



D7 A Report of the First AAFS Forensic Science Education Conference

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The goals of this presentation are to explain the Academy's new Forensic Science Education Conference project. Attendees will learn details of the Academy's initiative to provide forensic science knowledge to the nation's middle- and high school science and math teachers.

In July 2002, one hundred twenty middle- and high school teachers attended the First Forensic Science Education Conference in St. Louis. The conference acquainted the teachers with all the forensic sciences and the American Academy of Forensic Sciences.

In December 2000, the results of the Third International Mathematics and Science Survey (TIMSS) were released comparing U.S. students with those of 41 other nations. At the fourth grade level, U.S. students scored in the top quartile in both math and science. At the eighth grade level, U.S. students scored slightly above the international average in science and below the international average in mathematics. At the end of 12th grade, the performance U.S. students in both math and science ranked among the very lowest in math and science of the 42 countries, including the performance of the most advanced students. At the Council of Scientific Society Presidents meeting in December 2000, attendees agreed that few of today's U.S. middle- and high school students showed interest in the basic sciences, but the vast majority of middle and high school students were enthralled with the forensic sciences.

In February 2001, recognizing that the American Academy of Forensic Sciences was in a pivotal position to promote the forensic sciences to America's youth, discussions of a collaborative initiative between the AAFS and middle- and high school science and mathematic teachers was initiated by the AAFS. Volunteers were recruited via the *Academy News* from among the membership to assist teachers requesting technical assistance in introducing the forensic sciences to their students. At the 2002 AAFS annual meeting in Atlanta, Director of Development Jim Hurley met with interested members and began the formation of a mentoring network. The Trustees of the Forensic Science Foundation also gave their support to the concept and agreed to revise the Academy's "So You Want To Be A Forensic Scientist" booklet.

In March 2001, AAFS members were spotlighted in a workshop that was held at the National Science Teachers Association annual meeting in St. Louis. Approximately 100 science teachers attending the workshop showed very strong support for additional information regarding the forensic sciences. Virtually all in attendance said that they would attend a summer conference in 2002 if AAFS members would provide them instruction as to how to incorporate forensic science applications into their classrooms.

In April 2001, an application was submitted to The Saigh Foundation to support a conference to inform middle- and high school science teachers of the disciplines that could be introduced into their science curricula. In October 2001, The Saigh Foundation did award a \$50,000 grant to the AAFS to conduct a three-day conference in July 2002, at Saint Louis University in St. Louis, MO.

The three-day conference was held July 25-27, 2002. More than 120 middle- and high school science teachers attended from 30 states and Poland. Fifteen AAFS members provided presentations and fourteen workshops were conducted to illustrate forensic science experiments that could be conducted in middle- and high school science laboratories. All sections of the AAFS were featured to ensure that teachers were aware of the variety of forensic specialists that compose the world of forensic science. A four hundred-page manual was developed and distributed to teachers that included a lesson plan for each discipline's workshop.

A description of the conference program and workshops will be presented. Results of conference registrants' evaluations will be provided. A template that has been developed to assist designers of future conferences will also be explained.

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