NELSON SANTOS: So, this is our last panel for the day, and I guess the last panel for this commission. So, that's a dubious distinction that you folks have up here. I'm going to turn it over. You want to moderate this, John? I'll turn it over to John.

JOHN BUTLER: I guess Jeremy Triplett is up first, from American Society of Crime Lab Directors; right? Go ahead.

JEREMY TRIPLETT: All right. My first technology hurdle has been passed. I've turned the microphone on well. So, we're off to a rocking start. My name is Jeremy Triplett. And I was hoping, with this possibly being our last lunch together for some of us, that we would have had some "collegiation" before I had to present to you. I thought it might make the follow-up questions go a little easier, but, alas, I was -- I had requested a couple hours of "collegiation," but it didn't happen. So, I apologize for that.

It seems like, as I've sat here and listened for the last couple days, that the big theme of a lot of the panels the past two days are sort of half reflection and half projection. So, where have we been and where do we go from here? And so I think it's along those lines that I'd like to offer some comments from the American Society of Crime Lab Directors on how we might be able to assist. ASCLD supports many of the work products that you all have passed over the last three years, and believes that we can assist -- with the news yesterday, that we can assist carry a lot of that work, many of those projects and ideas forward into the crime lab community. And we're excited to do that.

But before I start, I just wanted to take a moment and express my personal appreciation to all of you. I've been up here several times, and through this endeavor I've had the opportunity to meet many of you that I probably never would have before. And I just wanted to thank you for the hospitality, the co-vice chairs always being so kind, and the staff of the commission. I just appreciate getting to know very many of you. And ASCLD really appreciates the important work that you've done over the last three years, but we believe the National Commission truly has furthered the work of the NAS report. And we think that you've given a great amount of attention to very important forensic science issues. And so I just wanted to say, from myself personally, thank you. I know it's been a lot of time and effort. You've probably spent who knows how many hours reading and digesting materials and becoming familiar with all kinds of forensic topics. And so I just wanted to thank you.

ASCLD has tried to be helpful in this process. I think we have. I hope that you feel that. We've tried to be as involved as we possibly can be. I have some of my most respected and esteemed colleagues that are ASCLD members that are here on this commission, and I look up to you very much. We've tried to put at least one or more ASLCD members asked to be participants on the subcommittee. So, we've been very active in the subcommittee work, and I hope that's been evident. And we've published one or two public comments to your documents. Just kidding. It's been a -- it's been a lot of work, but we've tried to display that we're interested in partnering, being constructive, helpful, and I think we've done that.

So, with that said, I know that I've done this before, but I'll tell you just again who the American Society of Crime Laboratory Directors are. We are a nonprofit 501(c)6 professional society of crime laboratory leaders. We have more than 600 members from all sizes and types of forensic laboratories. We have members from large, medium, small laboratories, federal, state, local, and private laboratories. We actually have some international members, which we think is really wonderful that we can network even globally.

The mission of the American Society of Crime Lab Directors is that we are dedicated to providing excellence in forensic science through leadership and innovation. That plays out in several ways. We do training for crime laboratory leaders on management principles. We try to speak to boards and commissions like this to bring up relevant information about operational issues in crime labs as you're deliberating important topics. We have a symposium and then we have several committees, some of them I'll speak to as I talk about some of the work products that may -- we might be able to help with.

I wanted to share, just before I get into the bulk of my slides, ASCLD has five strategic goals for 2016 and 2017. And I share them with you to demonstrate that I think ASCLD and the National Commission share

several important goals. Our five strategic goals for this year were to cultivate forensic science leaders, promote quality operations, serve as a trusted voice in forensic science, advance the science of forensic science, and pursue ASLCD organizational excellence. And with that, I'd like to begin talking about how we might be able to assist you.

So, where do we go from here? Several of the National Commission views and recommendations ASCLD believes we can help implement, or further down the road. And I think that was why some of us were asked to speak to you today. We recognize that some of them are not without challenges. Operationally speaking, some of them will be difficult, but I like to think that sometimes with big change, large change, it's not always easy. It's going to be hard, but we are committed to assist, and with trying to implement some of these.

And I want to, over the next few minutes, highlight a few of the work products and ways that ASCLD might be able to help. I would say this is not exhaustive, so just because it's not in the presentation doesn't mean we don't support it, but these are a few that reached out to me. And my OCD compels me to try to bin sort all my thoughts here, so I've found three topics under which I can categorize them, although my OCD makes it really awkward that that last one doesn't end with "al." So, I wanted to do foundational, operational, and "researchal," but I didn't want to create a new word.

So, what are some foundational issues? And I know a lot of times we're talking about foundational science, and, of course, that's important. What I mean by "foundation" for this topic is just core issues, what are bottom-line issues, some of the just key mission issues that you all have passed recommendations on that we might be able to carry forward. You passed a recommendation on National Code of Professional Responsibility for Forensic Science and Forensic Medicine Service Providers. ASCLD supports a national code of ethics -- a national code, and supports strong ethical standards for forensic scientists. ASCLD is looking to engage and work with the relevant stakeholders to discuss ways we can implement that recommendation. One might look like ASCLD reviewing our own code of ethics to ensure it's consistent with what you published, the code that members in ASCLD ascribe to when they're members, and also encouraging all labs to implement a similar code of ethics.

You passed a views document on inconsistent terminology. ASCLD agrees. And last time I spoke to you, I talked about a few different hats that I wear. This is an ASCLD issues because ASCLD supports OSAC work, and ASCLD is also intimately involved on the ISO technical committee 272, but I can also tell you from OSAC that that work is ongoing. ASCLD supports OSAC'S work in unifying terminology, identifying problematic terminology, and clarifying inconsistent terminology.

So, we support the work that OSAC is doing. ASCLD is also the TAG, the Technical Advisory Committee administrator to ANSI for ISO 272 in the U.S. We administer the TAG. So, we're intimately involved right now with ISO/TC's 272 work on creating new standards. And the first one, we know, is a vocabulary standard. So, we're involved in helping shape that, and believe that your views document on inconsistent terminology, we can go far into addressing that.

Operationally speaking, you -- the very first thing that you recommended, the very first thing you passed was a recommendation on a survey of forensic capabilities. ASCLD strongly agrees with this. In fact, we know very well how hard it's going to be. We tried to do it. We did finish one, as best we could, and we had some great leadership with past President Jay Henry, and RTI also helped us do that. But we -- we tried for I think the better part of four years to do this survey. And we recognize that it's difficult. To whatever extent we can help BJS as they go forward with this survey, we're willing to help. We can blast it out. We can make sure all of our members receive the survey. We can try to be a communication conduit. We strongly are willing to help with that.

We feel that information about the number of labs and those performing forensic science activities in the U.S. is important. As you saw with the Project Foresight presentation this morning, we think having that data is important, and we're interested in gathering data to know the universe, I think, or the discussions at the very beginning of this commission that this survey might help us uncover, the universe of forensic science out there and the universe of practitioners.

You passed a recommendation on universal accreditation. This is probably one that is closest to the heart of ASCLD. Just comparatively speaking, ASCLD has long stood for universal accreditation. It's part of the core beliefs of our organization. In fact, it led us, back in the '80s, to begin looking at accreditation from the perspective of ASCLD Lab. Now, I'll take the moment to clarify that we are now separate entities, ASCLD and ASCLD Lab. Our names are very similar, and so sometimes that creates some confusion, but ASCLD is the professional society, ASCLD Lab is the accrediting body, which has now joined forces with ANAB. But we value accreditation and we think it's very important.

And so how can we further accreditation knowing that more than 95 -- more than 95 percent of state crime laboratories are accredited, but how can we further it? We will continue to educate crime laboratories and digital evidence units on the value of accreditation and we'll provide practical guidance on how laboratories that are not there yet can achieve it. One way we can do that, an effort that we're involved with is called the International Forensic Strategic Alliance. It's a network of organizations similar to ASCLD across the world.

They have created what they call minimum requirement documents. And these are largely used for developing countries that are trying to improve the rigor of forensic science from a very, very bottom line up. And so they don't meet the rigor of let's say ISO 17025 or the supplemental standards from accrediting bodies. They are a good start. And so ASCLD has worked with these MRDs, and those laboratories we would be interested, if they're not there yet, if they're seeking accreditation, if they're working on it for the first time, the MRDs are a good first step. And then, as I mentioned earlier, I won't belabor the point, but we're working with ISO/TC 272 on new international forensic science standards. Accreditation is something we value highly.

Operationally speaking, continuing, you passed a recommendation on proficiency testing. ASCLD supports a robust proficiency testing program. A lot of thought has gone into proficiency testing. And I know there are a lot of people that have advocated for blind proficiency testing. And then we've had the debate over whether it's easier, whether it's not. I still state that it's difficult to implement. I know as I look through my laboratory and the operations there, and I try to picture how I would develop that, forensic science -- forensic scientists are pretty smart actually. They will know when something's not -- is out of the ordinary.

So, but that said, we have several laboratories that are working on creating blind proficiency testing programs and leading many of our labs in that area. ASCLD is committed to sharing that information, those that we know are trying to implement blind proficiency testing. ASCLD has a resource on our website. It's for members to share. We have model policies. We have validation studies, procedures that are available for ASCLD members to share. We're open to ensuring that when laboratories develop a blind proficiency testing program, we get that information out to all the ASCLD members so that they can see how other laboratories did it. It would just help. You don't have to recreate a system from the ground up. So, we're committed to resource sharing on blind proficiency testing programs.

