

Supplement to the Academy News
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Young Forensic Scientists Forum Newsletter

2007 YFSF Program

The YFSF is looking for interest in planning and organizing next year's AAFS Young Forensic Scientist Forum with activities and events to last the entire week. If you have a personal interest, want to get involved, or have questions about next year's session please feel free to contact YFSF President **Allison Curran** at amcurran@gmail.com or YFSF Secretary **Jeannette Perr** at jeannette.perr@fiu.edu.

AAFS meetings. At the Seattle meeting, not only were her students encouraged to participate in the YFSF BYOS, it was a portion of a class project. Additionally, while she encouraged students to attend meetings she also encouraged them to attend the YFSF. Her students have been attending the YFSF since the 2000 meeting in Reno, and the numbers have consistently grown resulting in about 40 of her students attending the YFSF in Atlanta (2002) and Chicago (2003).

VCU Professor Honored With YFSF Founder's Award

Marilyn Miller was presented the YFSF Founder's Award at the 2006 AAFS Annual Business Meeting in Seattle. Dr. Miller was chosen for the award based on her outstanding commitment to educating young forensic scientists and her continued support of the YFSF.

The educational career of Dr. Miller began at the University of New Haven and continues at her current position at Virginia Commonwealth University. While Dr. Miller's education of young forensic scientists begins in the classroom, it often continues through advisement outside of classes and even after her students have graduated. Dr. Miller has shown a major commitment over the years to her current and past students often keeping in contact with many of them years after graduation.

It is through her teaching that Dr. Miller became involved in the YFSF. In the past, she has provided advisement for the YFSF Program Committee, assisted with projects, encouraged her students to participate in the YFSF BYOS, and consistently traveled with her students to the



Dr. Marilyn Miller with former students, from right to left: Allison Curran, Claire Sheppard, and Dennis Estacio.

Due to her initial support a growing organization and her continued support of the education of young forensic scientists, YFSF activities and programs the YFSF was proud to present Dr. Miller with the 2006 YFSF Founder's Award.

—Claire Shepard, MS
Past YFSF President

The Importance of Internships: Take the “Hands-On” Approach

A college degree is not the only aspect of importance to your future career; internships are becoming an increasingly critical component of education and training. As a member of the AAFS, you should understand that the field of forensic science has become progressively more popular due to the media. Therefore, many people who had otherwise been uninformed in the areas of forensic science are now interested in forensic careers increasing the competition dramatically. The influx of persons interested in these jobs and an increase in educational programs in forensic science places each one of us in a larger pool of competition. We all must find a way to enhance our skills to create a more marketable position over our competition. Hands-on training in the field will help give you a valuable advantage in job interviews.

Whether you are an undergraduate student who is interested in pursuing a career in forensic science or a graduate student in a program specifically focused in an area of forensics, internships are still a valuable tool. For those early in your education an internship will give you the opportunity to “test the waters.” Commitment is a key quality to possess if you wish to pursue a career in forensic science. If you are unsure of your career direction, an internship may help you determine what skills you have, which ones you need to develop, or simply determine something you dislike. We all want to be happy in our careers doing something we enjoy. An internship in the area(s) of forensics you are interested may help you determine if this career path is the right choice for you. For those of you already in a forensics education program, an internship is the best way to translate book knowledge into real-world applications. Learning the techniques and theories behind a specific technique is important; however, being able to apply those techniques in a lab is what really matters in the real world.

An internship is primarily viewed as a way for you to obtain hands-on experience in the field. However, there are many other advantages of internships that you may not be aware of. First, an internship is a way to assimilate yourself into the field of forensics. When applying for an internship, it is much like applying for a job: you will be interviewed and most likely undergo the necessary testing/background procedures required as if you were directly hired for a position with that lab or agency. An internship gives you the opportunity to see what to expect when applying for a job in the field and provides you with practice in your interviewing skills. Second, an internship is a way to provide you with insight the way a particular agency operates. You will learn lab protocols or agency principles relevant to the standards in the field. Knowledge in these standards will be extremely advantageous when applying to similar agencies or labs. Finally, an internship may just provide your “way in.” Think about the networking opportunities an internship can provide, the people you will meet and work with. Your internship may turn into a job after you finish your degree or help you locate a job in another area. These are just a few of the reasons you should seek out an internship if you are interested in a career in forensic science. Learning how to use the skills taught to you in the classroom is the best way to ensure success on the job.

—Marrah Lachowicz, MFS
YFSF Program Co-Chair

About the YFSF

The YFSF is dedicated to the education, enrichment, and professional development of young forensic scientists. YFSF participants can be non-AAFS members, while organizers must be AAFS members from any section within the AAFS. The Forum provides a medium to educate and to network with young forensic scientists to facilitate their establishment within the forensic science community. The YFSF is composed of a Special Session, a Poster Session, a Bring Your Own Slides Session, and a Breakfast Session during the AAFS Annual Meeting. Outside the Academy meeting the YFSF works to further the endeavors of young forensic scientists through the YFSF newsletter and the YFSF website (<http://www.aafs.org/yfsf/index.htm>). YFSF President **Allison Curran** (amcurran@gmail.com) and YFSF Secretary **Jeannette Perr** (jeannette.perr@fiu.edu) can answer any questions about the YFSF, and are looking to many different levels of young forensic scientists participating next year’s session.

YFSF Website

The YFSF is looking for a technologically savvy person to help design the new website. If interested please contact **Jeannette Perr** (jeannette.perr@fiu.edu). Look for the improved website soon!

