

78th Annual Scientific Conference

American Academy of Forensic Sciences

February 9-14, 2026

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center
New Orleans, Louisiana



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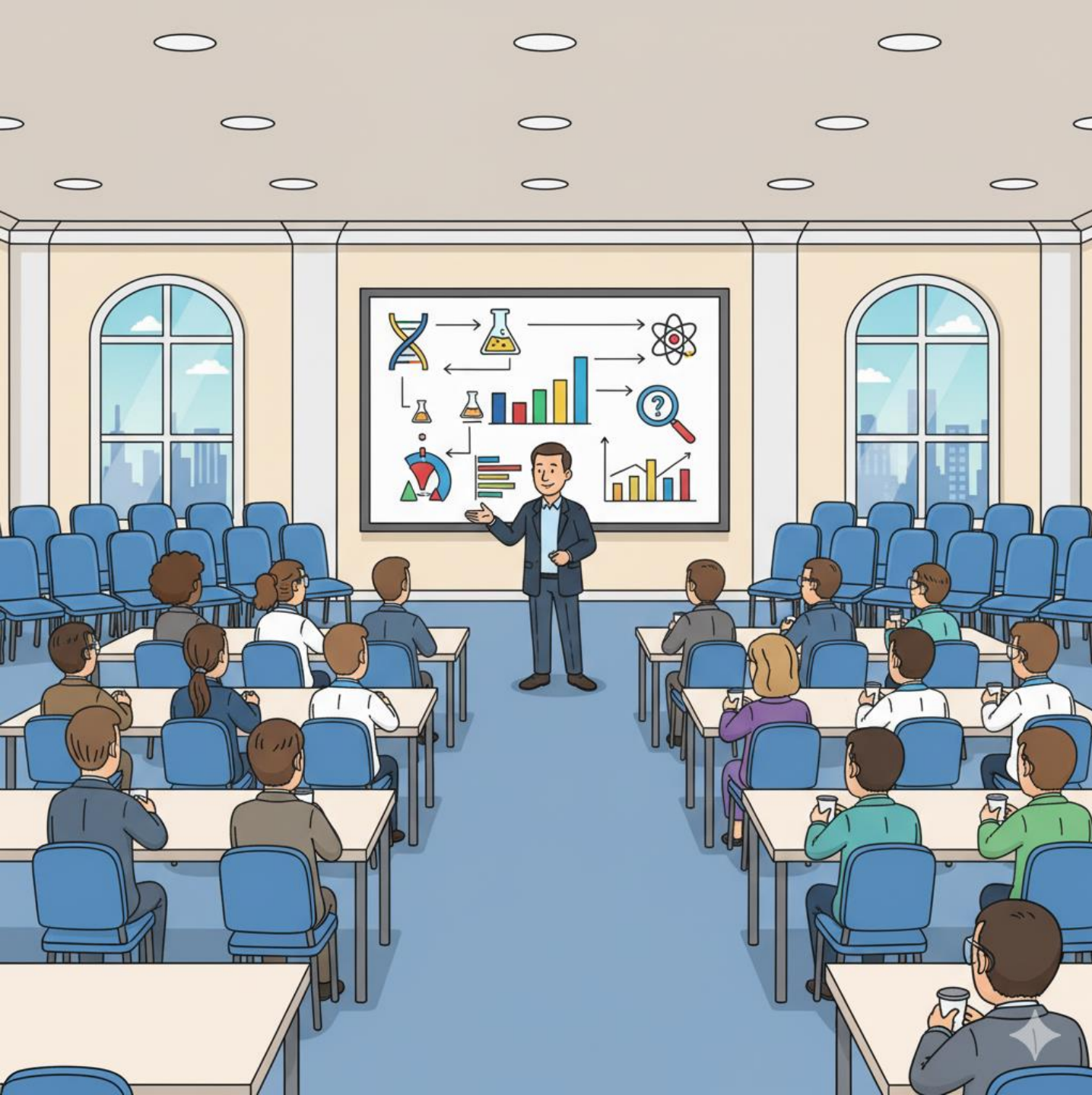
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About AAFS & the Conference

Conference At-A-Glance

What is AAFS?

About the Annual Scientific Conference

Meet the 2025-26 President

What is AAFS?

Leading The Forensic Sciences Since 1948



The American Academy of Forensic Sciences is a multidisciplinary professional organization providing leadership to advance science and its application to the legal system. As a globally recognized authority in forensic science, AAFS serves as the premier resource for forensic professionals worldwide.