You passed a recommendation on root cause analysis. Being that we highly value accreditation, we also value root cause analysis. It's a key part of some of the accreditation programs. So, ASCLD does support a rigorous quality of program. Many labs already have that. We continue to do trainings at the ASCLD symposium, online, webinars, through our accrediting body partners. And we continue to advocate for robust root cause analysis.

In views on certification, forensic science practitioners, you passed that views document. ASCLD does support this in concept. The idea that forensic science practitioners should be certified. We do recognize that it's difficult financially. So, how we would implement it is difficult. There's a significant cost that would go into certifying every forensic scientist in every lab, not just originally. I'm certified by the American Board of Criminalistics, but originally you do the training and do the examination, but the ongoing cost, every year, of making sure you do the ongoing upkeep is also a financial consideration.

All right. I just failed that one. There we go. And then the last category I wanted to talk to you is a couple of views documents -- a views document and a recommendation you passed that are research-related. You passed a document that views on scientific literature in support of forensic science and practice. And I personally am very invested in this area. I highly value research. ASCLD values research as well. One of the key issues I have, and this is one that they may have to, like, pull up the hook and get me off the stage, is that one of the big problems in forensic science right now at publically-funded labs is we don't have access, many of us don't actually have access, like a university might, to go in and be able to get a lot of that peer-reviewed literature that this views document values.

At my laboratory, if I want an article, say, from Journal of American Chemical Society, what I need to do is drive an hour to go to University of Kentucky, go to the library, print it out, go back home. And there's an electronic process, but we don't have access into that system. And UK is probably the biggest with U of L access. So, I've talked to a lot of my colleagues. I wondered if I was alone. Is it just, you know, kind of me in Kentucky? And I hear this from a lot of my colleagues, that they don't -- they can't have access unless they go somewhere else. So, some mechanism by which publically-funded labs or forensic labs, some mechanism by which they could have access to peer-reviewed journals in kind of the high impact journals would be wonderful. Just food for thought for those going forward, people maybe that fund things. What?

You also passed a recommendation to fund postdoctoral projects to facilitate the translation for research into forensic practice. This is an idea that I'm really excited about the future direction of ASCLD. ASCLD has a forensic research committee. And one of our strategic goals over the next year is to use that forensic research committee to connect local researchers with local crime laboratories, and act as -- I keep kind of calling it, like, a switchboard operator. ASCLD themselves, as the organization, isn't going to -- can't engage in research. That's just not part of our scope and abilities, but what we can do is we know where the crime laboratories are, for the most part, and we can better identify where the research is being done.

And it's particularly for studies, like white box/black box studies, where you're looking for examiners and participants. ASCLD feels like we could play a key role in that and linking up people, and providing some of those participants in black box/white box studies. And so one of the key things we're going to investigate over the next year is how we might be able to create that directory and be advised of new studies ongoing and coming online, and being able to connect people to provide participants for those. And so I'll wrap up. I know we have quite a few people speaking today.

Looking forward, where do we go from here? ASCLD recognizes there are probably going to be a lot of ideas coming forward on how we continue with investigation into advancing forensic science. ASCLD continues to engage and be happy -- wants to lead efforts in advancing forensic science. We would support all initiatives that include several key factors that are important to ASCLD. Participation from people from all sizes and types of laboratory, so federal, state, and local forensic scientists, and a significant input from forensic scientists. We want to continue to contribute in a constructive and a substantive way. And ASCLD does look forward to advancing forensic science in the U.S. I'll say thank you. And I know we'll have questions at the end; right?

JOHN BUTLER: Okay. Thank you very much, Jeremy. Okay. Ken Williams from the American Academy of Forensic Sciences will provide a perspective from AAFS. Thanks, Ken.

C. KEN WILLIAMS: Well, first of all, I'd like to thank the organization or the commission for giving us an opportunity to speak to you today. I'm also very thankful that President Betty Layne DesPortes asked me to speak to you to represent the perspective of the criminalistics section. This is just one perspective that I'm giving you. The American Academy of Forensic Sciences represents the interest across the entire forensic science community. We are a multidisciplinary professional organization, and our objectives are to promote professionalism, integrity, competency, and education. We also try to foster research. We want to improve practice and encourage collaboration, all within the forensic sciences.

As I mentioned, we have many interests to represent. We have 11 sections within the academy, anthropology, criminalistics, all the way down to toxicology. I'd like to draw your attention to the first,

anthropology, because, as I said, this is just one perspective. Anthropology used to be called physical anthropology. I think they changed their name just so they could knock criminalistics down a peg, but that's okay. We're still the largest section of the academy.

We were founded in 1948. We have national and international members. We have more than 7,000 members academy-wide. And, as I mentioned before, the criminalistics section is the largest, with more than 2,800 members. It was going so well. There we go.

Let's take a minute to look at the involvement of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences. We have 14 commission members that are members of the academy. So, we have quite a large representation. We also have three ex-officio members. We also have numerous subcommittee member positions. So, the American Academy of Forensic Sciences does have a presence on the commission, and that is something that we are truly thankful for.

When I prepared this presentation, I thought why is there a need to tell you the benefits that you, as a commission, have done for the forensic science community, but then I thought, you know, this presentation is also available to the public, so it's necessary for them to hear it as well. I'm also glad I did it because now that I know this commission is ending, it's also good for the next administration to hear what some of those benefits are, because, as they try to move forward, they need to see the progress that you have made thus far. And I think panels like this and the panels that we've had over the past day-and-a-half will be great for the next administration to hear.

But the benefits of the commission as we see them as an academy are great. One of them is the fact that you try to seek consensus. You don't always get it, but you do make an effort to obtain it. And that was obvious from the vote that we had yesterday. You needed a two-thirds majority, you didn't always get it, but you continued to move on. And so for that we're thankful for the efforts.

You also identify the key issues that we need to address, and we're going to see some of those later. And they're very evident in the work products that you have continued to push forward. But, to me, the largest benefit is this creation of a forensic science sandbox. Because of commissions like this, you bring together local, state, and federal agencies. Nowhere else can you go and you have lunch in the same room with judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors, federal, state agencies, and just all come together, although, as Jeremy mentioned, sometimes it's a bit contentious, but you're still together in the same room. You're able to share thoughts, and, because of that, it improves the forensic sciences, and that's what the purpose is. We need to do that as a community and as a commission, also as an organization. You also represent the various forensic science disciplines. And, as I mentioned, you're just bringing people together, statisticians, scientists outside of forensic science, officers of the court, and the public.

But there are some concerns. The recommendations that are adopted are only at the discretion of the DOJ. You put them forward. They can either be as a views or recommendation, but it's at the discretion of the DOJ. As a result of that, some of those policies may not affect private laboratories. And they may also not affect the state and local laboratories as well.

The limited number of forensic science practitioners appointed as commissioners, that is a huge concern for the American Academy of Forensic Scientists. And when I prepared this presentation, I was able to use a document that was formulated under the Presidency of John Gerns in 2016. And many of these concerns you will see in this presentation, but that was one that came out quite a bit. And of those limited number of practitioners, only three, one state and two from the county-level, are on the commission. That is a concern for us as an academy.

Your challenges moving forward, there's a very narrow focus as an advisory committee. As I mentioned before, you put forward recommendations or views for the attorney general. So, you can only advise, no true enforcement. The lack of direct implementation authority -- you have great ideas; how can we see them through? We need a little help with that. The limited involvement of independent and non-federal laboratory-affiliated scientists, this goes back to the earlier point where just the limited number of forensic science practitioners, but you have a lot of federal agencies involved.

And by being here this past couple of days I was able to speak with one of your commissioners, and now I know that there are laws or rules that govern commissions such as this. As a state organization, I was unaware of that. Maybe that's something, when you move forward, that you communicate to the greater public. Why is it the commission is composed this way? Explain the rules that you must follow to them so we don't have these same complaints.

Lack of enforcement -- sometimes the things that are said may lack the teeth necessary in order to see them through, but one of the things that the commission can control or advise is funding. And that may be your only true way to affect those laboratories at the state and local level, by holding back funding, because the laboratories need that funding in order to do the work that they are so desperately trying to do.

So, the needs of the forensic science community, we need a federal entity that is dedicated to forensic science. And with that federal entity, we need leadership. And that leadership comes in the form of guidance and support. And when I mention leadership, you may have remembered in the mission statement for the American Academy that we are a professional organization that provides leadership. Well, that leadership that we're able to provide as a volunteer organization is very limited in scope. We're not designed to make policy. We only provide a forum for discussion, with a diversity of perspective. And we do that with our annual meeting each and every year, where we bring the different people together, where we can hear some of the research that's going on out there, some of the policy that is being affected by the decisions that are made on a daily basis.

But your leadership, as an example, could help us with something that was just mentioned in the previous panel by Carol Henderson, synthetic opioids. That is a large concern right now in the forensic community, not only how to analyze the substance, but analyst safety. What are the proper PPE that we need to wear, and by "PPE," proper protective equipment, masks, environmental controls, or engineering controls, storage, disposal? Many labs are trying to deal with this situation right now, but if we had a national organization that's able to combat this issue, and do it once, that's something that can be publicized to the community, and the labs around the nation, also around the world, can use that information instead of trying to reinvent the wheel each and every time.

