

Scientific Working Group on DNA Analysis Methods (SWGDM) January 2024 Report

January 8-11, 2024

I. Agenda:

Please see Attachment 1.

II. Meeting Synopsis:

Monday, Jan 8, 2024

The SWGDAM Executive Board met on Monday.

The Rapid DNA and Quality Assurance Committees held individual meetings during the day

Tuesday, Jan 9, 2024

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSION

The SWGDAM Chair, Anthony Onorato, welcomed attendees, revised the meeting agenda and provided an update on renewed memberships, members and those retiring from SWGDAM.

Jocelyn Carlson, Chair of the Quality Assurance (QA) Committee presented the proposed revisions to the 2025 Quality Assurance Standards (QAS). She discussed the personnel qualifications standards extensively, including degree and coursework requirements. She noted the decision to remove the master's level course requirement for Technical Leader's as well as the additional requirement for forensic science-related degrees. There was discussion on the elimination of the named course requirements and introduction of portability. Ms. Carlson also reviewed proposed changes to Standard 8 intended to clarify the requirements for software validation and introduce expert system (from the database standards).

Douglas Hares, Chair of the Rapid DNA Committee reviewed the new Rapid DNA quality requirements in Standards 18 and 19. The standards work together to define Rapid DNA program requirements and the relationship between laboratories and partner agencies. In further discussion, there were concerns with an entity having a Rapid DNA

instrument/System as their only DNA capability and using that capability to meet the definition of a laboratory for QAS and NDIS participation purposes.

COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Following lunch, the Committees and Working Groups met for individual meetings for the remainder of the day.

Wednesday, January 10 & 11, 2023

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSION

SWGDM Executive Secretary Dawn Herkenham presented an overview of *Smith v. Arizona*, a case before the U.S. Supreme Court on the issue of whether the 6th Amendment Confrontation Clause allows for the testimony of a substitute expert. Vice Chair Russell Vossbrink provided additional details on the case from his jurisdiction. The presentation included case precedents as well as the potential impact for forensic DNA laboratories. Ms. Herkenham concluded with an informal survey of laboratories that indicated approximately 65% employ the team approach in forensic DNA analysis case processing.

Following this presentation, the SWGDM body listened to the live oral argument in the U.S. Supreme Court on the *Smith* case. Following the arguments, SWGDM discussed their impressions and how to assist laboratories going forward.

COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Following lunch, the Committees and Working Groups met for individual meetings for the afternoon session.

SWGDM ROUND TABLE

Dr. Thomas Callaghan, Chief Biometric Scientist for the FBI Laboratory, presented on the 25th anniversary of the National DNA Index System, the history of CODIS and the development of SWGDM, culminating in an official recognition of SWGDM Executive Secretary Dawn Herkenham for more than twenty years of service to SWGDM and the forensic DNA community. Special guests for her celebration included former SWGDM Chairs and FBI Laboratory management.

Thursday, January 12, 2023

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSION

SWGDM Executive Secretary Dawn Herkenham gave a brief recap on results of the SWGDM Survey on team-based DNA analysis, indicating that a majority of

laboratories polled use multiple biologists and examiners in the processing and analysis of forensic DNA.

Ted Hunt of the FBI's Office of the General Counsel provided his perspective on the oral arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court as he attended the arguments in person on Wednesday. Mr. Hunt reviewed confrontation clause case precedents as well as implications for forensic DNA testing analyses and testimonies. Mr. Hunt explained the time frame for a decision and responded to questions. At the conclusion of his presentation, it was suggested that SWGDAM draft a resource statement, which would be used for instructive purposes to explain the team approach used in forensic DNA analysis as well as its prevalence in U.S. laboratories. A straw vote among the SWGDAM body indicated that the majority of those present wish to begin drafting such a resource statement now.

Following lunch, the SWGDAM body reconvened to begin document review. Jocelyn Carlson, Chair of the QA Committee, began by presenting on revisions to the Quality Assurance Standards for Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories draft, going section-by-section for group review of the document language, syntax, and content. Douglas Hares and Brian Harmon presented an update on the Rapid DNA Committee, followed by a group review of Standards 18 and 19 on Rapid DNA, as well as a review of the QAS "definitions" section. A straw vote revealed that the majority of attendees were opposed to partner agencies having advanced Rapid DNA operators and with the SWGDAM body's sentiments, that category of operator was removed from the Standards. There were several additional suggestions made for wording changes and definitions during the discussion.