Our Mission

- Promote professionalism, integrity, competency, and education
- Foster research and improve practice
- Encourage collaboration across forensic sciences

Our Impact

- Groundbreaking research contributions
- Expert testimony in high-profile cases
- Pioneered Digital Forensics and Forensic Nursing Science
- Critical guidance on scientific matters affecting justice

Founded

1948

Members

6,500+

Countries

70+



Conference At-A-Glance

3,500+

Expected Attendees

Forensic professionals from around the globe

50+

Countries Represented

International participation and collaboration

1,000+

Total Presentations

Cutting-edge research and methodologies

12

Forensic Disciplines

Comprehensive multidisciplinary content

Key Information

Dates: February 9-14, 2026

Location: Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, Louisiana

President: Joanna Collins, MFS

Time: All times are in the U.S. Central Time Zone

Conference Theme

"Back to Basics: The Fundamentals of Forensic Science"

Reinforcing ethical practice, scientific integrity, and practitioner well-being across all forensic disciplines



About the Annual Scientific Conference

The Premier Global Gathering

The AAFS Annual Scientific Conference is the world's largest and most comprehensive gathering of forensic science professionals. This prestigious event brings together experts from around the globe to advance the field through scientific excellence and collaborative innovation.

What Attendees Experience

- Cutting-edge research presentations and methodologies
- Collaborative idea exchange and networking opportunities
- Latest updates across all forensic disciplines
- Professional development and continuing education
- Access to innovative technology in The Forensic Exchange

1

Multidisciplinary Content

Comprehensive coverage spanning 12 forensic science sections with specialized tracks

2

Multiple Session Formats

Oral presentations, poster sessions, hands-on workshops, and interactive discussions

3

Global Networking

Connect with leading forensic experts, researchers, and practitioners worldwide

4

Innovation Showcase

Explore the latest forensic technology, tools, and services from industry leaders



Meet the 2025-26 AAFS President

Joanna Collins, MFS
AAFS Fellow, General Section
Forensic Consultant
LINUS Investigations & Consulting



Leading the Academy with Vision and Experience

Joanna Collins brings nearly 30 years of forensic science experience to her presidency as the 2025-26 AAFS President. Her distinguished career and unwavering commitment to scientific integrity shape her leadership vision for the Academy.

Presidential Focus Areas

- Ethical application of forensic science principles
- Practitioner well-being and professional support
- Standards development and rigorous implementation
- Maintaining objectivity and neutrality in forensic work

"The theme 'Back to Basics' reminds us that regardless of technological advances or evolving methodologies, the core principles of forensic science remain constant. Our allegiance as forensic scientists should be to the science itself and not a 'side' or the recipient of the information developed."

— Joanna Collins, MFS, 2025-26 AAFS President



Back to Basics

A detailed illustration of a conference hall. In the foreground, several groups of people are engaged in conversations. Some are holding coffee cups, while others are looking at their smartphones. The people are dressed in professional attire, including suits, blouses, and lab coats. In the background, there are rows of blue chairs and several large arched windows that look out onto a city skyline. A large sign at the top of the hall reads "Back to Basics". To the left and right, there are exhibition booths with various displays and equipment. The overall atmosphere is one of a busy, professional gathering.

Conference Theme & Content

2026 Conference Theme

12 Forensic Disciplines

Who Attends AAFS?

Scientific Content Overview

Schedule Overview

“Back to Basics: The Fundamentals of Forensic Science”

2026 Conference Theme

This year's theme addresses a critical need in the forensic community: reinforcing the foundational principles that ensure accuracy, reliability, and scientific integrity. With continued exonerations due to faulty science and misrepresentation, "Back to Basics" emphasizes the importance of thorough investigation, proper analysis, and ethical practice at every stage—from scene response through courtroom testimony.



The Science

Strengthening Core Principles

- Ethical application of each discipline
- Continued standards development and implementation
- Applying the scientific method to all analyses
- Remaining neutral, objective, and free from influence
- Staying true to the discipline and the science



The Practitioner

Supporting Forensic Professionals

- Recognizing forensic scientists as the foundation of the field
- Addressing vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue
- Promoting work-life balance and well-being
- Supporting professionals facing demanding workloads
- Building resilient forensic communities



Comprehensive Coverage Across All Sections

The 12 Forensic Disciplines

All conference content relates to the 12 AAFS membership sections, each representing specialized areas of forensic science expertise. These disciplines form the comprehensive foundation of forensic practice, investigation, and testimony in legal proceedings worldwide.