We also rely on that entity dedicated to forensic science for funding. We look at the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant, or the JAG. And how can that funding be used by the public laboratories or the state and local laboratories for OT programs, overtime programs, for instrument purchases and upgrades, consumables, and also accreditation? That's something that Jeremy just talked about, but accreditation is very important for the laboratories.

As you may have noticed in the slides, there's a knotted rope in the corner, and you may have asked, well, why do we have this? And that's just a test for those of you that were actually paying attention with the forensic sciences out there in the room, but that knotted rope is because there are many demands that are being placed on the laboratory. And with those demands, we have many different forces pulling on us. And the labs are that knot right in the middle. And that also signifies that oftentimes our hands are tied in what we're able to do. And I'm not here before you today to sound like a pitiful state employee, because that's not my goal, but by providing this perspective is just to let you know sometimes our hands are tied in what we're able to do.

And don't get it confused, because some of you may hear that and think, well, you're able to do it, but you're not willing. Okay. That may be the case sometimes, but an overwhelming willingness to help can often lead to diminished capabilities. And please don't get that confused with diminished capacity, but diminished capabilities, because the more that the lab is asked to do for a particular customer, the less they may be able to do for that same customer down the road or another customer that needs more evidence analyzed. So, we have this balancing act that we have to do just as much as we can but enough for you as the customer.

And with those demands, we have backlogs. And backlogs, you have to be careful with those because a backlog can be defined in many different ways. Some laboratories can define a backlog as any case over or older than 30 days. A backlog can be any cases older than 15 days. It all depends on how it's defined by that agency. But the better question is to ask about efficiency. Well, turnaround times, that may be a better indicator. How long is it taking that lab to get that case out of the laboratory?

We also have demands that are placed on us by the customers, obviously, there's many agencies, also the prosecutors, defense attorneys, and even victims. Just last week, I had a victim that called and wanted to know the results of her sexual assault kit. And I think back to the panel that we had up here yesterday when they discussed victim notification. Well, that is the perfect instance of that. The only thing I could do as a laboratory manager was to direct her to the submitting agency or the local prosecutor's office, but that is a victim that wanted to be notified of the results of her sexual assault kit because the agency was not providing the necessary information. So, those are demands that are placed on the laboratory.

I haven't been contacted by a suspect just yet, but I'm sure that day's coming. Also, accreditation, we've talked about that briefly and we'll look at that in just a bit, but all of this we have to keep in mind because we still need to maintain quality. And that's what accreditation helps to ensure, quality throughout the entire laboratory, throughout the forensic science community. Accreditation helps to ensure that, but with all of the demands that are placed on the laboratories and on the forensic science service providers, we have to keep quality in mind.

So, continuation of the commission -- well, when I prepared this presentation, I thought yes and I thought it was a no-brainer. I thought something like this was necessary. I thought we needed this in order to advance the forensic sciences, in order to continue to move forward. Unfortunately, my views, as well as some of yours, are not shared by the current administration, but that's not to say they may not find a suitable replacement. And if they do, I hope they take a look at the webcast of this commission's two days so they can see some of the things that have been done, as well as those things that we need to do as we move forward.

And why do we feel, as an academy, the NCFS should continue? As I mentioned before, the commission has identified key issues. One of those, accreditation and proficiency testing. I've talked about that earlier. Also, reporting and testimony; scientific inquiry and research; training on science and the law, as Carol Henderson spoke about in her previous presentation, with the curriculum development. Those are just a few of the key issues that you, as a commission, have put forward. But, again, those items have been put forward to the DOJ as either a recommendation or a view. No true enforcement. There we go.

And, again, with accreditation, I wanted to take a look at a recommendation that you actually put forward as a work product in March of 2016, a recommendation on universal accreditation. It was recommended that all forensic science service providers become accredited. This is beneficial yet very challenging, because accreditation, it is good, but it is very time-consuming. You need analysts that are able to go in to review the standards on an annual basis. You need analysts that are able to go in and make sure they conform to the policies. You need analysts to go in and review the necessary material. All of this takes the analyst away from the bench work. Again, where we have those demands that are placed on the laboratory in order to get evidence or cases out quicker, but that takes us away.

With your accreditation, there was a proposed implementation strategy where it was to direct all DOJ FSSPs to maintain their accreditation. DOJ grant funding provided to non-DOJ FSSPs shall be granted to accredited FSSPs only. That's the withholding of funding. That's the kind of enforcement that you will need in order to affect the state and local laboratories. And also like it was written in your work product "enforce by any means necessary." If accreditation is important, this is the kind of enforcement that is necessary. If labs need to get it done, and in order to receive funding, they will get it done. That's the way it will happen.

Also, draw your attention to the Justice for All Reauthorization Act of 2016, which reauthorizes Coverdell through the fiscal year 2021. There, the applicant must certify accreditation. If not accredited, existing

grant recipients must include progress towards obtaining accreditation. Again, this is withholding of funding in order to make sure labs are accredited. And what does this do for the forensic science community, it ensures quality. Expansion of the forensic science evidence with respect to the elimination of backlogs, it now includes impression, digital, and fire evidence. There are also more funds available to test rape kits.

And the commission, moving forward, these are some of the things that we would like to see as an academy. More involvement from the greater forensic science community, at the state, county, and local level. Continue to maintain a balance of backgrounds. Continue to seek feedback from the providers. But something the providers need to understand is that they are stakeholders in all of this. Many of the forensic science service providers are unaware of the efforts of the commission. This is something the commission should address, or not just this commission but whichever entity the attorney general decides or the current administration decides to move forward, make sure the stakeholders are aware of their stake in all of this.

And continue to advance the forensic sciences. That's what we're all here for. We're passionate about what we're doing. I heard this the past couple days from the panels, from the speakers, from you as a commission, listening to your questions, sometimes as you go back and forth with each other. Everyone has a passion about what we're doing here, we know we have a purpose, we know it has meaning, but we need to continue to advance the forensic sciences.

And with that, thank you, but before I go, I'd like to mention a couple things. One, Jeremy, maybe with your forensic research related -- relatable -- I'll give you that "al" -- but President Betty Layne also told me to take pictures, so if you don't mind, while I have your attention, I'd just like to get a picture of the commission so I can show that to Betty Layne, because being in D.C., you know when the President asks you to do something, you do it. So, thank you very much.

JOHN BUTLER: Thank you, Ken. The next speakers will be from the International Association for Identification, Rus Ruslander.

RUS RUSLANDER: Good afternoon, and thank you for allowing me to be here to represent my organization. The International Association for Identification, which I'll refer to as the IAI from now on, represents in excess of 7,000 members, and I would add that the vast majority of that group of members resides and practices here in the United States, but in total, we represent 70 countries worldwide, so they do look to us and to people like the commission for guidance.

The members are primarily active practitioners in pattern evidence and crime scene disciplines. Our organization promotes standardization and excellence through forensic science profession. We encourage any collective effort whose endeavors work toward that end; therefore, the establishment of the commission and the manner in which it has moved forward has always been and continues to be of extremely high interest and importance to the members of the IAI.

On behalf of the membership, I'd like to thank this opportunity to thank the commission for all its hard work fostering an agenda promoting the advancement, as well as research in forensic science. Since your first meeting in February of 2014, we've looked toward the commission and to its work products in supporting and promoting positions that we have maintained dating back to our presentation on December 6th of 2007 at the National Academy of Sciences Committee on identifying the needs of the forensic science community. While we have not agreed with all of your recommendations, we have appreciated your efforts and the process which allowed for comment and feedback from the community. Before I discuss our vision looking forward, however, I'd like to touch on some of the commission's recommendations, which we do support.

Continuing universal accreditation, that seems to be the underlying theme that all of us seem to -- that and training that we talk about. We fully support your recommendation on accreditation on all forensic service providers. This not only includes all crime laboratories but based on studies undertaken by the IAI several years ago, some 3,000 identifications units across the country as well. We also support the five-

year window, which has been proposed to achieve this feat. While this is a goal that we aspire to, we believe it is important now to map out an implementation plan to achieve this goal in the five years that you've recommended.

Regarding certification, the IAI strongly supports the recommendation that all forensic science practitioners become certified in all categories of testing in which examinations are performed as soon as the requirements of the certification body are met, provided that a certification examination is available. As you pointed out, in part, further on in your recommendation under professional certification, it provides the general public and the judicial system with a means of identifying those practitioners who have successfully demonstrated compliance with established requirements.

As a certifying body of practitioners, we recognized the importance of certification several years ago and developed programs which continue and are recognized by the forensic community, along with many of the stakeholders we serve as a benchmark to be followed by others. I would like to take this time, again, to thank the commission for inviting the IAI to come before you and to describe our programs and extol its benefits to the stakeholder community.

