



COUNCIL OF FORENSIC SCIENCE EDUCATORS

Improving Practitioner Relations

David D. Cunningham, Ph.D.
Eastern Kentucky University
David.Cunningham@eku.edu

Pamela J. Staton, Ph.D.
Marshall University
staton1@marshall.edu

Student-Practitioner Relations

- **Admissions: Avoiding Failed Background Checks**
- **Internship & Job Prep:**
 - **Professional Development Assistance (MU)**
 - **Student-Practitioner interface**
 - **Mock Interviews – practitioners serve as part of interview panels**
 - **MU Research Day - Practitioners serve as formal poster reviewers**

Practitioners as Adjunct Faculty @ ECU

Long-term Adjunct Faculty

- State Medical Examiner's Office (retired)/Drugs and Toxicology
- State Forensic Lab (retired)/ Microscopy and Trace Analysis
- Department of Criminal Justice Training/ Professional Practice (night course)

Additional Adjunct Faculty

- Working Professionals
 - DNA course, 1 credit (6 weeks)
 - Firearms (firing range at State facility)

Practitioners as Guest Speakers

- Seminar speakers
 - K9 Unit
 - Medical Examiner
 - Do other practitioners attend?
 - Mandatory student lay and research seminar presentations
 - attended by area practitioners
 - recorded via Camtasia Studio® and sent to practitioners
 - Program Alumni



Hosting and Attending Meetings

- **Hosting Meetings**
 - **Appalachian Institute of Digital Evidence (AIDE)**
 - local, state, and federal DE, IT, and attorneys
- **Attending Conferences & Hosting Receptions**
 - **AAFS, IAI, SOFT, etc. & regional meetings**
 - **Student and Alumni Attendance & Volunteers**
 - **Workshops, Continuing Education, Enrichment**
 - **Posters & Session Presentations**

Short Courses & Training

- MJ Identification
- Meth Synthesis
- Digital Forensics - Graduate Certificate in Digital Forensics at Marshall
- Advanced DNA Training, Y-STR Training, Emerging DNA Training, Relationship/Paternity Training (including statistical analysis), Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Training at Marshall

Advisory Committees

- Practitioners on Academic Program Advisory Committees
- Academics on Crime Laboratory Advisory Committees
- Outcomes: collaborations, feedback, guidance, trends, support

Academic-Practitioner Partnerships

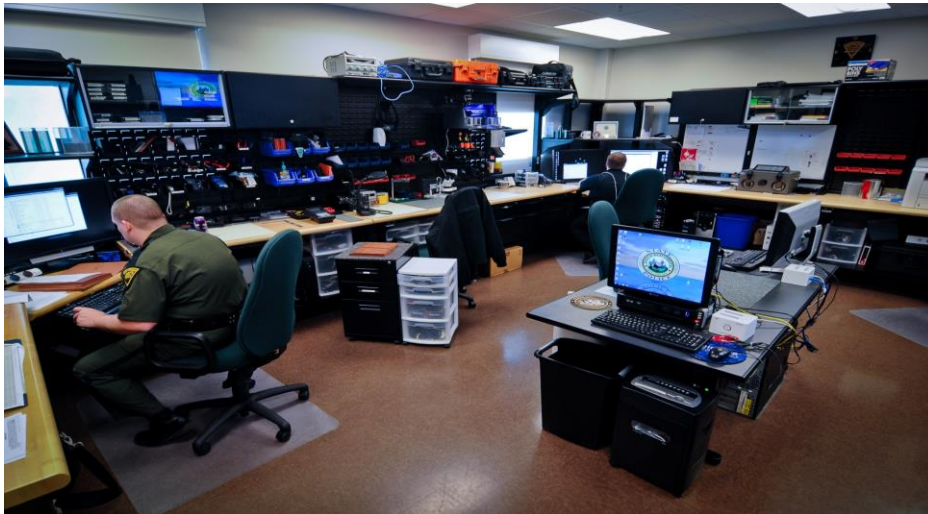
- Near proximity or on-site crime labs:

MUFSC's on-site ISO 17025 DNA Lab: WV CODIS Lab, casework, parentage & relationship, backlog reduction.