Anthropology

19.2% of members



Criminalistics

25.7% of members



Digital & Multimedia Sciences

3.3% of members



Engineering & Applied Sciences

1.6% of members



Forensic Nursing Science

1.3% of members



General

10.8% of members



Comprehensive Coverage Across All Sections (cont.)

The 12 Forensic Disciplines

All conference content relates to the 12 AAFS membership sections, each representing specialized areas of forensic science expertise. These disciplines form the comprehensive foundation of forensic practice, investigation, and testimony in legal proceedings worldwide.



Jurisprudence

5.0% of members



Odontology

7.2% of members



Pathology/Biology

14.3% of members



Psychiatry & Behavioral Science

1.8% of members



Questioned Documents

1.8% of members



Toxicology

10.0% of members



Who Attends AAFS?

A Global Community of Forensic Experts

AAFS attendees are a diverse and accomplished group of forensic professionals from around the world who **represent the full spectrum of forensic science practice, research, education, and administration.**

Government Agencies

FBI, DEA, ATF, state crime labs, medical examiner offices, and law enforcement agencies nationwide

Private Sector

Independent consultants, private laboratories, technology vendors, and expert witness specialists

Academic Institutions

University professors, researchers, and students from leading forensic science programs worldwide

International Delegates

Forensic professionals from over 50 countries, fostering global collaboration and knowledge exchange

Professional Roles Represented

(but not limited to)

- Crime scene investigators
- Laboratory scientists and analysts
- Medical examiners and coroners
- Law enforcement investigators
- Academic researchers, educators, and students
- Legal professionals and attorneys
- Forensic nurses and health care providers
- Digital forensics specialists
- Private consultants and expert witnesses
- Structural, mechanical, and civil forensic engineers



Scientific Content Overview

Comprehensive Program Formats **Included With Registration**

Oral Presentations

536 Sessions

Traditional scientific presentations delivered by leading researchers and practitioners sharing cutting-edge findings and methodologies

Case Breaks

8 Interactive Sessions

Real forensic cases examined collaboratively, bridging theory and practice through active problem-solving

Opening Plenary

Wednesday, February 11

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Extended keynote session examining how the fundamental principles of the conference theme, "Back to Basics," impact the broader forensic science field and future directions.

Poster Presentations

558 Displays

Visual research showcases with direct author interaction, perfect for in-depth discussions and networking

Deep Dives

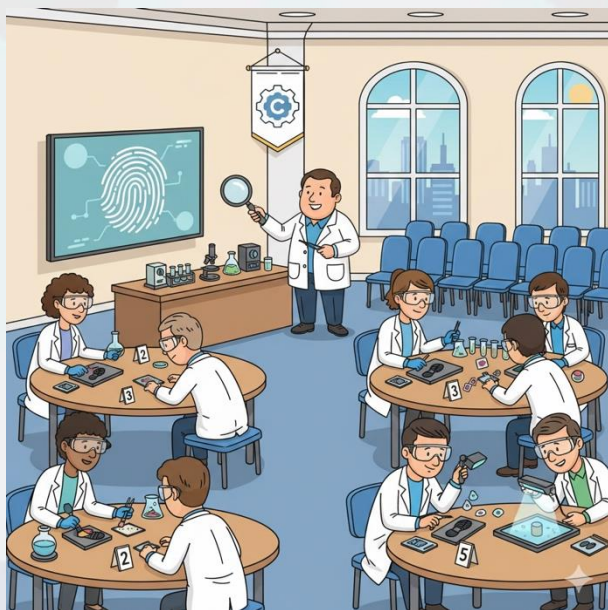
3 Intensive Sessions

Extended explorations of specialized forensic topics with expert-led comprehensive analysis



Scientific Content Overview (cont.)

Comprehensive Program Formats. **Pre-Registration Required**



Workshops

35 Sessions Available

Gain hands-on experience through immersive, practical learning sessions led by field experts. These in-depth workshops require separate registration and offer unmatched opportunities to develop specialized skills.

Half-Day Workshops: \$165

Full-Day Workshops: \$300

Topics span all forensic disciplines, from DNA analysis techniques to digital forensics and crime scene reconstruction methods.

Luncheons

6 Sessions

Combine education with networking during catered lunch sessions. Separate registration required. Connect with colleagues while exploring focused forensic topics.