Regarding the proficiency testing, the IAI supports your recommendation in encouraging all -- yeah, did I say that already. I'm having some technical difficulties here. Anyway, if there is one commission recommendation which we're particularly grateful for and supportive of, it is that recommendation on AFIS interoperability. This long-standing problem facing the latent print community dates back many years. To get a sense of how long the problem has been persisted, I go back to years just prior to 1995, when it was professed that interoperability would occur by 1995. Well here I am today in 2017, and we've yet to see a fix to this important problem. We believe that continued attention brought to this issue may one day lead to its resolution.

With the announcement of the Office of the Attorney General yesterday of the commission's termination, the IAI, in furtherance of the commission's past efforts, recommends and strongly supports the formation of the Office of Forensic Science. We believe this office should reside in the Department of Justice and work alongside the OSAC housed at NIST. As stated by the chairman of the consortium of forensic science organizations and Dr. Victor Weedn during a House Judiciary committee on March 28th, 2017, the voice of the forensic science community is not commensurate with the new role and, accordingly, forensic science has been relatively neglected and inadvertently -- I'm sorry -- an adequately supported. Your commission has echoed these statements and provided a roadmap for the public and for the path forward. Now it's time to develop an implementation plan.

We believe that forensic practitioners should be represented in appropriate numbers on all levels of the committees and administration of the proposed OFS. We also suggest that pattern evidence and crime scene disciplines be included in significant proportions. In conjunction with the establishment of the OFS we support the codification of OSAC ensuring not only their existence but continuing appropriations commensurate with their work. We recommend the National Institution of Science of Technology continue to remain the overarching authority, coordinating and facilitating the OSAC's administration meetings and their work products.

Many of our memberships serve in various capacities on the OSACs, and the IAI is extremely happy with and supports the OSAC's efforts. It is crucial, in our opinion, that appropriate offices be set up and qualified leadership with forensic science backgrounds be put in place. We strongly support the creation of this office to do the following: First would be to review the recommendations of your commission and create a strategic plan to advance the operation of our nation's crime labs by implementing the appropriate recommendations; create a robust research agenda going forward between practitioners and academia. As you're well aware, science is ever-changing and, therefore, forensics as well.

The IAI supports research being done at numerous agencies, to include applied research as it directly results to contemporary questions and issues put forth by the criminal justice system, as well as research as it is conducted at many of our colleges and universities. The IAI also supports collaborative efforts amongst academia, forensic service providers, and forensic practitioners. The IAI supports and promotes

the establishment of federal repository of all forensic literature and research, both past and present, which would be made available to interested parties, as mentioned a little bit earlier. Currently there is nothing in existence that would be beneficial, not only to the practitioners but researchers as well. If OFS would be able to coordinate and lead this effort, despite numerous agencies participating in the research, I think that would be great thing.

Secondly, to map our appropriate strategic plan for sufficient resources. That will not only assist in the current operational issues but work to get in front of emerging problems such as the opioid issue. Acquiring and maintaining proper instrumentation, training, accreditation, certification, and proper funding to implement any program all come back to sufficiently and consistently appropriating the resources to achieve not only the needs of forensic community but those being demanded by the stakeholders we serve as well, which includes the judicial system and the community itself.

Without adequate funding and continued commitment to these resources to achieve the recommendations, what good are they. If anything they might as well be considered unfunded mandates. Instead of furring the forensic community and its role in criminal justice, they will become an albatross around our necks, as we are questioned by the judicial system as to why these recommendations have not been put into place. The lack of implementation due to the lack of funding can also be viewed by our stakeholders as a failure on the part of the laboratory, calling into question the reliability of its work.

In closing, the IAI recognizes and thanks you for your commitment over the past three years in recognizing that although we believe that the sciences sound and the resulting opinions valid, in science there's always work to be done and new frontiers to explore. We're grateful that you brought not only attention to the issues facing the forensic community but also your willingness to reach out and inviting us to assist in your endeavor. Thank you very much.

JOHN BUTLER: Thank you, Rus. Our next speaker will from the National Association of Medical Examiners, Randy Hanzlick.

RANDY HANZLICK: Thank you very much. Our presentation, on behalf of the National Association of Medical Examiners will describe the major issues facing forensic pathologists, how commission products have addressed those issues and impacted on forensic pathologists to date, and a summary of future priorities. The main leadership has contributed to and reviewed the content of this presentation to ensure that it's consonant with their thinking and not just mine, and we want to thank the commission. As you'll see by the end of my talk today, this commission has produced that touch on virtually every major issue that faces forensic pathologists and death investigators, and we're also thankful for the opportunity to have been involved in the commission directly and to provide comment.

Death is one of the things that happens to all people. It occurs millions of times each year in this country. Each death impacts on somebody or some entity, whether it's a loved one, a business, the courts, law enforcement, an insurance carrier, someone's liberty, safety, or financial wellbeing, vital statistics agencies, or simply a county agency's need to burry an unclaimed body for example. So the death -- the impact of death is far reaching and there should be no shabby or lacking death investigations. Yet, those conditions still exist. Forensic pathologists play a key role in qualify death investigations and can help improve the situations, but there are needs.

In a nut shell, it's hard to recruit and retain people in the specialty forensic pathology. There aren't enough of us. Many work in outdated facilities, lacking adequate financial support and related equipment and services. Some death investigation systems are antiquated, caseloads are rapidly increasing, salaries are often not competitive, and educational loan debt is high. Independence and autonomy are sometimes hammered by prosecutorial law enforcement, parent agencies, or other interests. Compliance with standards is difficult and expensive. There are fears of infringement on the medical component of forensic pathology practice, and although death investigation is state- or county-based, there's no guiding light of comprehensive support the at the federal level to assist the states in improving the systems that exist within their states.

Forensic pathologists must be physicians with an MD or DO degree, and that should never change because a major component of pathology practice involves complicated medical issues. The recruitment pipeline for forensic pathologist production begins in high school therefore, because a college degree, medical degree, pathology residency training, and specific forensic pathology fellowship training are required. There are obstacles to recruitment at each of these steps.

Further, the average person who goes through these steps is 30 years old or older and has large debt when training is completed. Although some loan forgiveness programs exist, they are few and the financial advantage of them is questionable. The number of pathology residents is low compared with other specialties. Some pathology residents are actively discouraged by faculty when they consider forensic pathology as a career. There are only about 38 places that train in the entire United States, and such training, more often than not, requires the trainee to move to another city or state after pathology training, and most have already moved at least once or twice to go to college, medical school, and then do their pathology residency. Many of have to move yet again to then get a job in forensic pathology. This can be taxing to lifestyle, family, and finances.

Less than two-thirds of only 83 approved training positions are actually funded, and even further are filled. The net result is that only about 30 or 40 new forensic pathologists are produced per year, which is barely enough to offset retirement, death, and attrition due to burnout and other causes. Thus, we have about 600 or so full-time forensic pathologists in the United States when we need a thousand or more to meet need and be compliant with caseload accreditation standards. As you can see, it will take a while to get to that service level.

Many facilities are antiquated. They lack proper equipment, funds, and services, such as modern body imaging and sophisticated and timely toxicology services. Many cases are still done in hospitals or other facilities that weren't designed for medicolegal death investigation and many of these facilities are rated less than adequate, with few plans to improve things in the future. Sorry. Two clickers here is getting to me.

Many jurisdictions have a small enough population that the building and maintenance of a local facility cannot be justified financially. Yet nearby regional centers and services are lacking, have evolved in a norm-formal makeshift way, or are a hundred miles away. Long distances mean time and money, which can discourage death investigations when they really should be done.

In more than 2,000 county jurisdictions an elected coroner, with often minimal qualifications, actually heads the system, and the forensic pathologist is a worker bee responsible to the coroner and may have little input into the operations and case decision-making, at least in the initial phases of the investigation when critical decisions have to be made. This results in great variance in the extent and quality of investigations around the country and the manner and quality of communication with families, legal next of kin, and other users also varies.

Although the medical examiner coroner's office may be an independent county or state office with its own budget, it's often within the health department, law enforcement, justice, public safety, or even prosecutorial office. These administrative settings can create perceived or real conflicts and adversely impact funding because the parent entity not the medical examiner controls the budget and agency priorities. Such settings can also restrict the types or focus on death investigation, whether extent or scope.

Forensic pathologists are not opposed to the idea of standards. In fact, NAME has its own standards for autopsy performance and accreditation. The International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners also has accreditation standards. There's some concern however about the recent flurry of entities ostensibly developing standards or the increasing requirements for those entities that develop standards to offer accreditation. For example, complying with ISO to legitimize a standards development organization carries with it additional costs and manpower needs. In addition to NAME and IACME, we now also have the Academies Standards Board with consensus bodies, the OSACs, and the Forensic Science Standard Board. How the interplay between all these will work remains to be seen, and some of

it seems possibly redundant. Although the NCSF document about accreditation suggests that accreditation by NAME and IACME is acceptable, it's important to realize that they are not exactly the same. Despite similarities, names accreditation criteria are a bit more rigorous. If these two standards are to be viewed as equivalent, they probably really should be equivalent.

Part of the accreditation standards process requires that caseloads not exceed specific levels. But something as simple as the recent drug over dose epidemic can dramatically increase office caseload to the extent that high caseload can precluded accreditation or result ins loss of accreditation because acceptable caseload is exceeded. If funding is not provided to increase staffing, the issue of accreditation becomes moot in a sense. The cases have to be done regardless of accreditation status.

