



## **BYLAWS**

### **1 Article 1: Name**

The name of the organization shall be the Scientific Working Group on Friction Ridge Analysis, Study, and Technology, and shall herein be referred to as SWGFAST.

### **2 Article 2: Objectives**

- 2.1** To establish guidelines and standards for the development and enhancement of friction ridge examiners' knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- 2.2** To discuss and share friction ridge examination methods and protocols.
- 2.3** To encourage and evaluate research and innovative technology related to friction ridge examination.
- 2.4** To establish and disseminate guidelines and standards for quality assurance and quality control.
- 2.5** To cooperate with other national and international organizations in developing standards.
- 2.6** To disseminate SWGFAST studies, guidelines, standards, and findings.

### **3 Article 3: Membership**

- 3.1** SWGFAST shall consist of up to 40 members involved in the discipline of friction ridge examination. Members shall be from local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies as well as the forensic community. Membership selection is based on individual qualification, not by agency affiliation, except as noted in 3.2, 3.3, and in 6.1.3. Additional members may be added as necessary to create standing committees.
- 3.2** One member shall be appointed by the Federal Bureau of Investigation Laboratory Division.
- 3.3** The American Society for Crime Laboratory Directors (ASCLD) and the International Association for Identification (IAI) shall be allowed to designate a representative as an ex-officio member at meetings. The persons so designated shall become representatives of their organization and be permitted to attend meetings only after their representative status has been approved by the

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SWGFAST Executive Committee. SWGFAST members may nominate the designated representative for SWGFAST membership.

**3.4** Membership terms shall be five years in duration, except as otherwise provided in 4.7.

**3.4.1** A member may be reelected.

**3.4.2** A member's term shall begin with the first meeting after his or her election.

**3.4.3** Following a member's last meeting of his or her current term and prior to the next meeting, the Executive Secretary shall contact the member to determine his or her interest in continuing membership. If interested in continuing, the member shall submit a written statement to the Executive Secretary, including his or her interest, past participation, future contribution, and agency support. The Executive Secretary shall provide the members the statement and the opportunity to vote.

**3.4.4** Membership renewal shall require the approval of a majority of the membership.

**3.4.5** The Executive Secretary shall collect, count, and document the votes. The ballots shall be preserved by the Executive Secretary until the next meeting.

**3.4.6** When the Executive Secretary's membership is up for renewal, the Chair shall manage the voting for that member.

**3.5** The membership roster will be reviewed at least annually. As vacancies occur, members shall determine the need to elect new members.

**3.6** Persons desiring membership may submit their name and pertinent background to any member. Candidates may also be nominated by a member.

**3.7** A candidate for new membership requires the approval of a majority of the membership. The vote shall be taken at a regular meeting.

**3.7.1** The members present will determine the number of vacant positions that may be filled.

**3.7.2** When electing multiple members, each member may vote for the number of candidates equal to, or less than, the number of positions to be filled.

**3.7.3** If the initial or subsequent vote fails to produce a majority approval of sufficient candidates to fill one or more of the desired number of positions, the election may be terminated at the discretion of the members present or the process will be repeated with a reduced list of candidates. The members present will be informed of the vote spread, candidate names omitted, to decide by how many candidates the list will be reduced.

**3.8** A member's intent to resign should be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary who shall advise the Officers.

**3.9** Membership Termination

**3.9.1** Any member may submit a written complaint to the Executive Committee to terminate the membership of another member. The complaint shall contain allegations that support termination.

**3.9.2** The Executive Committee shall review the complaint and determine the action needed. Action shall be to dismiss the complaint or to conduct an inquiry.

**3.9.2.1** If the complaint is dismissed, the matter is resolved.

**3.9.2.2** If further inquiry is warranted, the Executive Committee will:

**3.9.2.2.1** Provide the accused member an opportunity to respond in writing or to resign within 30 days;

**3.9.2.2.2** Consider all pertinent information;

**3.9.2.2.3** Vote on the matter.

**3.9.3** Executive Committee and membership voting

**3.9.3.1** If the Executive Committee reaches a majority vote to dismiss the complaint, the matter is resolved.

**3.9.3.2** If the Executive Committee reaches a unanimous vote to terminate the membership, there is no right of appeal.

**3.9.3.3** If the Executive Committee reaches a majority vote to terminate the membership, the accused member may resign or refer the matter to the membership.

