

Illinois Forensic Science Commission

Quality Systems Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2025, 2:00 p.m. meeting

I. Call to order

Subcommittee Chairperson Claire Dragovich, called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 p.m. The meeting was held via Web Ex.

II. Roll-call

The following people were present:

1. Claire Dragovich, FS Commission Member, Subcommittee Chairperson
2. Judge Art Hill (ret.), FS Commission Member, Subcommittee Member
3. Frances Kammueler, Subcommittee Member
4. Amy Watroba, Executive Director-Forensic Science Commission
5. Maya Dukmasova*
6. Robin Woolery

(*denotes individuals who joined meeting after roll-call)

III. Review of Minutes:

1. The approval of the minutes from the October 9, 2025, subcommittee meeting was postponed to the next meeting due to a lack of quorum.

IV. Discussion: Continued Discussion on Investigative Report Regarding the University of Illinois Chicago Analytical Forensic Testing Laboratory issued May 28, 2025.

Ms. Dragovich noted that the subcommittee is continuing its discussion of the Investigative Report issued by UIC related to AFTL. Ms. Watroba shared the UIC Report to facilitate review. The subcommittee continued its page-by-page review of the UIC Report to identify issues and questions beginning at the middle of page 30 with subsection I.

Allegations that AFTL ceased human testing on human biological samples due to the laboratory's purported shortcomings are unfounded. (pages 30-31):

- Subsection I. on page 30 of the UIC Report explains that AFTL is located within the College of Pharmacy and states that the decision to terminate the human testing side of AFTL was made for 2 primary reasons: 1) it no longer supported educational curriculum offered by the College; and 2) the human testing side of AFTL was not financially viable. The Report names the individuals who made

the joint decision to cease human testing and states that the decision-making process began in 2022, “well before any allegations against AFTL were made known to the decision-makers.” (Report at 30) It was noted that the Report does not include the source(s) of the allegations. On page 1 of the Report it indicates that the University became aware of questions raised regarding AFTL’s testing methodologies via court pleadings in May or June of 2024. The reference is only to the allegation that AFTL’s methodologies were flawed because they failed to distinguish between the Delta-8 THC and Delta-9 THC isomers. The Report also references issues with testimony, but the Report is unclear about what specific and separate allegations were made related to AFTL. (Report at 1) The Report states that the allegations were presented to University counsel and that the law firm was hired in November of 2024. (Report at 1-2)

- Paragraph 3 states that the human testing side of the lab had sustained revenue shortfalls for years. (Report at 30) The Report further states that the College supported the human testing side of the lab because “that side of the lab provided some educational value for students enrolled in the University’s Forensics Masters and PhD programs.” (Report at 30) The subcommittee noted that the Report does not specify what specific connections existed between the lab and university students, such as access to the lab or internships. It is unclear what the educational value of a working lab would be to students. The Report also does not discuss the fact that the human testing side of the lab was fee-for-service, nor does it outline any other sources of revenue such as grants. The Report provides no objective evidence or specifics for the reader to understand what the disconnect was between the incoming revenue and the cost of testing on the human side of the lab or how significant the revenue shortfall was. It is unclear if the lab ever was financially stable on the human testing side.
- Paragraph 3 on pages 30-31 of the Report continues by explaining that the University suspended its Master of Science Program in December of 2022 and over the course of 2022 and 2023 implemented additional cost-cutting measures to ease the financial burden AFTL placed on College resources. The Report provides the example of relocating the lab in-house in April of 2023 as one such cost-cutting measure. Subcommittee members discussed the fact that relocating a lab is a huge endeavor and discussed some logistics involved in such a move. For example, when instruments are relocated, they must be subjected to instrument checks to ensure everything is working correctly. Vendors may assist with this process depending on the instruments. Quality control checks also need to be in place. DD Woolery explained ISP’s recent process of relocating instruments from Joliet to Chicago and then back to Joliet following the remodeling of the Joliet lab. She stated that before the Joliet lab could re-open it had to be re-accredited. Ms. Dragovich noted that accreditation scope is for a particular address and that relocation would require notification

to an accrediting body. It was noted that the actual date of the AFTL relocation is unclear from the Report.

- The Report states that discussions regarding a reduction of staff on the human side of the lab were held in June of 2023. The Report further states that the determination not to renew human testing contracts and not to reappoint human testing staff was made in October of 2023. The Report also states that a named lab employee resigned effective February 1, 2024, after notification that human testing would cease at AFTL. (Report at 31)
- The final paragraph of the section concludes that allegations that AFTL closed human testing due to issues related to flawed methodologies are unfounded. The Report states that the decision to discontinue human testing at AFTL, effective February 5, 2024, was the culmination of a process, which began in 2022, that weighed the financial burden of AFTL's human testing along with the decision to suspend the forensic science programs at the College. (Report at 31)
- The subcommittee discussed ambiguities related to the timeline of when human testing ceased, the March 2024 CAPA, and AFTL's accreditation cycle. It was noted that it costs money to have an assessment team come to a laboratory for an on-site assessment. It also is unclear if the equine and human sides of the lab were on the same accreditation cycle. The subcommittee also noted that it is unclear whether the staff named in the Report also did testing on the equine side of the lab.