Today certification of forensic pathology is not a real big issue because formal training in accredited programs is required to qualify for forensic pathology board examination, and many forensic pathologists' jobs require it. Ongoing maintenance of certification however and required self-assessment modules are time consuming and expensive and may pose, actually, a larger problem for forensic pathologists than the basic certification itself. Certification of investigators is a large issue because there are many more investigators than forensic pathologists, and their education, training, backgrounds, and training settings are more diverse than those of forensic pathologists. Certification of Odontologists, anthropologists, toxicologists, and others are of value of course, but less directly related to the daily forensic pathology practice.

Forensic pathologists became appropriately concerned when they heard that consideration was being given to somehow limit the information available to them at the time of autopsy, with issues such as task relevance, cognitive bias, sequential unmasking and the like. It posed the fear that forensic pathologists would become assembly line workers blindly doing the same repeated tasks in a vacuum, with no contemplation or professional judgment component to their work, essentially serving as autopsy-matrons. The concept still prompts concern among forensic pathologists, as is the idea of using required checklists and report formats. Forensic pathologists need timely access to circumstantial death scene, investigative, and medical social history to guide their autopsies and investigations, and thankfully we're still at that point where we have that information.

Forensic pathologists are confused by the way that testimony and other procedures have been handled by the courts and judiciary. For example, cases in which the right to challenge an accuser may be extended to mean that no substitute forensic pathology witness is permitted, bringing up cases of testimony versus a business document. The concept of reasonable certainty has always been confusing and, thankfully, is being address. In some jurisdictions attendance of a medical examiner in an indictment hearing is standard procedure while in others it seldom or never occurs. The scope of testimony provided by the forensic pathologist varies widely among jurisdictions and the courts. The use of judicial vouching varies. The same expert witnesses seem to appear in case after case, even ones who's credibility might be questioned, yet the practice seems to continue.

The legal and court system seems to lack standards, and many forensic pathologists believe that the problems among forensic pathology practice pale in comparison to those in the legal and court system. Education of judges and attorneys is needed, as well with as the public and juries, in regard to forensic pathology. Some of have even suggested, and we heard this earlier today, difficult cases include some sort of panel of recognized expert to help adjudicate these cases to keep things on more of an even keel. All of these things are things you've heard over and over again just in the last 48 hours.

Although mass fatality training and programs are in place, many areas actually lack actual experience with such events and are not truly prepared to handle them. This problem prompted the recommendation for a national call center, which is a very admirable concept and can be very helpful, but it's probably less urgent right now than the need for resources to conduct quality routine daily death investigations that all offices experience. The debate over coroner and medical examiner systems continue and many still believe that the NAS report recommendation to abolish coroner systems should be pursued. We heard that stated earlier today. The many reasons difficulty of doing so is well recognized, but there remains the

need for a model law to help modernize death investigation laws and improve systems of all types, including the need to revisit coroner qualifications and selection processes.

The commission has prepared nine recommendations, which directly address all of the topics that I've mentioned, and a few other products that are peripherally related too. They provide moral and philosophical support to the forensic pathology and death investigation community in the following areas: forensic pathology supply, accreditation and certification, a national office for medicolegal investigations, improving communication, autonomy and independence, communication and information systems for medical examiners and coroners, a national call center for mass fatality management, and a model medicolegal death investigation law.

Thus far the tangible outcome of these recommendations and views is that the NIJ did put out a grant opportunity to fund accreditation, costs, and to fund -- accreditation costs and to fund some of the unfunded forensic pathology training positions. As I understand it, there are about $4 million made available for that program, but I just want everybody to realize that if the full programs that were in these recommendations were implemented, it could cost about $30 million a year, so we appreciate the effort that has been put in sincerely, but it's going to take a lot more in the future to implement these programs.

The recommendation for a national office has gained some momentum from multiple organizations. By a "national office," I mean now of medicolegal death investigation or medicolegal investigation, not the forensic science one. But the other views and recommendations have had little follow up in an organized effort with financial and other support. Forensic pathologists and NAMEs reaction to the ideas of a national office is, in general, supportive, but there is concern about the federal tendency to have an attitude of we are the feds we know best and we're going to tell you what to do, and if you don't do it we're not going to give you any money. It's really important that the commission's recommendations for a national office be implemented as recommended in the report, and that is to assist the death investigation community with funding and resources not to regulate it, run it, or tell it what to do.

It was very important that the commission drew a distinction between forensic science practitioner and forensic medicine practitioner, as this did acknowledge that forensic pathologists are physicians who are not primarily conducting repetitive laboratory tests using sample standards, controls, standard accepted methodologies, et cetera, and that there are distinctions between the two.

So the top priorities are to develop and fund a large-scale program to increase the recruitment, training, supply, and retention of forensic pathologists using loan forgiveness, salary augmentation, funding of all training programs, and other needed measures, such as reducing the costs and time required to maintain certification; improve death investigation systems in states through improvements in statutes; funding for facilities, equipment, personnel and services, including the development of regional autopsy centers of excellence; developing a formal dedicated communication and information system for medical examiners and coroners. And you probably realize by now that most of these could be facilitated by a national office, as has been proposed. Ensure autonomy and independence of forensic pathologists, work with attorneys and the judiciary to improve their understanding of forensic pathologists and their were procedures, and to make it easier for forensic pathologists to interact with the legal system and make sure that standards and guidelines that impact on forensic pathology are developed primarily by professionals working the discipline and that the costs and labor of becoming an accredited body or of becoming accredited are not prohibitive.

All of the other commission views and recommendations are very important that take a backseat to these ones that I'm mentioned. The biggest need at present is planned and effective follow up to commission views and recommendations. It's also the view of NAME that some entities such as the commission should continue in the future, although it appears that the commission in its current form is history.

Okay, I have haven't mentioned research, and this is my last slide. But I want to use it because it's important to realize that, as an example, there's obviously a need for research. Well NAME, the SWGMDI, and the OSACs have already identified specific research needs related to forensic pathology and death investigation. The problem is that forensic pathologists do not have time or resources to

engage in research. Manpower and funding for research will have to be provided by research-oriented state or federal agencies, such as the CDC, NIJ, NIH, and others.

So forensic pathology and death investigation, and perhaps many of the other forensic disciplines have already identified need. That's what this group's been doing. That's what many others have been doing. It's been talked about in the 1920s with the original National Research Council reports. If there needs to be a needs assessment now, it seems like that needs assessment should focus on how to address the needs that have already been identified and to implement programs to solve existing and well documented problems.

So once again, thanks to the commission for allowing forensic pathology input and for all the products that you've worked on. I probably have the privilege of being the shortest term member of the commission, but I'm familiar with what you've been doing. Two meeting, good for the CV, I guess. But thank you very much, and I hope all this work continues. Thank you.

JOHN BUTLER: Okay. Thank you, Randy. Our next speaker will represent the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners, Frank DePaolo. Thank you.

FRANK DEPAOLO: Thank you. Good afternoon and thank you for this opportunity to address the commission today. I have no formal presentation. I will be just making a few brief remarks on behalf of the ISCME. Let me start by thanking the members of the commission and the subcommittees for the tremendous efforts put forth to date in the interest of improving forensic science. Dr. Hanzlick provided you with a comprehensive overview of many of the issues affecting medicolegal death investigation, most of which we are in full agreement with.

In the interest of time and to avoid duplication, I yielded most of my time to Dr. Hanzlick so that he could complete this comprehensive overview. I will use this opportunity to provide you with a few very brief comments regarding issues important to both coroners and medical examiners.

I speak today on behalf of the membership of the International Association of Coroners and Medical Examiners, of which I am the current president. The IACME is a professional organization that represents both coroners and medical examiners, the vast majority of our members coming from the coroner systems of course. The IACME currently has just under 1,000 members, which are representative of the more than 2,000 coroner jurisdictions in the United States. Of note, though, only 25 or the more than 2000 coroner jurisdictions are currently accredited by the IACME, and I think only a few by name. As many of you know, accreditation of medicolegal death investigation systems is voluntary, which is likely one of the primary reasons for such low numbers.

Looking forward, I would like to take this opportunity to highlight three areas that must be addressed. First, on accreditation, the commission issued a recommendation that all medicolegal offices become accredited within five years. The IACME strongly supports this recommendation. As you know, the recommendation, as well as others, specific to medicolegal death investigation were forwarded on to the White House for consideration. The IACME believes that mandatory accreditation would actually drive improvements in medicolegal death investigation simply by forcing local jurisdictions to develop competent medical legal offices.

Many coroners and medical examiners in the United States are underfunded, understaffed, and overwhelmed. For example, as Dr. Hanzlick pointed out, the recent surge in opiate deaths has worsened the current situation, with many medicolegal offices left with no options but either to modify the current criteria for conducting autopsies in order to deal with the crisis or by not conducting them at all. We believe that requiring an office to become accredited would force local jurisdictions to provide the necessary resources needed to meet accreditation standards. There is currently no other incentive for a local jurisdiction to direct otherwise scarce resources to a medicolegal operation.