Schedule Overview

Your Week at AAFS 2026

Sunday, February 8

Registration opens and off-site New Orleans tours commence in the evening. Book a spot when registering!

Monday, February 9

Workshop sessions begin and attendees who pre-registered will take off on an off-site crime lab tour. Take advantage of early networking opportunities with fellow attendees.

Tuesday, February 10

Final workshop sessions and crime lab tours conclude for pre-registered attendees. Two all-day special sessions take place that are **open to all attendees!**

Tuesday evening includes **multiple receptions and networking events** providing relaxed settings for colleagues to connect before the main program launches.

4

Wednesday, February 11 Conference Officially Begins

The opening Plenary Session kicks off scientific programming. The Forensic Exchange (exhibit hall) opens at 11:30 am, offering access to cutting-edge technology and industry leaders.

AAFS members will make their way to their section business meeting before attending the AAFS Annual Business Meeting in the main session ballroom. Evening events continue!

5

Thursday, February 12

Full day of scientific sessions with extended Forensic Exchange hours (9:00 am-2:00 pm).

Don't miss the **Forensics After-Hours Reception** in the exhibit hall (6:00 pm -8:00 pm) featuring networking, demonstrations, and Mardi Gras festivities. The evening also features special scientific presentations.

6

Friday, February 13

Scientific sessions continue with morning Forensic Exchange access (9:00 am-1:00 pm). The evening brings authentic Mardi Gras celebrations throughout New Orleans—experience the city's legendary parades and cultural traditions.





Experience & Venue

The Forensic Exchange
Beyond the Convention Center
New Orleans - A City Like No Other

The Forensic Exchange

Exhibit Hall



Exhibition Hours

Wednesday, February 11

11:30 am – 4:00 pm

Thursday, February 12

9:00 am – 2:00 pm

After-Hours Reception: 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Friday, February 13

9:00 am – 1:00 pm

New Name for 2026!

For the first time, the AAFS exhibit hall has a name: **The Forensic Exchange**. This new name more accurately describes the attendee experience.

What Awaits You

- Cutting-edge forensic technology and equipment demonstrations
- Leading manufacturers and service providers
- Industry organizations and professional associations
- Official AAFS booth with membership information
- Interactive game area for entertainment
- Comfortable attendee lounge for relaxation
- Food and beverage stations

For Exhibitors & Sponsors: Interested in showcasing your organization? Visit <http://www.aafs.org/annual-conference/exhibitor-sponsor-information> for complete details and opportunities.



Beyond the Program



AAFS Evening Events

- Guided tours of New Orleans attractions
- Section and committee receptions
- Cross-disciplinary networking events
- Mentoring sessions for students and early-career professionals

Mardi Gras Celebrations

- Authentic parades throughout the week
- Traditional festivals and street celebrations
- Unique cultural experiences
- **No closing party**—explore the city's legendary festivities instead!

AAFS Sales Store

Browse branded merchandise, conference memorabilia, and exclusive AAFS apparel. Perfect for gifts or personal keepsakes from your New Orleans experience.

Conference Bookstore

Discover the latest scientific texts, forensic reference materials, and professional development resources curated specifically for conference attendees.



New Orleans: A City Like No Other

"Experience the unmatched beauty of New Orleans—where history, music, food, and celebration come together like nowhere else in the United States."



Live Musical Heritage

From world-famous jazz clubs on Frenchmen Street to spontaneous brass bands in Jackson Square, music pulses through every corner of the city.



Culinary Capital

Savor world-renowned Creole and Cajun cuisine. From beignets at Café Du Monde to po'boys and jambalaya. Every meal is an adventure.



Historic Architecture

Wander through stunning French Quarter streets lined with colorful Creole townhouses, ornate wrought-iron balconies, and centuries-old landmarks.



Festival Spirit

The conference timing during Mardi Gras season offers a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to experience authentic celebrations, parades, and Southern hospitality.

Ernest N. Morial Convention Center

Our state-of-the-art venue sits in the heart of it all—walking distance to the French Quarter, steps from the Mississippi River, and surrounded by hotels, restaurants, and attractions. World-class facilities meet an unforgettable location.





