

Report from the 59th Seminar of the American Polygraph Association (APA), San Diego, August 2025

The 59th annual seminar of the American Polygraph Association (APA) was held in San Diego, California in August 2025. The event gathered several hundred of polygraph specialists from virtually all regions of the world, including experts from Poland.

Its agenda comprised numerous presentations, discussion panels, workshops, and case studies devoted both to professional practice and the latest scientific developments in the field of polygraph examinations. Subjects covered included the impact of legal changes concerning cannabis legalisation on pre-employment screening procedures, polygraph assessments in financial crime investigations, and methods for detecting deception attempts during screening and investigative testing.

In the scientific and methodological section, Kristine Smith delivered a detailed presentation on numerical (quantitative) interpretation of polygraph charts. Considerable attention was also drawn to contributions on the Modified Integrated Truth Technique (MITT) and the Concealed Information Test (CIT). Raymond Nelson's presentation, outlining contemporary, evidence-based approaches to analysing physiological signals deserves a special mention. In turn, Russ Warner focused on methodological and statistical aspects of polygraph research while discussing the importance of decision-making based on statistical data in organisations that employ polygraph testing.

One of the seminar's thematic strands addressed pre-employment testing, differences between public- and private-sector practices, as well as ethical and technical issues associated with testing minors. Many contributions took the form of case studies.

One of the key moments of the seminar was the announcement of the election of the new President of the American Polygraph Association, Pam Shaw, who has taken the helm of the organisation for the current term. Her appointment signals the continuation of APA's strategic direction centred on professionalisation, standardisation of procedures, and the integration of the international milieu.



Pam Shaw is a licensed polygraph examiner with extensive experience in law enforcement and in training polygraph professionals. She holds a bachelor's degree in Exercise Science and a master's degree in Allied Health Education from Eastern Kentucky University. For approximately fifteen years, she was affiliated with the Kentucky Law Enforcement Council, where she served as Testing Services Section Supervisor. At that time, she conducted numerous polygraph examinations for over 400 law-enforcement agencies in Kentucky and oversaw the state's polygraph quality-assurance programme. She also served as Director of the Kentucky Institute of Polygraph Studies. For many years, Pam Shaw has been active in the APA structures, serving in various roles in its Board for over fifteen years. She has also worked with local organisations, including the Kentucky Polygraph Association, where she has held both the presidency and vice-presidency. In the field of education and training, Pam Shaw has served as an adjunct professor at the Texas Department of Public Safety Polygraph School and as Principal Primary Instructor at the Singapore Ministry of Defence Centre for Credibility Assessment. She is also the founder and owner of Shaw Polygraph Services, Inc, and ProSource Alliance PTE LTD (Singapore), companies specialising in polygraph training and services. She is well known within the Polish polygraph community, for whom she has conducted professional training.

To wrap up, the 59th APA seminar constituted an important forum for the exchange of experiences among researchers, practitioners, and representatives of institutions

from various countries. The participation of Polish experts corroborated Poland's active engagement within the international polygraph community. The seminar demonstrated that the APA is stalwartly committed to regular training and the development of early-career practitioners. It may, however, be worth noting that future editions could place greater emphasis on scientific issues rather than focus predominantly on the practical aspects of examiner work. The advancement of polygraph methodology goes beyond honing professional practice as above all it hinges on rigorous scientific research. Without scientific work in psychology, psychophysiology, and even neurophysiology, no meaningful progress in detection-of-deception techniques can be achieved.

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