Second, shortage of forensic pathologists, as Dr. Hanzlick noted in his presentation, there are less than 600 forensic pathologist currently in the United States, with a need for as many as 1,200. Consequently

there are forensic autopsies being performed by non-forensic pathologists or not at all. In August of 2015, the commission voted to adopt a recommendation to increase the number, retention, and quality of board-certified forensic pathologists. Just a few months ago, the NIJ released a new grant solicitation entitled "Strengthening the Medical Examiner Coroner System," which is a great first start in responding to this crisis, but, clearly, not enough; lastly, the coroner versus medical examiner issue addressed in the NAS report. The IACME does not advocate for one system over another in this debate. The IACME advocates for improvement in medicolegal death investigation through training, adherence to standards, accreditation for medicolegal offices and the certification of its personnel.

In closing, our members have been increasingly optimistic over the past three years as a direct result of the nine recommendations made by the forensic science commission, specific to improving medicolegal death investigation. We are disappointed that the commission's charter will not be renewed, but we are hopeful that the newly formed forensic science subcommittee at the DOJ will address many of these issues, many of the issues identified by the commission.

I would be happy to answer any questions you have at the conclusion of the panel presentations today. Thank you.

JOHN BUTLER: Thank you, Frank. Our next speaker will represent the National Sheriff's Association, Tim Scanlan.

TIMOTHY SCANLAN: While the clicker make it's way down here, I just want to start by saying that I'm happy to be here today and to represent the National Sheriff's Association. Many of you know me from serving as a proxy two times, and attending of the meetings. Besides what I do here, my job description is pretty simple. I'm the director of -- the commander of the Technical Services Bureau for the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office, and part of that bureau is our Laboratory Services Division. So in saying that, I'll just start by saying that although I'm in charge of the whole bureau, I came up through the forensic science program, first as a forensic scientist, then as a crime lab director, laboratory services commander, and now the current position that I hold.

Much like everybody else, I'll be a little redundant, but I really want to thank the commission members. I think what you all have done here, and I'm privileged to be a proxy twice to actually be a part of it to see what you do and how all the hard work and dedication that has been put into this process. The National Sheriff's Association and the Jefferson Parish's Office thanks for that effort and dedication. It has been contentious at times, but I think that everyone's passion is for the right reasons and we're trying to improve the field of forensic science and it's use in the criminal justice system.

In addition to thanking the members of the commission, I think a thanks goes out to everyone watching right now. All these people that have done public comments, all these organizations who have made comments and helped strengthen the commission's report as they come out, the views document and the recommendations, I think it was a team effort. My other hat is I'm on the board of directors for ASCLD, and, you know, we put a lot of time and effort into doing this, and same with the IAI and the other organization. And I think it speaks a lot to the commitment of everyone in the criminal justice system to maintaining the excellence of forensic science and always trying to improve.

So three things today: I wanted to give a local perspective. I was asked to kind of talk about standard local crime lab, and that's what we are. I was also asked to discuss some accomplishments of the commission and, just like everybody, what we do moving forward. So the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office Crime Laboratory is part of our Laboratory Services Division. Our parent agency is about 1,500 people, sworn and civilian officer. The Laboratory Service Division has about 62 employees in it, both sworn and civilian as well. And we do everything a normal crime lab does; crime scene processing, forensic identification, which would be our firearms, tool marks, latent prints, shoe print, tire track, all that standard stuff; forensic chemistry, where we focus on controlled substances, and arson investigation; DNA analysis, everything from conventional serology through full-blown DNA. We have the newest component of our laboratory systems, our digital forensic units, which is -- you know, it's funny hearing the backlog

things. We're lucky. In our lab system we don't really have a backlog in most major cases. We have adequate funding, we have workflow processes, and we keep up on our cases pretty well.

I will say digital forensics is one that is the "growest" number of backlog. Everyone here has at least one cell phone on them; right? Nobody has a flip phone, I'm guessing. And it takes time to do that stuff. So I have guys that work for me that will leave home without their gun, but return or back to get their cell phone if they left it; right? So that is the biggest growing area right now, in my opinion, in forensic science, and one that we have to address moving forward.
Quality assurance and quality control obviously is an accredited crime laboratory, we have a quality assurance program. We have our own photo lab, and also the Property and Evidence Division falls under us as well. The facility that houses our crime lab and our DNA laboratory is 45,000 square feet. We built a new facility in the fall of 2010, and it is both our ISO accredited 17025.

I wanted to include -- I know the words are small, but I wanted to include our mission statement. A lot is said about local and state crime laboratories, especially those affiliated with law enforcement, and I just wanted to read the three bottom bullets. I'm a big proponent in that your mission statement should really show what you believe as an entity. And the three things on the bottom would be provide accurate and impartial forensic analysis of evidence collected from a crime scene and suspicious incident. And we believe in that. Obviously through accreditation we have a buffer that's already built in, but in addition to that, to be impartial, everyone from our bench chemist supervisors all the way through our crime lab director, our Laboratory Services Division commander, and me, the chief of the bureau, are all forensic scientists. All came up through forensic science, and it helps us remain impartial and put forensic science first to help in your criminal investigations.

With that, I'll move onto the National Sheriff's Association. Obviously the National Sheriff's Association is a large organization. It represents 3,088 sheriffs. There's a chief law enforcement person in each parish or county, and they also represent all the deputies and law enforcement personnel, as well as all the public safety professionals and concerned citizens who care about criminal justice in the law enforcement community. It is a key player in criminal justice, and also stretches out now to homeland security issues and tries to improve issues that are important to the law enforcement and criminal justice community. The National Sheriff's Association has been a partner of the commission from the very beginning.

In fact, Greg Champagne, Sheriff Champagne, is the president of the National Sheriff's Association and plays an active role on the commission. So we have full buy-in from us. We discuss it all the time. Before meetings we discuss it amongst the sheriffs, our positions, and how to go and how to comment on different things. So we were a part of the commission throughout the process, and we thank you for letting us be a part of the commission.

We've all seen this document in the research, but I just want to further stress the importance of state and local. I think everyone up here has mentioned state and local, state and local enough. But it's important that the vast majority of forensic analysis is utilized by local law enforcement and done by local labs. In fact, our laboratory does work for not just Jefferson Parish, the people of Jefferson Parish. So we do work for surrounding parishes, we do work for the state, and we do work for the federal entities. We do work for DEA, secret service, FBI, just to name a few. So we are partners across all those different boundaries. And you'll see that throughout the country, that the state and local labs are the backbone of what we do in forensic science and they need to be supported.

So what are the accomplishments of the commission and some of the things that the NSA support? And it's a broken record by now so I'll go a little quickly. But one thing I think is very important about the commission is that you all put a spotlight on forensic science and show it's importance within the criminal justice community and that's important to show, hey, look we had this big chunk of the forensic science community that we need to focus on and look at. The committee meetings and the preparation for the meetings, all the public comment periods, getting all of the forensic organizations involved, law enforcement, defense attorneys, everyone who's involved, prosecutors, put a spotlight on what is needed in forensic science as far as training. It also shows the importance of such organizations like the OSAC and the strong work that they are doing to help strengthen forensic science across the board.

I think one thing that really came across -- and we talked about training a lot today, but you've got to forgive me, I'm a big training person -- is the training for legal professionals, a big part of what we do in forensic science and part of our mission is training. We believe not only do we train our laboratory staff but we hold continuing education for our police, for our prosecutors, for our defense, and to the judiciary. We believe that if everyone understands the boundaries of forensic science and it's proper application it makes us all stronger. That's a big part of our mission in our crime lab, and I think across forensic science. So I think a big thing this commission did was show we do have some deficiencies in training. In the legal profession, they all don't take biology classes; right? So we have to show them what we do, and the limitations, so that when we go to court we can all have effective testimony. And "effective testimony" means accurate fair testimony.

Another recommendation was universal accreditation. I won't harp on this but it's supported across the scientific community, and the importance of funding for this at the federal and state level. I'll probably say this again, but one of our fellow commission's mentioned that, I won't use your words, but, you know, learn to talk to and communicate with our legislators and get them to understand why it's important to support forensic science. The recommendation on proficiency testing, again support across the forensic science community, and I think it needs to extend to beyond those who work in publicly funded crime labs. I think anyone conducting forensic analysis who plans to testify in a court of law should be part of a proficiency testing and prove they can do what they say they can do. That's an important part of what we do each day, and every accredited crime lab is part of that, and I think it should extend to all forensic science service providers.

Again, it does take funding. So, as everyone else said, it takes funding to put in these programs, to do all the backfill, to get everything done. It needs to go into a robust proficiency program, but it's something that needs to happen.

The code of professional responsibility, as it was adopted by the Department of Justice, is something the National Sheriff's Office supports. But not universal. We think that that's a very robust code that's out there. We think that each organization, much like ASCLD mentioned, needs to help in this process to make sure we have uniform standards and professional conduct. It's something that we can live up to, something that's not created that we automatically fail. But it's something that we can actually put into place that benefit it is people that we serve.

To echo the IAI, crime knows no geographic boundaries; right? So we need to have an AFIS system that is interoperable across the country. Where I am, in Jefferson Parish, we have the I-10 corridor where crimes goes back and forth, and we need to have a uniform AFIS program. And one great thing the commission said was the standards should be set by the OSAC, because those are the professionals who do this every day, and that we need to fund this to make sure that it is uniform, it is robust, and it's something that will stand up and help us across the criminal justice community.