Jodi Irwin, Chair of the Next Generation Sequencing Committee, reviewed the SWGDAM SNP Interpretation Guidelines including the need for the document and the discussions on scope of the document. The draft document was provided to laboratories doing sequencing as a more targeted public comment solicitation and 37 comments were received. After the review of the document, Steven Myers made a motion to approve the SWGDAM Interpretation Guidelines for Single Nucleotide Polymorphism (SNP) Analysis by Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories which was seconded by Brian Harmon. The motion was unanimously approved by the SWGDAM members present (29).

Lisa Schiermeier-Wood (Chair, Laboratory Operations Committee) and the Laboratory Operations Committee explained the status of several of the documents in their Committee (Validation Overview, Autosomal Multiplex Module, Probabilistic Genotyping Module, Quantitation Module). Following the summary presentation, Jason Kokoszka gave a review of the Validation Overview document and the Multiplex Module, noting areas of change and the document's main points. Lauren Lu presented on

the PGS Validation Module, focusing on areas where changes occurred and giving an overview of the document's history, key features, and roadmap. Lastly, Joseph Hof reviewed the Laboratory Operations Quantitation Module, which is currently an early-phase rough draft. In response to comments provided for the PGS Module, revisions were made to the earlier modules to make them consistent and accordingly, draft Laboratory Operations documents will be going distributed for a final SWGDAM comment period.

III. Attendees:

Please see Attachment 2.

IV. Next Meeting:

The next meeting will be held July 9-11, 2024.

Attachment 1 - Final Agenda



SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP

DNA ANALYSIS METHODS

**SWGDM JANUARY 2024 REGULAR MEETING
AGENDA**

Monday, January 8, 2024

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET

SWGDM Executive Board Meeting

Special Committee Breakout Sessions

Tuesday, January 9, 2024

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSION

Quality Assurance Standards (QAS) Discussion

Proposed changes to Standards 5, 8, and 15

Proposed additions for expert system use by Forensic DNA Testing Laboratories

New Standards 18 and 19 for Rapid-DNA technology

LUNCH

COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Chair Anthony J. Onorato

| ajonorato@fbi.gov

| SWGDM.org



SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP

DNA ANALYSIS METHODS

Wednesday, January 10, 2024

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET

COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS

6:00 PM – 8:00 PM ET

ROUNDTABLE SESSION

Thursday, January 11, 2024

9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SESSION

As requested by Committee/Working Groups

COMMITTEE/WORKING GROUP UPDATE SESSION

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Anthony J. Onorato

| ajonorato@fbi.gov

| SWGDM.org

Attachment 2 - Attendees

**SWGDM July 2023 Meeting
January 8 - 11, 2024
Attendees**

SWGDM Chair
Anthony Onorato

SWGDM Vice Chair
Russell Vossbrink

SWGDM Executive Secretary
Dawn Herkenham

SWGDM Attendees

Chris Askew
Jack Ballantyne
Suzanne Barritt-Ross
Tiffany Bazazzadegan
Todd Bille
Thomas Callaghan
Jocelyn Carlson
Amber Carr
Dorothy Catella
Michael Coble
Jerrilyn Conway
James Corcoran
Jennifer Coursey
Daniela Cuenca
Brenda Danosky
Eric Duvall
Neil Fernandopulle
Connie Fisher
Julia Garofalo
Russell Gettig
Katherine Gettings
Ann Marie Gross
Lisa Grossweiler
Jessica Hanna
Douglas Hares
Brian Harmon
Bruce Heidebrecht
Joseph Hof

Deedra Hughes
Ted Hunt
Jodi Irwin
Jessica James
Tracey Johnson
Kristy Kadash
Marla Kaplan
Susannah Kehl
Ben Knoch
Jason Kokoszka
Brandon Letts
Eugene Lien
Jason Linder
Lauren Lu
Charla Marshall
Amy McGuckian
Scott McWilliams
Gary Molina
Shawn Montpetit
Lilly Moreno
Ashley Murray
Steven Myers
Vanessa Nelson
Mary Lou Nicholson
Heather Parrish
Walther Parson
Dixie Peters
Harrison Redd
Erica Romsos
Lisa Schiermeier-Wood
Alyssandra Shaffer
Philip Simmers
Rhalie Simmons
Christie Smith
Mark Smith
Melissa Suddeth
Joel Sutton
Tiffany Thoren
Andreas Tillmar
Peter Vallone
Tiffany Vasquez
Jeanette Wallin

Richard Wilson
Timothy Zolanz