VII. Conclusion. (pages 31-32):

- The subcommittee discussed the fact that the Report was written by attorneys hired by the UIC for a particular mission and that the Report should not be viewed as providing an objective summary of what occurred at AFTL. As an example, the subcommittee noted that the Report seems to absolve AFTL of any consequences resulting from the admitted failure to distinguish between the Delta-8 and Delta-9 THC isomers by focusing on the commercial availability of Delta-8 products. From a scientific standpoint, the commercial availability of Delta-8 products is irrelevant. The subcommittee further noted that the wordsmithing of the "Conclusion" section of the Report fails to address the real-life implications of the testing deficiencies at AFTL. When evidence is presented in court, the fact that what was reported in an AFTL report as an amount of Delta-9 might actually include Delta-8 and that fact that it was not disclosed might have a real impact on a prosecutor's ability to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.
- The subcommittee noted that the Report concludes that AFTL should have modified its methodologies to allow for the complete separation of Delta-8 and Delta-9 "once AFTL became aware or should have been aware that consumable

hemp-derived Delta-8 products became available on the commercial market." (Report 31) The Report however then states that AFTL's methodologies generated significant data that when reviewed on a case-by-case basis may account for or eliminate any potential interference of Delta-8 in the quantitation of Delta-9 and confirm a "scientifically reliable result." (Report at 31-32) This statement is contradictory to the results of the 2024 CAPA. The Conclusion section does not refer to or remind the reader of the corrective actions taken by ISP in 2021 or the fact that AFTL should have recognized that there was a problem when ISP acted in 2021. It also was noted that when AFTL finally issued a letter in 2024 after opening a CAPA, AFTL only sent a notification letter. AFTL did not retest samples or issue amended or supplementary reports to indicate that reported results were not accurately reported. More work should have been done by AFTL to make clear that the original reports might not be accurate because of how those reports are used in the criminal justice system. The subcommittee observed that the Report reads as if it was written to avoid taking ownership for AFTL's actions and inactions.

- The final paragraph of the Report finds that AFTL leadership missed the significance of the Delta-8/Delta-9 issue despite legitimate concerns being raised and discussions occurring regarding the issue between 2021 and 2023. The subcommittee noted that the Report is vague as to who it considers "AFTL leadership." This could mean the lab director, the lab director and the quality manager, or those parties and senior technical staff. AFTL was a small lab with very few employees. Also, it is unclear how AFTL leadership could have "missed" the significance of the issue given ISP's very detailed letter outlining the steps ISP took as part of its 2021 corrective action.
- The Report concludes "However, the Investigative Team found no evidence that AFTL knew its methodologies and/or test results were flawed and suppressed that knowledge from law enforcement or prosecuting authorities, nor did it find any evidence of an intentional or deliberate attempt to mislead or report flawed test results." (Report at 32) The subcommittee discussed the fact the law firm writing the Report is not positioned to make this statement because they do not have all the information necessary to draw such a conclusion. The Report clearly states earlier that they did not have enough information to conduct a complete investigation. The Report also does not identify what information was reviewed. It was noted that there are email exchanges between AFTL leadership discussed in the Report indicating that they were aware of the separation issue. The subcommittee posited that the Conclusion section of the Report was written with an eye toward readers who might only read the Conclusion and not review the entire Report. The Report itself contradicts the Conclusion.

- The subcommittee discussed the concept of what AFTL “knew” as used in the Report and how it could mean that AFTL staff did not understand or were not educated enough to recognize the problem. The subcommittee was troubled by the suggestion in the Report that it is possible mistakes were made but that it was fine because AFTL staff did not “know” they were making mistakes. The subcommittee further noted that the Conclusion section only discusses the Delta-8/Delta-9 separation issue and fails to mention anything about either the issues related to urine testing or the issues related to inaccurate/misleading testimony.
- After concluding its review of the Report, the subcommittee discussed ideas for a responsive statement. The subcommittee discussed the value of issuing a digestible responsive statement as opposed to a line-by-line dissection of the Report. A document summarizing the concerns that the Report evaluated, the Report’s conclusions about those concerns, and the Commission’s thoughts or observations about those conclusions was discussed. The subcommittee discussed identifying three or four main topics to address in addition to noting the internal inconsistency of the Report. The subcommittee will work on a summary response to then share with the Commission and, if appropriate, that response could be posted on the Commission’s website. The subcommittee discussed a possible timeline. The subcommittee also discussed the previous statements issued by the Commission related to the DUI statute and the testing of urine for Delta-9 THC and issues related to reporting results and trial testimony from AFTL based on urine testing. The subcommittee discussed general topic points that they may want to include in the responsive statement. The subcommittee discussed doing a gap analysis and making prospective recommendations in a subsequent document.

V. Old Business

The subcommittee will be working on the 2025 Significant Non-Conformity Report after the first of the year. Ms. Dragovich and Ms. Watroba will send out the solicitation letters before the next subcommittee meeting.

VI. New Business

None.

VII. Public Comment

Maya Dukmasova offered public comment related to the media’s difficulty in obtaining lab reports from AFTL pursuant to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). Ms. Dukmasova stated that the lab reports are necessary to quantify how many cases were impacted by the testing issues, what kind of testing was done, what types of results were obtained, etc. Ms. Dukmasova commented that the University has fought FOIA requests and that her media outlet had to file a lawsuit. A settlement was reached through which approximately 500 redacted reports were obtained, but the University is now fighting a subsequent FOIA

request for more reports. Ms. Dukmasova voiced concern about the fact that a lawsuit appears to be the only way for the media to get the reports, establish basic data points, and determine the full scope of the problem at AFTL. Ms. Watroba inquired about the University's response to the FOIA requests and Ms. Dukmasova responded that the University denied the requests for multiple reasons and that the same lawyers who wrote the Report are involved in the FOIA litigation.

VIII. Next Meeting/Adjournment

The next meeting will be scheduled via Doodle Poll. Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:19 p.m.