Logistics & Planning

Registration Information
Hotel & Travel Information

Registration & Pricing Information



Included with Registration

- All scientific sessions (oral presentations, posters)
- Opening Plenary Session
- Special Sessions, Case Breaks, and Deep Dives
- Access to The Forensic Exchange
- AAFS Sales Store and Bookstore
- Academy-wide receptions and networking events



Add to Your Registration

- **Half-Day Workshops:** \$165
- **Full-Day Workshops:** \$300
- **Luncheons:** \$85
- **Workshop-Only Attendees:** Separate registration fee applies if not attending main conference
- Off-site tours

Ready to Register? Visit <http://www.aafs.org/annual-conference/registration-information> to complete your registration. Review the full schedule during registration to select your preferred workshops and luncheons. Hotel reservations are separate from conference registration.



Hotel & Travel Arrangements



Headquarters Hotel

Hilton New Orleans Riverside

Distance: Just 0.3 miles from Convention Center

Rate: \$247/night + tax (single or double)

Dates Available: February 5-14, 2026

Room Configuration: Two queen beds

Location Highlights: Walking distance to French Quarter, Harrah's Casino, National WWII Museum, and countless restaurants

Overflow Hotels

Cambria Hotel New Orleans Downtown Warehouse

Renaissance New Orleans Arts Warehouse District Hotel

Limited government rate rooms for qualified attendees



Hotel & Travel Arrangements (cont.)

