program Specialist Soward updated members and staff on the current total number of licenses issued as of January 14, 2026 (1,371 total), as follows: non-interpreting, 238; provisional, 7; temporary, 4; uncommon, 3; and regular analyst and technician licenses, 1,119; in addition to renewals processed to date.

Garcia explained the responsibilities of the Vice Chair who serves as the presiding member in the event the Chair is absent. Rossi volunteered to fill the role.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Berg moved to elect Celestina Rossi as Vice Chair. Paulson seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

Staff reported the transfer of licensing data into ALiS, the Commission's newly developed licensing application system. Staff completed all January 2026 renewals. Staff notified February expirees of the new application process and February expiring licensees are able to renew their licenses in the new system. Staff expects to send notices to the March and April 2026 expiring licensees next week.

4. Review any outstanding coursework evaluations.

There were no outstanding coursework evaluations for review by the Committee this quarter.

5. Review any outstanding criminal history evaluations and/or licensee conduct reports from licensing applications.

There were no outstanding criminal history evaluations or licensee conduct reports for review by the Committee this quarter.

6. Update on development of a guidance document for intra/inter-agency proficiency monitoring programs and standard operating procedures in collaboration with Texas

Division of the International Association for Identification (TDIAI), including discussion of March 30, 2026 – April 2, 2026 Crime Scene Investigator Standard Operating Procedure Development Course and establishment of competency exams in connection with voluntary license programs. (Paulson)

Committee member Paulson provided an update on the working group developing guidance documents for a model intra- and inter-agency proficiency monitoring program, as well as an in-person training on standard operating procedures (SOPs) for crime scene units. The guidance is being developed specifically for small law enforcement agency crime scene units that require assistance in creating first-time SOPs to comply with the Commission's quality requirements for employing laboratories whose personnel seek Commission licensure.

Members Paulson and Rossi developed an SOP-writing workshop to be held at the Barbara Jordan Conference Center in Austin from March 30, 2026, through April 2, 2026. Paulson and Rossi are also collaborating with members of the Texas Division of the International Association for Identification (TDIAI) to develop TDIAI-administered competency examinations to satisfy latent print examiner licensure requirements that otherwise would require certification exams, such as the International Association for Identification's Certification Exam for Latent Print Examiners.

Members discussed feedback on the AFIS latent print competency exam administered by DPS. Participants and their supervisors raised concerns regarding exam difficulty and time requirements for analysts who do not work latent prints full time, particularly in small law enforcement agencies where personnel often perform multiple roles. Members discussed forming a consensus group to evaluate the exam before it is incorporated as a component of licensure. Berg volunteered to review the exam and provide recommendations for revising the time requirements and/or content of the exam if needed.

- 7. Discuss and vote on recommended rule changes including, but not limited to, amendments to Section 651.207, Forensic Analyst and Forensic Technician Licensing Requirements, Including Initial License Term and Fee, Minimum Education and Coursework, General Forensic Examination, Proficiency Monitoring, and Mandatory Legal and Professional Responsibility Training to: 1) remove the fee for a temporary forensic analyst and technician license; and 2) clarify scope of toxicology categories of licensure.**

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to recommend that the Commission adopt changes to the rules discussed, subject to suggested non-substantive revisions from the Office of the Governor, Texas Register, and commission staff. Woolridge seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

- 8. Discuss and vote on recommended rule changes including, but not limited to, amendments to Section 651.219, Code of Professional Responsibility to clarify the**

Section's applicability to accredited law enforcement agency crime laboratory managers only.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Paulson moved to recommend that the Commission propose changes to the rules as discussed, subject to suggested non-substantive revisions from the Office of the Governor, Texas Register, and Commission staff. Berg seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

9. Update re: Statewide Task Force on Rapid DNA, including the group's November 7, 2025 and January 9, 2026 meetings in Austin, Texas, and discussion of Rapid DNA Operator license. (Garcia)

Garcia shared that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) released a sample memorandum of understanding for partnerships between law enforcement agencies and CODIS laboratories. Texas' Rapid DNA task force is developing its own version of this umbrella MOU based on the FBI's sample to ensure the agreement aligns with Texas law including the Code of Criminal Procedure and the Administrative Code. DPS is in the process of implementing Rapid DNA arrestee pilot programs in two booking stations (Montgomery and Williamson counties). A subgroup of the Committee plans to develop licensing requirements for individuals other than DNA analysts who will be tasked with operating the Rapid DNA instruments.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Berg moved to recommend that the Commission elect Rossi as the Licensing Advisory Committee representative on the Statewide Task Force on Rapid DNA. Paulson seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

MOTION AND VOTE: *Woolridge moved to instruct Rossi, Berg, and Paulson to work with Commission staff to create a proposal to the Committee for Rapid DNA operator licensure. Greenwood seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

10. Discuss progress on updating the General Forensic Analyst and Technician Licensing Exam, including group assignments for review of the seven domains and updates from recent exam group meetings.

All seven domains for the updated General Forensic Analyst and Technical Licensing Exam (GFALE III) identified and reviewed all the study materials so that the domain objectives can be solidified and the group can begin working on question development. The groups plan to finalize all revised study materials before the Committee's April 23, 2026 meeting.

11. Discuss possible fire scene investigator license.

Members and staff considered an inquiry proposing a Commission license for fire scene investigators to address gaps in scientific training. Members observed that a fire scene investigator license is already offered through the Texas Commission on Fire Protection

(TCFP) for former firefighters and agreed that any identified training gaps are best addressed within that existing framework. The Commission discussed working with TCFP to suggest improvements to scientific training and education, consistent with prior collaboration with the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to enhance crime scene investigation training in the Basic Peace Officer certification curriculum.

12. Update re: Texas Forensic Analyst Apprenticeship Pilot (TFAAP) Program. (Garcia)

Garcia provided an update on collaborative efforts to establish the TFAAPP program in accordance with SB-1620. The pilot program will support 18 apprentices during their first two years of employment. Initially, the pilot program will focus on the following forensic disciplines: seized drugs, blood alcohol analysis, and forensic biology/DNA, with firearms planned for future iterations of the program if it is continued beyond the pilot phase. The Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors is scheduled to discuss the program and will solicit feedback from state laboratory managers regarding workforce needs and the availability of qualified apprenticeship candidates in these disciplines.

13. Update from the Texas Association of Crime Laboratory Directors (TACLD). (Peter Stout, TACLD President)

TACLD did not provide an update.

14. Consider possible agenda items for next quarterly committee meeting.

There were no additional agenda items suggested for the next quarterly committee meeting other than those noted above.

15. Schedule of future quarterly committee meetings including, but not limited to, scheduled meetings for April 23, 2026; July 30, 2026; October 22, 2026; January 28, 2027; and April 29, 2027.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Rossi moved to instruct staff to schedule these meetings. Paulson seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adopted the motion.*

16. Public comment.

There were no additional public comments beyond those previously noted.

17. Adjourn.

MOTION AND VOTE: *Berg moved to adjourn the meeting. Paulson seconded the motion. The Committee unanimously adjourned the meeting at 11:58 a.m.*