Obviously uniform terminology, as everyone said, is important to us, and OSAC is paving a way in that, and they're doing a strong job, and it is supported across. We all want to make sure that we have the uniform language that we all need so that when we get into court and we say certain words, no matter what jurisdiction we're in, those words all mean the same thing, and that's important to all of us.

So with the commission scheduled to sunset, where do we move forward? Well the National Sheriff's Association, First, wants to say that forensic science is sake component of law enforcement, and it does play a key role in the criminal justice system. And I think you'll see this at the local and state level; that as more funding, people are taking money out of their budgets and the SWAT guys are missing out on some things, maybe because the crime lab needs some money. And you are seeing that shift. But it is burdensome. We do need to have some extra funding. We need it at the state and local level, and federal, to go to our elected representatives and make sure we have that funding. But it is important to the members of the Sheriff's Association and the local law enforcement.

We have to also remember that we have to follow state laws and legal precedence when we actually enact what we do in forensic science. And much like Texas has done, we have to go to our legislators and make sure they understand what we need and what's scientifically accurate. I can tell you that in the State of Louisiana we do a great job of communicating and lobbying -- lobbying is the wrong word, but speaking to our legislators to make sure they understand what's needed.

One of the biggest debacles a few years ago was when all these synthetic cannabinoids came out, and they needed input from the forensic science community to know what to make illegal, how to name it, how to put that into operation, and it's something we worked very closely with. Across the United States with sexual assault kit laws being passed, we have to make sure that these are laws that are passed that we can live up to, that we're not setting ourselves up to fail. And it's incumbent upon us and local law enforcement, local crime labs to reach out to the legislators and make sure we have an open relationship with them.

Again, support OSAC and its efforts to strengthen forensic science. I'm not going to read the mission of OSAC. We all know it. We've all been there. But OSAC has an important role, and especially now with the sunsetting of the commission, that it really needs to remain strong and act as a voice for forensic science and to help codify everything we wish it to do and to help us to remain strong. And then lastly, I know we talk a lot about funding, but there's specific things we need to think about when we fund things. One is obviously obtaining and maintaining accreditation. We need to get that out to everybody that we can, and the funding is either going to come from the federal or the state level to get that done. And the local sheriffs and local law enforcement are chipping away their budgets to help in that, but sometimes the money is not there, so we all have to sacrifice uniformly to make sure this happens, because it's an important part of what we do.

Training: Again, I can't stress enough how important training is, not just for the bench chemist. One thing that ASCLD has pioneered over the last couple years and assisted with it is leadership training. It's important for the forensic science practitioners or the best chemist who have now become a supervisor to understand how to manage their crime laboratories. And we have the ASCLD Leadership Academy, and we're also working with RTI, the National Forensic Science Academy to develop these leadership programs in forensic science to help them not just be a chemist but to be a true leader as they communicate within their laboratory and across the criminal justice system to help better represent the field of forensic science.

Resources: As all these backlogged things come up and all these new demands and that knot gets tighter every time, we need resources. We need resources to move forward. And, again, we're not begging the federal government to help us and do everything. We do believe it's a state and local issue as well. Everyone needs to pitch in and make sure we fund this needed part of the criminal justice system.

And then lastly, university partnerships are important. There's a lot of talk about the science in forensic science. And I would say, ask any of you who have access to Pro Quest to look up the numerous Master's thesis and doctoral dissertations in forensic science that are always overlooked when we have this discussion. That's general acceptance not in forensic science, but in the field of science in general, because, just like I did my Master's thesis, we have to stand in front of a panel and defend the science of forensic science that we put forth in our thesis. And we think that greater collaboration between the crime laboratories and the academic institutions will only help strengthen forensic science as we improve the science, which we do every day.

And I know we have one more speaker, so I'll save my questions until the end. Thank you.

JOHN BUTLER: Our final speaker for this is John Grassel, and he's supposed to on here from the International Association of Chiefs of Police and the Forensic Science Committee there as part of IACP. Do we have you online, John?

JOHN GRASSEL: I am online. Can you hear me?

JOHN BUTLER: Yes.

JOHN GRASSEL: Great. So I appreciate you having me here. And earlier, before all this started, we were told that we had the dubious distinction of being the last panel, so I guess I have the extra dubious distinction of being the last panelist on the last panel. And as my mom sometimes used to say, I think I have a face for radio, so it might be better that you're hearing me through a WebEx. That will hopefully make things go much smoother for you all.

First, in light of the announcement yesterday by the attorney general regarding the commission, I'd like to first thank the commission for their hard work and efforts. Although our organizations may have had differing views in some areas, this does not at all diminish our appreciation for the dedication you have displayed toward our common goal, which is, of course, the advancement of forensic science.

Today, in addition to representing the International Association of Chiefs of Police, I will also be speaking on behalf of the major chiefs, Major City Chiefs Association and ASCIA, which is the Association of State Criminal Investigative Agencies. Together we represent the majority of local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in the United States and provide quality forensic services to investigate all levels of criminal activity. Our member agencies are committed to supporting quality forensic services, advancing and improving technologies whenever possible, and advocated for the continued research and funding in forensic science.

As we all know, forensic science plays a critical role in the criminal justice system, and our organizations have supported and continue to support the following areas: The first, as we've heard by numerous speakers, the accreditation of all forensic service providers in all forensic disciplines. This accreditation should be conducted by qualified accrediting entities, with expertise relevant to the accreditation of the forensic science laboratories. Also, increased partnerships between scientists and forensic lab and academia. There is a need for a comprehensive national research strategy. That strategy should be developed by forensic scientists and forensic science organizations in cooperation with the criminal justice and academia communities. The research strategy should be based on improving and/or advancing forensic science. Grants should be made available to academic, government, and private sector scientists to perform this research. Partnerships and/or corroborations with practicing forensic scientists should be required as part of the grant application.

We also continue to support the increased grant opportunities and funding to support basic and applied forensic research, expanding and updating of laboratory facilities' equipment and capacity enhancement efforts. These grant funds, when available, should also be used for backlog reduction and general enhancement to forensic public laboratories. Additionally, we support the creation and resulting work products of the OSACs, the Organization of Scientific Area Committees, to strengthen and advance forensic science. And finally, the objective forensic science providers within law enforcement that help focus and improve investigations and provide actionable intelligence to improve police response and service.

Throughout each of the agencies I represent today we have routinely interacted with members of the commission. We've responded to posted documents. We've provided comments, and we've attended meetings in person, and now, via the web. We, in addition, have one commissioner, Ted Hunt, and a vice chair, Nelson Santos, who I send my appreciation and thanks to their dedication to the commission. Also today, we heard from another IACP forensic committee member, Kevin Lothridge.

Since the 2009 publication of the National Academy's report our organizations have strongly advocated and continue to advocate that crime laboratories should remain within law enforcement parent agencies. Proper forensic science within law enforcement can be used to drive and improve investigations, and improve overall police response and services. Forensic science organizations can function properly within a law enforcement agency. This relationship often provides background information that permits the forensic scientist to select the most probative evidence, prioritize selective analyses, and formulate a working hypothesis. The caveat, however, is the scientist must remain free from undo influence in regards to the analytical conclusions and reporting of results. Law enforcement must commit to the independence

and objectivity within the organization. So units must be staffed by scientists and technicians, which may be sworn or civilian, as long as they are properly trained in scientific method principles and receive continuing education in their respective disciplines. Staffing is also a key point for public (inaudible).

Federal funding, as we've heard from several speakers today, we believe that the federal government should have an active role in supporting all publicly funded forensic laboratories. This funding should be provided for accredited crime laboratories and for forensic service providers to meet the growing demands for forensic science to aid in investigations. If we look at some federal grant programs, such as the Paul Coverdell Forensic Sciences Improvement Grant and the CEBR, the DNA Capacity Enhancement and Backlog Reduction Grant Program has good guidelines to follow. From a personal perspective, coming from a smaller agency, without the Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant, we probably would not have had the funds to achieve ISO accreditation, so those types grants are critical for all agencies.

We also support partnerships between academia, the private sector, and government forensic scientists to advance current technologies, as well as to develop new capabilities. I think earlier today we listened to Ken Williams talk about any time you take an analyst away from the bench it obviously leads to a greater backlog. So some of the partnerships between academia and the private sector could help that, in that the research that could be done by academia would be critical, and it would safe the analysts time so that they could dedicate more of their time to actual bench work. We wish to coordinate federal funds related to forensic science to allow for a collaboration with ongoing research efforts by the DOD and other federal agencies, as long as there's not a duplicating of efforts or funding.

We fully support the OSACs, which were created in 2015. We support the development of the national standards for each forensic discipline by the OSAC in a manner similar to the adoption of the FBI DNA QAS that has been developed by SWGDAM.

Some of our priorities and needs; infrastructure. Look at some of the labs, the public labs throughout the country are in a less than desirable state. We seek a national commitment to establishing the facilities needed to provide these quality forensic services and to meet the increasing demands of submissions.

Equipment: A commitment to resource and properly equip forensic providers; personnel for education, and especially continuing education of forensic practitioners; research and development, again, with academia and private industry; quality services, as we talked about for national standards and accreditation; and a needs assessment, by determining the needs of the broad forensic community to assist the Department of Justice information gathering towards assessing and reporting on forensic laboratories.