Exclusive Airline Discounts



Delta Airlines

Meeting Code: NY456

Travel Dates: February 4-22

United Airlines

Offer Code: ZRJC835782

Travel Dates: February 6-17

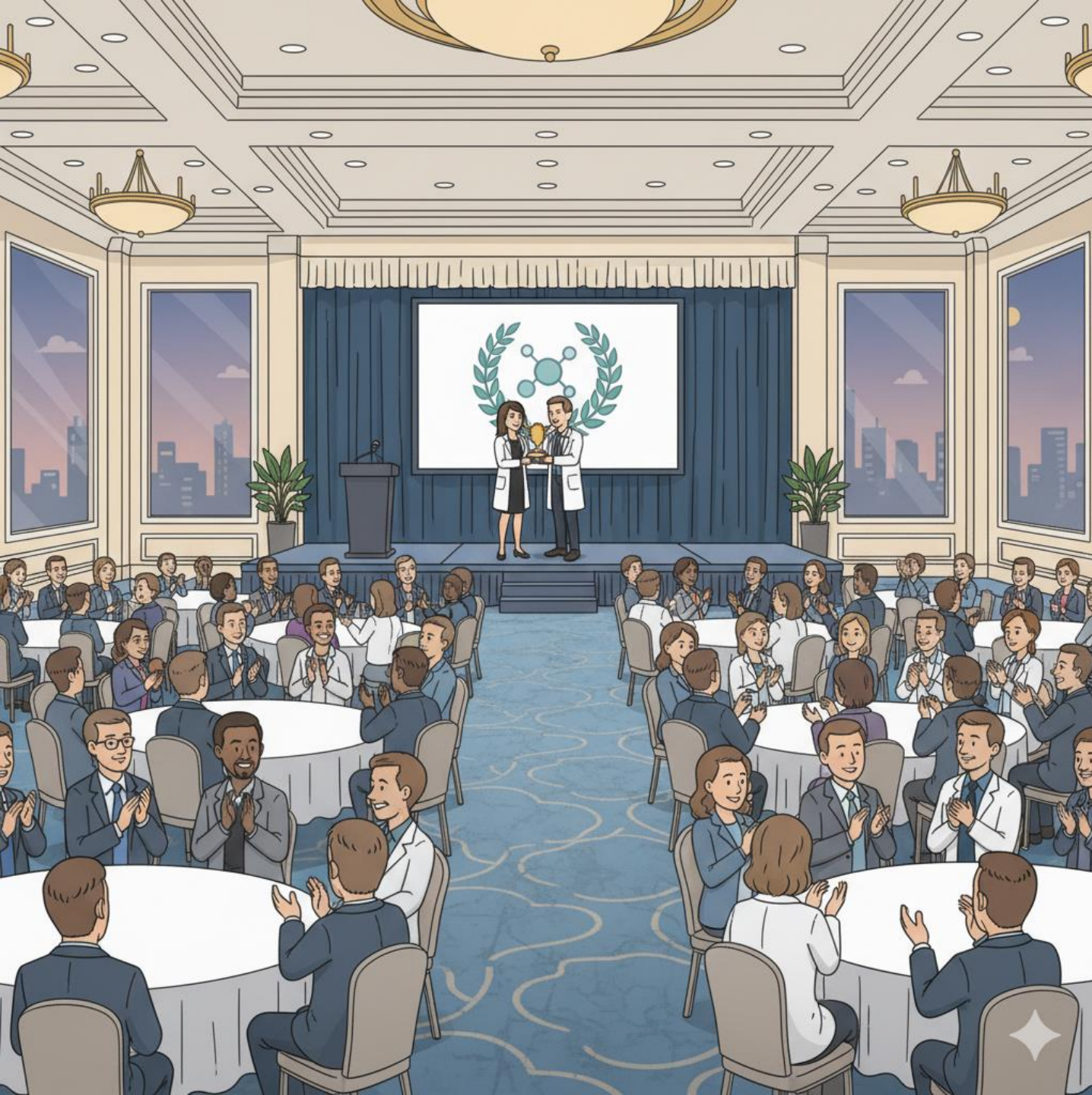
Southwest Airlines

Company ID: 99090843

Travel Dates: February 6-17

IMPORTANT BOOKING NOTICE: AAFS does not use third-party housing services. Book your accommodations only through official AAFS links to ensure legitimate reservations and rates. Complete travel details: www.aafs.org/attendees/travel-information





Media & Recognition

For Media & Press

AAFS Awards & Recognition

Coverage Opportunities at AAFS 2026

Complimentary Press Registration:

Members of the media with appropriate credentials may receive complimentary conference registration. Proof of press affiliation required.

Note: Press attending workshops must pay additional workshop fees.

Story Opportunities:

- Groundbreaking forensic research presentations
- Interviews with leading forensic scientists
- Access to experts across 12 disciplines
- Coverage of Plenary Session on fundamental principles
- Technology demonstrations in The Forensic Exchange
- International perspectives on forensic science
- Discussion of exonerations and forensic science improvements

Photo/Video Opportunities:

- Scientific sessions in action
- The Forensic Exchange exhibit hall
- Networking events
- New Orleans backdrop during Mardi Gras season

Media Resources: Full media kit available with graphics, logos, and additional materials



2026 Gradwohl Medallion Recipient

Honoring Excellence in Forensic Science

The AAFS recognizes outstanding contributions to the forensic science community through prestigious awards.



Michael A. Peat, PhD

About the Award:

The AAFS Gradwohl Medallion is the Academy's highest honor, recognizing distinguished service to the AAFS and the forensic science community, including:

- Lifetime achievement in forensic science
- Outstanding service to the Academy
- Significant research contributions
- Leadership and innovation in the field

Dr. Peat's recognition represents the pinnacle of achievement within the forensic science profession.



2026 Distinguished Fellow Award Recipient

Honoring Excellence in Forensic Science

The AAFS recognizes outstanding contributions to the forensic science community through prestigious awards.



Barry K. Logan, PhD

About the Award:

The AAFS Distinguished Fellow Award recognizes significant career contributions to forensic science, honoring professionals who have demonstrated:

- Exceptional achievements in their field
- Leadership within the forensic science community
- Dedication to advancing forensic methodologies
- Commitment to education and mentorship

Dr. Logan's recognition highlights the caliber of excellence celebrated at AAFS conferences.





Connect With Us

Connect With AAFS
Conference Contacts
Join Us in New Orleans

Connect With AAFS

Stay Updated on Conference News

Website:

Conference Home: www.aafs.org/annual-conference

Registration: www.aafs.org/annual-conference/registration-information

Program: www.aafs.org/program

Attendee Info: www.aafs.org/attendees

Exhibitor and Sponsor: <https://www.aafs.org/annual-conference/exhibitor-sponsor-information>

Travel Info: www.aafs.org/attendees/travel-information

AAFS Newsfeed: <https://www.aafs.org/search/news-and-events>

Social Media: Follow us for updates, announcements, and behind-the-scenes content

Twitter: @The_AAFS

Facebook: AAFS.org

LinkedIn: American Academy of Forensic Sciences

YouTube: @AAFSSChannel

Conference Hashtag: #AAFS2026, #BackToBasics



Conference Contacts

Questions? We're Here To Help

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Join Us In New Orleans

AAFS 78th Annual Scientific Conference February 9-14, 2026

AAFS 2026 | NEW ORLEANS

BACK TO BASICS

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF FORENSIC SCIENCE

Register Today: www.aafs.org/annual-conference

- ✓ 1,000+ scientific presentations
- ✓ Networking with 3,500 global professionals
- ✓ The Forensic Exchange exhibit hall
- ✓ Professional development opportunities
- ✓ Mardi Gras season in New Orleans

Where Science Meets Justice

