

This is a reminder that the deadline to submit an abstract for the 2019 ASCLD Symposium is Friday November 2nd. Not only is it important to write the abstract well to be selected for the symposium, but this year the abstracts of the presentations selected will go in the proceedings publication in *FSI-Synergy*. We look forward to a very productive submission week so we can have another amazing symposium!

Last week I spent with our colleagues at the forensics lab in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico is a beautiful place! While I was not able to see much of the island due to the long hours working with the lab, the parts that I did see were amazing! The staff in the lab are really amazing and dedicated. After two hurricanes and a turnover in senior leadership, the laboratory and medical examiner office in Puerto Rico could use our help. This is the second time I have been to Puerto Rico in the last few months to help senior leadership there to prioritize and accomplish recovery projects. ASCLD is partnering with the National Association of Attorney's General (NAAG) on this project. I was able to meet with senior leadership of the new Puerto Rico Department of Public Safety including Director Hector Pesquera. Director Pesquera expressed his thanks to ASCLD for all the work we are doing to help Puerto Rico. I was also able to spend four extended hour days at the laboratory where we met with every discipline to determine their needs and how ASCLD might help. We met with facilities maintenance, human resources, financial, grant management, information technology, quality management, and every scientific discipline. We were able to work with them to prioritize the greatest needs, and start to move some projects forward. For the next few months, we will be working with them on priority projects. In January 2019, we will return with technical experts and also present the ASCLD leadership academy for all their management/leadership staff. We have made contact with a number of technical experts, but we are still looking for immediate help in some various areas. Please contact me if you have the ability to help in any of the following areas. At this point there are no funds to help with these activities:

- Remote technical review in DNA, trace analysis disciplines.
- Remote or onsite casework in DNA, DNA database, firearms, certain trace disciplines.
- Remote training of new examiners in trace analysis.
- On-site validation of an SEM.

If you are not able to help in these areas, there will be other things identified over the next few years we are helping in Puerto Rico.

Director Pesquera has also requested the help of ASCLD in finding a new Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner that oversee the laboratory and medical examiner office. At this point we are hoping to identify individuals interested in either an interim or permanent position. Interested individuals should contact me directly at matthew.gamette@isp.idaho.gov. After discussion with the Puerto Rico government, it has been determined that these positions do not require a PhD or MS degree. The position does not necessarily require Spanish language proficiency, but that is certainly a plus for the positions.

Matthew Gamette - ASCLD President