**3.9.3.3.1** If the matter is referred, the membership shall be provided the complaint and the response.

**3.9.3.3.2** Final determination of the complaint will be conducted by voting in accordance with membership renewal procedures.

**3.10** The Executive Secretary will notify the Chair in writing if a member has missed two consecutive meetings. The Chair will periodically review multiple absences and pursue appropriate action.

#### **4 Article 4: Officers and Executive Committee**

**4.1** The Officers shall consist of the Chair and the Vice-Chair.

**4.1.1** An announcement to hold an election for an officer shall be distributed to the members by the Executive Secretary.

**4.1.2** Nominations shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary.

**4.1.3** They shall be elected from the members for a term of three years by voting in accordance with membership renewal procedures.

**4.1.4** They may be reelected.

**4.1.5** The terms of the officers shall commence at the conclusion of the meeting in which they are elected. When a member's elected term ends between two meetings, the member continues in office until the conclusion of the next meeting.

**4.1.6** Removal from office requires the approval of two-thirds of the membership.

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**4.1.7** The functions and duties of the Chair and Vice-Chair shall be those customary to their respective offices.

**4.2** The Executive Secretary shall be appointed by and serve at the discretion of the Chair. The functions and the duties of the Executive Secretary shall be those customary to the office.

**4.3** The Executive Committee shall include the two Officers, the Executive Secretary and two member representatives.

**4.3.1** Member representatives shall be elected by a majority of the members present at a regular meeting for a term of three years and can not be reelected for a consecutive term.

**4.3.2** Their terms shall be staggered.

**4.3.3** The terms of the member representatives shall commence at the conclusion of the meeting in which they are elected. When a member's elected term ends between two meetings, the member continues in office until the conclusion of the next meeting.

**4.4** An Executive Committee member's resignation shall be submitted to the remaining Executive Committee members.

**4.5** Removal from Office of a member of the Executive Committee, excluding the Executive Secretary, requires the approval of two-thirds of the membership. The vote shall be taken at a regular meeting.

**4.6** If an Officer resigns or is removed from office, the Chair shall designate a temporary replacement until an Officer is elected.

**4.7** When a member is elected as an officer or member representative for a fixed term which extends beyond the remaining length of the member's SWGFAST membership term, the elected person's membership term shall continue until the end of the elected position.

## **5 Article 5: Meetings**

**5.1** There shall be a minimum of one regular meeting per year.

**5.2** Special meetings may be called by the Chair or by a majority of the Executive Committee.

**5.3** Attendance of a majority of the membership shall constitute a quorum for voting at a regular meeting.

**5.3.1** Each member shall have one vote and the use of proxies is prohibited.

**5.3.2** A majority vote of the members present is required unless otherwise noted.

**5.4** Guests may be invited to attend a meeting. Invitations will be extended by the Chair, Vice-Chair, or their designee.

## **6 Article 6: Committees**

**6.1** There shall be Ad Hoc as well as Standing Committees within SWGFAST.

**6.1.1** The Chair may establish Ad Hoc Committees as needed and define their assignments.

- 6.1.1.1** Ad Hoc committee members will elect the committee Chair.
- 6.1.1.2** The Ad Hoc committee Chair may appoint a committee Vice-Chair.
- 6.1.1.3** Ad Hoc Committee documents require approval by a majority of the committee members present.
- 6.1.1.4** Ad Hoc Committee documents shall be submitted to the members for modification or approval.
- 6.1.2** When a special need requires their formation, standing committees may be established by the members in the same manner as is required for a change in the bylaws.
  - 6.1.2.1** The standing committee shall elect the chair and vice chair. The presiding chair shall manage all standing committee activities, including but not limited to preparing agendas, presiding at committee meetings, acting as spokesperson for the committee, and forwarding appropriate draft documents and other work products to the SWGFAST Chair and SWGFAST membership.
  - 6.1.2.2** The SWGFAST Bylaws shall apply to all standing committee actions, including document approval, modification and revisions, except where otherwise provided herein.
  - 6.1.2.3** The initial members shall be elected by the SWGFAST members. Subsequent members shall be elected by the standing committee according to the method for election of SWGFAST members.
  - 6.1.2.4** One or more SWGFAST non-standing committee members may be appointed by the SWGFAST chair as ex officio participants.
  - 6.1.2.5** If the standing committee is dissolved, the membership of those elected for the sole purpose of serving on the standing committee is also dissolved.
  - 6.1.2.6** Standing committee members shall vote on matters originating from the committee when presented for approval by the full SWGFAST membership.
  - 6.1.2.7** At the discretion of the SWGFAST Chair standing committee members may be present during discussions and vote on other matters.
- 6.1.3** A standing tenprint committee is established, consisting of up to ten members whose terms shall be two years in duration, except as otherwise provided in 4.7 Membership renewal shall be in compliance with 3.4.1 through 3.4.4 and 6.1.2.3.