State Police Digital Forensics Unit that services 26 counties of WV.

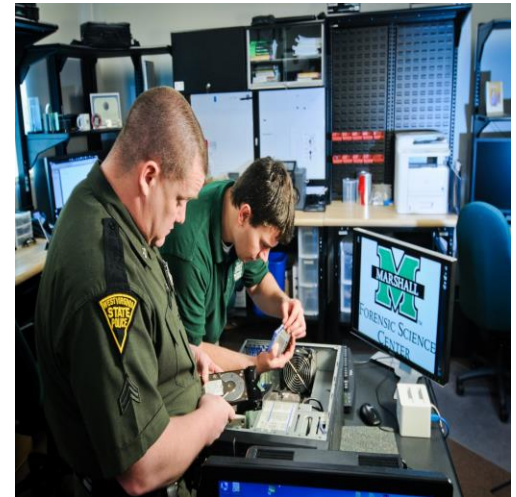
- GREAT opportunity for internships, jobs, student work experience prior to graduation, and practitioner relations.
- Does your crime lab need overflow space?

WVSP Digital Forensics Unit and WV CODIS Unit at Marshall University



University-Crime Lab Partnerships

- **Benefit to Crime Lab** – Labor & Funding
- **Benefit to University** – Publicity & Grants
- **Benefit to Students** - internships, jobs, references, work experience prior to graduation, improved practitioner relations



Networking

- Academic Program-Crime Lab networking
- Identifying common mission, goals, & needs
- Networking through professional organizations & membership
- Surveys, visits, tours, offerings, conferences & face-to face meetings with practitioners



TEAM BUILDING

Shared Internship Training @ Marshall

- Joint-venture Internships
 - Technical Assistance Program (TAP): MU-Crime Lab Hybrid - (Aug-May at MU; May – Aug in Crime Lab)
 - Single point of contact
 - Employer feed-back survey
 - Internship appreciation packet
 - <http://www.marshall.edu/forensics/uncategorized/mu-dna-tap-program-promoting-university-and-crime-lab-partnerships>



State Training

- State Training Facility
 - DOCJT Alcohol: Student visits / training
- Offering University Facilities for Training



Association Meetings

- Tennessee Valley Corridor
 - Forensics Initiative
- Workshops
 - Direct Analysis in Real Time (DART) Mass Spectrometry at Vendor's Site
- Roundtables
 - Face-to-face feedback on program graduates
 - Need for training for ABC exams!

Faculty-Practitioner Research

Joint research projects

- Coordinate vendor, state lab and university
 - Hand-held Raman Spectrometer
- Barriers?
 - Analyst needs a project to get promoted?
 - Access to samples?

University-Based Continuing Education for Practitioners

- Accreditation
- Advancement & Promotion
- Professional Enrichment
- Lack of Travel Funding
- Time Away to Attend

Internet Connections

- Cloud (Web Presence)
 - LinkedIn
 - Facebook
 - Alumni surveys every 2 years
 - iConnect (a mail subscription service)
 - 323 email addresses
 - 79 not active (bounced)
 - 65 responses = 27%
- Meetings and Constant Contact with Practitioners

Education & Training via the Web

- Association Activities via Web
 - Ames Lab (Midwest Forensics Resource Center)
 - Webinar / newsletter
- NIJ.gov/training

Publications

- Textbooks

Practical Forensic Microscopy

- Peer-Reviewed Publication

Journal of Forensic Science

Forensic Science Policy and Management

Journal of Forensic Identification

Publicity

- The heart of getting you and your professional partners (as well as legislators) recognized
- Know your Public Information Officer
- Know your Legislators and Crime Lab Administrators
- Invite anyone/everyone for tours
- Host non-forensic related meetings in your facilities

Improving Practitioner Relations

Here



Improving Practitioner Relations

There



And Everywhere!

