



January 8, 2016

Office of Science and Technology Policy, Executive Office of the President
Eisenhower Executive Office Building
1650 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20504

RE: President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology

Dear Diana Pankevich, Ph.D.

On behalf of the forensic science educators represented by the Council of Forensic Science Educators (COFSE), we wish to express our appreciation for the work of the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP).

We understand that the President's Council of Advisors on Science and Technology (PCAST) working group on forensic science is interested in making recommendations to the President before the end of calendar year 2016. The COFSE believes strongly in an increased federal research agenda to advance forensic science in the United States. We are also aware that PCAST may be highly influential in obtaining the funding necessary to further that agenda. We believe that some of the increased funding for forensic science research should go to university forensic science education programs. These education programs are responsible for preparing the next generation of forensic laboratory examiners. These programs should also have a strong role in forensic science research. Forensic science faculty members are uniquely situated to understand the research needs of the forensic science community. In contrast to forensic science research conducted within forensic science laboratories, forensic science research carried on within forensic science degree programs is more likely to be viewed as disinterested and unbiased. However, at the present time these forensic science degree programs are handicapped by a lack of both resources and faculty. It is virtually impossible for forensic science degree programs to acquire advanced analytical instrumentation on forensic science research grants. It is very difficult under present conditions to pursue a university research career in forensic science. Consequently, at research universities forensic science faculty are regarded as second class citizens with only limited access to university resources. If opportunities for forensic science students to participate in cutting edge forensic science research are not available, they will not be exposed to research and to a research culture. While universities are the primary recipients of federal funds for technology transfer, little of this funding has gone to support forensic science. Given the crucial role that forensic science plays in the criminal justice system, in counterterrorism and in intelligence gathering and analysis, this omission has national security implications.

Walter F. Rowe, PhD
President
Council of Forensic Science Educators