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IAI Liaison to the NIJ

Liason to the National Institute of Justice

First, I would like to thank Deborah Leben for sponsoring me as an IAI liaison to the National Institute of Justice. This affords an opportunity and a renewed effort for the highly esteemed and dedicated members of the International Association for Identification to keep apprised of the latest techniques and discoveries in forensic identification and crime detection and foster a knowledge base that is more accessible to your community. Dr. Greg Ridgeway, the acting director of NIJ, has emphasized the importance of networks and professional connections as ways to drive innovation, and I anticipate that this series of articles will further demonstrate his commitment to making NIJ a place where innovation flourishes.

And now for reintroductions: The National Institute of Justice is the research, development and evaluation agency of the United States Department of Justice. The three scientific offices that reside within NIJ are the Office of Research and Evaluation (ORE), the Office of Science and Technology (OST) and the Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences (OIFS). Each office is responsible for developing technical solicitations based on a set of scientific criteria or priorities that are identified by the specific communities they represent. To develop these priorities, program areas within NIJ assemble working groups consisting of scientists and practitioners who are actively involved in their field. The Forensic Science R&D Technology Working Group, for example, meets once a year to identify and document the research and operational needs of the forensic science community. These needs serve as the basis for NIJ's R&D funding decisions and are fundamental to addressing the near- and long-term capabilities of forensic practitioners. (**www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/priorities.htm**)

NIJ and IAI share similar objectives. The IAI Constitution outlines a mission centered on the advancement of the forensic identification sciences and crime detection through research, knowledge genesis, sharing, and supporting continuing education opportunities. NIJ's mission is to improve knowledge and understanding of crime and justice issues, particularly at the state and local levels, through science. The majority of NIJ's effort to support forensic science initiatives resides within the Office of Investigative and Forensic Sciences. The activities that OIFS supports include technology transition workshops, laboratory capacity enhancement, developing and updating investigative resources, training curriculum development and delivery, and forensic science research and development. (**www.nij.gov/topics/forensics/welcome.htm**)

There are two relevant NIJ solicitations that will be open at the time this article is published. The FY 2013 Social Science Research on Forensic Science will close May 15, 2013, and this solicitation seeks to stimulate research to examine the impact of advances in the forensic science disciplines on the criminal justice system, and changes and policies to adapt the greater use of forensic evidence. (**https://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/sl001038.pdf**) The FY 2013 NIJ Graduate Research Fellowship Program closes May 23, 2013, and this solicitation provides awards for research on criminal justice-related topics to accredited universities that support graduate study leading to research-based doctoral degrees. (**https://ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/nij/sl001030.pdf**)

In future articles I hope to give readers substantive examples and links to NIJ efforts that support our mutual goals. Thank you again for this opportunity to strengthen the network between our communities.

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