

MEMO

To: File

From: Dr. Staci Strobl

Date: December 8, 2014

RE: Summary of observation of Dr. Sabina Burton

The following paragraph will be used in any personnel-related documents which ask me to describe my impressions of Dr. Sabina Burton's teaching based on a December 4, 2015 observation of teaching.

I observed Sabina Burton's Introduction to Crime Scene Investigation course on Friday, December 4, 2015. I found Dr. Burton's class to be a dynamic and interesting one. She started the course out discussing the mass shootings in San Bernardino which had happened only two days before. She walked through some of the known facts and also asked students to contribute information they had gleaned from credible news sources. She helped the students make reasonable speculations about the perpetrators' motives, in particular helping students sort out the different crime types—that sometimes intersect-- that may be related or relevant to San Bernardino. She also appropriately offered question marks as to much of the speculation, inviting students to understand how much isn't known and can't be concluded even when details are available. Dr. Burton and the student discussed what they would want to find out if they were the forensic investigators on the case. She then went on to discuss the topic for the day, time of death determination. She very clearly used powerpoint slides to explain factors that determine the time of death including hypostasis, post-mortem lividity, algor mortis, rigor mortis, tardieu spots and marbling. There were pictures of many of the phenomenon. This is useful for future investigators to see because many of the relevant time-of-death factors can be observed by the naked eye at a crime scene. She offered scientific information as to what is being observed, such as capillary breaks causing tardieu spots, as well as explaining what the presence or absence of these factors could lead one to conclude and also, the limitations on any of those conclusions. Overall, Dr. Burton is a very interactive instructor who has good rapport with her students and presents an organized, visually instructive, and dynamic lesson for our Forensic Investigation students.