

# WORKSHOPS

*Pre-Registration Required by Jan. 30*

## **W4 Just Communications: Providing Clear and Accurate Reports and Testimony on Forensic DNA Results**

**Monday, February 13, 2023**

**8:00 AM – 5:00 PM**

**CE Hours: 7.75**

**Learning Overview:** DNA experts are asked in court to translate hours of chemistry and complex statistical analysis into yes or no answers. We learn to do this from previous experts who teach us the terms of art, metaphorical examples, and boundaries of permissible expert opinion. Like all human communication this is an evolving art that adjusts to changes in science, computation, law and culture. After attending this presentation, DNA analysts, lawyers, judges, and other criminal justice stakeholders will be better able to evaluate and communicate laboratory procedures and findings. They will be encouraged to adopt agile practices for clear and accurate testimony on the witness stand, and will be familiar with tips and tricks for guarding against common pitfalls. Participants will also learn from examples that have led to wrongful convictions, including bias in DNA mixture interpretation.

**Impact Statement:** This presentation impacts the scientific community by discussing the critical consequences that can result from false or misleading testimony that is anecdotal rather than based on empirical data and ways labs and individual analysts may mitigate some of these consequences through technical training, testimony oversight and quality management.

**Program Description:** It is essential that forensic scientists are able to clearly and accurately communicate their work, whether it is casework results or new research. This includes talking to other scientists, investigators, attorneys, judges or jury members, all of which present their own challenges. The presenters will discuss language choice and the impact of certain words and phrases in Forensic DNA reports and testimony and methods for resisting pressures from criminal justice stakeholders to stretch testimony beyond the limits of what science can support. Presenters will discuss best practice for communicating scientific results in reports and courtroom testimony to ensure results are being understood and not misunderstood. Topics that will be covered in the presentation are DNA transfer, persistence, prevalence and recovery; the hierarchy of propositions; evaluating findings given activity level propositions; and human factors and cognitive bias.

*Chair:*

**Tiffany A. Roy, JD, MS**  
ForensicAid  
West Palm Beach, FL

*Co-Chair:*

**Cynthia Cale, MS**  
CMC Forensic DNA Consulting, LLC  
New Caney, TX

*Presenters:*

**Greg Hampikian, PhD**  
Boise State University  
Boise, ID

**Julie Burrill, PhD**  
University of Dundee  
Stony Brook, NY

**Target Audience:** Criminalistics, Jurisprudence, Pathology/Biology

**Knowledge Level Required:** Basic

**Program:**

8:00 AM – 10:00 AM	<b>How to Practically Establish Multidisciplinary Audience-Based Communication</b> <i>Julie Burrill, PhD</i>
10:00 AM – 12:00 PM	<b>Human Factors in Forensic Testing and Reporting</b> <i>Tiffany Roy, JD, MS</i>
12:00 PM – 1:00 PM	<b>BREAK</b>
1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	<b>Case Assessment &amp; Interpretation: Review &amp; Application of DNA-TPPR Research</b> <i>Cynthia Cale, MS</i>
3:00 PM – 5:00 PM	<b>Case Examples From the Idaho Innocence Project and the Forensic Justice Project</b> <i>Greg Hampikian, PhD</i>