For the purposes of this standing committee, the majority of these members shall have primary responsibilities in performing tenprint examinations and have experience in tenprint operations. One member shall be appointed by the FBI CJIS Division.

## **7 Article 7: Documents, Approval, and Modification**

- 7.1** There are four categories of documents that are to be generated as the work products of SWGFAST.

- 7.1.1** Drafts of proposed new standards or guidelines which are circulated and published for comment by the community shall be referred to as "Drafts for Comment."
- 7.1.1.1** Each Draft for Comment shall also carry a title that is descriptive of its content and the designation whether it is being considered as either a standard, or a guideline.
- 7.1.2** A Draft for Comment that has been circulated and published shall, at the expiration of the period allowed for comment, be presented to the members for vote. If approved by SWGFAST, the Draft for Comment shall thereafter become an "Approved Document," carrying the appropriate title by which it was circulated as an earlier draft for comment and the date of its approval.
- 7.1.3** After a substantive modification of a document which has been reopened for discussion, the document shall thereafter be considered a "Revised Document for Comment".
- 7.1.4** When five years have elapsed from the date of adoption or modification of a document, members shall reconsider whether changes are required. During the reconsideration process, the document shall be referred to by its original title as a "Document for Five-Year Review - Draft for Comment."
- 7.2** A document shall become a Draft for Comment when it receives a two-thirds affirmative vote of the members present at the regular meeting.
- 7.2.1** A Draft for Comment shall be published for comment on the SWGFAST website and an announcement of its website publication shall be circulated to selected forensic organizations with a request to publish the announcement in the organizations' publications.
- 7.2.1.1** After publication of a Draft for Comment, comments received by the Executive Secretary or the Chair from the community shall be circulated to the members and reviewed at the next meeting. Further document revisions may be made if deemed appropriate, and thereafter submitted to a vote of the members.
- 7.2.1.2** If revisions are made to a circulated draft, the Chair shall decide whether only specific changes, or the entire document, may again be published as a Draft for Comment.
- 7.3** A Draft for Comment that, after the expiration of its comment period, receives an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the membership shall become an Approved Document.
- 7.3.1** An Approved Document can be reopened for review at any time by a majority vote of the members present at a regular meeting.
- 7.3.2** Modification of an Approved Document requires the approval of two-thirds of the membership.
- 7.3.3** If a document has been duly approved by two-thirds of the membership in accordance with Section 7.3 and the approved document contains a definition of a term or terms which SWGFAST members, in their vote on the approved document, decide ought to be included, amended or deleted in or from the Glossary document, such insertion, amendment or deletion shall be deemed a clerical act which requires neither the reopening nor the publication as a draft for comment of the Glossary document.

7.4 A Revised Document for Comment and a Document for Five-Year Review - Draft for Comment shall be treated in the same manner as a Draft for Comment.

7.5 When a document that does not fall within the above categories is to be published as a SWGFAST decision its content has to be approved by two-thirds of the membership.

## **8 Article 8: Amendments to Bylaws**

8.1 Members will be notified that a proposed amendment to the Bylaws will be presented for a vote at the next regular meeting.

8.2 Amendments to Bylaws shall be approved by two-thirds of the membership.

## **9 Article 9: Parliamentary Procedures**

9.1 Members shall follow good business practices during meetings.

9.2 Should a dispute occur, Robert's Rules of Order will be followed.

## **10 Article 10: Awards**

A member of the Scientific Working Group on Friction Ridge Analysis, Study, and Technology may be recognized with an award for outstanding efforts in promoting our science and SWGFAST. Suggestions for candidates shall be made in writing, complete with description of outstanding effort, and submitted to an Executive Board member. The Executive Committee shall evaluate the suggestions and determine whether the nomination should be presented to the members for a sustaining vote. This award, established in 2007, shall be known as: The Stephen B. Meagher Commitment to the Friction Ridge Science Award.