



## Criminalistics Section – 2006

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### **B142 Is Forensic Anthropology Important in an Interdisciplinary Forensic Science Program?**

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After attending this presentation, attendees will have a better understanding of the diversity within forensic science programs.

This presentation will impact the forensic community and/or humanity by making them aware that interdisciplinary forensic science programs are growing in popularity. Each program is unique and allows for a student to choose a forensic science program that meets their area of interest.

Forensic science programs have in the past focused on one disciplinary area; chemistry has been the most prevalent at the undergraduate and graduate level. In the past five years the United States has seen a dramatic increase in undergraduate and graduate programs in forensic science. Interestingly, they are more interdisciplinary than their predecessors. The trend appears to be towards incorporating several different areas of forensic science within the forensic science program thus providing a very thorough view and knowledge of the different specialties. Baylor University finds that adding skeletal biology and forensic anthropology to be an enhancement to its program. The forensic anthropologist is able to identify fragments of bone. They determine not only if it is human or nonhuman but also ascertain stature, sex, ethnicity, and age. This discipline is also aware of the time it takes human remains to decompose in different climates and areas so they can determine how long a body has been in a particular location. They are trained to diagnose trauma and any abnormalities that might be present on the skeletal remains which aid in the identification of the deceased individual. Most of this work is done within the context of law enforcement and criminal activity thus making it an integral part of forensic science. With the majority of the Baylor students declaring pre-medical studies the addition of these classes has proved to also be very beneficial for medical school study.

**Forensic Science Programs, Forensic Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Education**