In conclusion, I would again like to thank the commission for the opportunity to speak today. I applaud you in your efforts to move forensic science forward.

JOHN BUTLER: Thank you, John. Is there any questions, two or three questions before we take a short break, and then we'll come back for our final part of the meeting. Any questions anyone wants to ask? Oh, Julia.

JULIA LEIGHTON: I think these questions are directed mostly to Jeremy and Ken. I heard both of you talking, and we've certainly heard from a variety of speakers today, about what's the appropriate balance between forensic scientists and scientists in any particular commission? We could also talk about the appropriate balance of judges, prosecutors, and defense attorneys. But let's assume that, for the same of this argument, none of them should be involved. What I'm really interested in is what you all have described -- what your view is of what's the appropriate balance, and then, in particular, what you see as the role of the research scientist, independent scientists?

JEREMY TRIPLETT: So I'll start. Ken can clean up. So I do think there should be a balance. I don't know if I have a number in mind, but I think academic scientists and researchers certainly play a role -- and I'm looking at you and not in the microphone -- certainly play an important role. I've learned a lot, through my

experience with OSAC, speaking about the issues with the numerous people we have that are academic scientists on OSAC. I think they bring a different perspective. They bring a very rigorous mindset on the application of science. I think it's important. But I also think that, equally important, are practitioners who see day-to-day, and I'm no in no way diminishing what the academic community sees.

But I think it's also very important that a significant constitution of whatever we're talking about, anything down the road, be composed of practicing forensic scientists, which I think their perspective brings -- the perspective they bring is here's what I see every day, actually have a decent idea -- well I know what I don't know, to borrow an old speech. I may not know what I don't know. But I think that's the academic community that they can bring to that. But I think there's a significant amount of practitioners who also know what they don't know and know what they know. And so I think bringing operational considerations and bringing here to the table, here's what I deal with every day, how can we work together to move forward. So I think the mix, it needs to be a mix. It should not completely exclude either community, and I think that's important. I don't know if you're looking for a number. I don't have a number. But I think it's important to have both.

KEN WILLIAMS: I would agree with Jeremy. It's hard to give a number or to obtain a true balance. But I know when you think about the balance, what you need, really, is just that representation, because the issues are different as you look across the jurisdiction. Take, for example, the discovery document that the commission performed. A lot of that reflects upon what's happening at the federal level. We don't have that same type of assistance at the state level. I have defense attorneys putting demands on our laboratory for what they want provided, and I, in turn, have to go to the prosecutors, and in many cases the municipal prosecutor, to have them argue that maybe this isn't needed. But because the municipal prosecutors are unable to do that, that taxes the laboratory, because now we're forced with finding all of the information that the defense attorney says he or she may need.

Like Andrew Goldsmith talked about, he's able to go out and train the prosecutors so they can go out and better advocate for the laboratory. And so if you have more state and local agencies a part of the commission, able to talk about the experiences they're having, this is something maybe that could be put forward.

As far as the researchers, I definitely think they have a place, primarily because the analysts in the laboratory are not able to do the research that is necessary because of all the demands that are placed on them. With the backlogs, with turnaround time, and with accreditation, they just aren't able to do the research that we need in order to advance forensic sciences. So by having those researchers a part of the commission, they can tell you what's being worked on, and many times, by their students who are doing good work. Just like Tim mentioned, he defended his Master's thesis, I sit on a college board, and they do a lot of good work out there at the academic levels or in those academic arenas. And so by having those researchers there, they can put that information out there for the commission, and they can move forward with it.

GERALD LAPORTE: So, Ken, I'm going to ask you a question, actually put you on the spot a little bit. So, I know you and I are fellow CRIM members. I'm been an AAFS member 20-plus years. But I've always kind of talked about this but never asked probably. But why has the American Academy not taken a leadership position in the forensic science community? So, for example, why did it take this commission to make a recommendation that seems like everybody agrees about, which is universal accreditation. Why did the American Academy really never step up in the plate and say anything like that?

So I think kind of a going forward -- and I realize you're in a tough position, you can't speak on behalf of the academy, like if I ask you this question, maybe even just your thoughts, but has the academy considered or thought about, you know, establishing its own commission of sorts to handle some of these larger issues? I know we look at the federal government sometimes, but I think what a lot of people don't realize, or at least we know it but we don't talk about it, but the federal government can say all kinds of things. The states don't have to listen to what the federal government says because of the structure. But maybe if you had an American Academy that represents 7,000 plus member, states and locals from all over the country, maybe that would have some traction.

KEN WILLIAMS: Gerry, I would have to agree with you. And before I start with that, I would like to remind you, again, that this is just an AAFS perspective, just my own. But before I begin, also, I'd like to take you back to the formation of the academy SDO or the ASV, that was formed under past President Victor Weedn. To me, that was a step taken in the direction that Gerry's talking about, by the academy going out there and saying, we are going to start creating standards for the forensic science community. That was a tough pill for the entire academy to swallow, and that is something we're still dealing with.

But one of the concerns with that would be federal -- well not federal, but funding in general. We are doing our best to make sure we can maintain the SDO. And because of grants through the Arnold foundation, we are able to do that. But when grant expires we really are uncertain as to how we will continue to move forward. And I say all of that about funding to say this; when I mentioned during my presentation that we need an independent entity that's dedicated for forensic sciences, that's an entity that's dedicated to the leadership and forensic scientists. The American Academy of Forensic Sciences is a professional organization, but it's a volunteer when you really look at it. At it's basis, it's a volunteer organization.

All of the leadership, all of the members, they have other jobs, and so to ask them to do what is needed globally or even at the national level, you need a full-time representative in order to do that. I would love to do it. I would love to attend meetings all day. They don't let me out of the lab that often. This is my first commissioned meeting, and, unfortunately, this is the last. I work for the state, and when I go to academy meetings I am self-funded. And so to take the time that's necessary in order to promulgate policies that are going to affect the nation, you need someone that's full time. You need that independent entity, and unfortunately that has to come from the federal government, because they hold all the finances.

JOHN BUTLER: Okay. I have Matt, Pam, and Dean, and we have to go quick, because we're going to take a break soon.

MATT REDLE: Ken and Jeremy, I'm going to make this real quick and easy for the two of you. Do you think the collaboration that you've seen post the NAS report between forensic science practitioners and traditional science, do you see that as strengthening forensics in the future?

JEREMY TRIPLETT: Yes. Is that allowable?

KEN WILLIAMS: I guess when Jeremy said clean up, you really did mean that. Do I see the collaboration in strengthening forensic sciences? Absolutely. As I mentioned in the presentation, it's the consensus that we're seeking. And by having the different people represented, say, in a small room like this, it really helps that we can get all the issues out there on the table. So the more we are able to come together, the more we are able to hear the pains that other disciplines are facing, and not just their pains, but their successes as well, because we can all share together. And it truly does take a village in order to move the forensic scientific community forward. And so the more we're able to work together, the more we can collaborate, we can truly strengthen forensic scientists, and everyone has a stake in this. We need the input from everyone. We need to see your passion. We need to know what you're thinking in order to make this work.

PAM KING: So each of you gentlemen took the opportunity to thank the commission for the work that has been done over the last three years. I wanted to take the opportunity to thank each of you in your organizations for the participation that you and your memberships have had in the work that we have done. I think it was mentioned, at least by one person, the importance of public comment and the importance of the contributions that you've made. So I wanted to thank you all for that. I also wanted to set at least one sort of incorrect assumption from Mr. Scanlan. Fred has a flip phone, just saying.

FREDERICK BIEBER: Consistent with. Thank you, Pam. I appreciate that. Thank you.

DEAN GIALAMAS: I want to thank all you gentlemen for your presentations today. And what I wanted to point out, and it's, as I say this, it will come across, hopefully, with a little bit of humor, but I want to take

the serious side of it, and it is, if I look back at the reflection of what this commission has done, there's one formal process that we have that was never documented, was never put forth as a statement, and yet it was the only thing that was absolutely unanimous that this commission did, and it was the creation of a new verb called "collegiate." Thank you, Mr. Pulaski for that one.

Returning it to the serious side, the one thing that was interesting is that was an event that no matter who was in the room, whether there was an agenda, a perspective, a philosophy, there was always a meeting of the minds to be able to do that. And there's been a tremendous amount of energy and momentum put into the direction that this commission has gone. And what I really hope is -- and I'm not looking for a comment, but it's just really a statement, I think, and it's to you and this panel, and actually the previous two panel as well, and my hope is that as professional organizations that there's some way that you can "collegiate" and continue that momentum, because I don't think because the commission no longer exists that that should stop some of the things from happening. And there's clearly still low-hang fruit that can be addressed, and whether it's through regional meetings, some type of a gathering that occurs, a sentinel event, something of that nature, there's some powerhouses up here.

I mean I look at the National Sheriff's Association IACP, ASCLD, AAFS, just those four organizations, not to leave anyone out, but the impact of those particular organizations across the entire community of criminal justice, I think, has a real viability. So I would really encourage you to think about that with you organizations and take that back.

JOHN BUTLER: Thank you all very much. Let's thank the panel again for their (inaudible). We'll take a ten-minute break, and then we'll come back for any public comments, and then Nelson and I have some closing remarks.