

# Annual Newsletter of the Forensic and Investigative Sciences Program



Dr. Jeff Tomberlin, director

## A Message from the Director

Howdy FIVS Ags!

First, I want to thank Dr. David Ragsdale, Department Head, Department of Entomology, for asking me to fill the mighty large (literally and figuratively) shoes of Dr. Kevin Heinz as the Director of the FIVS Program. I know I have my work cut out for me with regards to maintaining a program of such high quality. Second, I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Heinz for doing such a great job as the Director. I will do my best to

continue and expand our program to even greater heights of recognition and production.

Since being named the director this past January, I have spent some time talking with students, current and former, as well with our faculty. I used these opportunities to develop a “plan” for how best to move forward. Through these interactions, I have developed what I would call a key theme for our program; we are more than a degree- we are a community. My primary goal is to increase student-faculty-community interactions in order to enhance the student experience and enrich the FIVS culture. I hope to achieve this goal through the following means:

1. **FIVS Upper Division Society:** We are currently developing an organization for the upper division students. This organization will serve multiple purposes during the two years a student is in the upper division FIVS courses. The students will complete a number of activities ranging from resume preparation, meeting with FIVS faculty and former students, attending/giving seminars related to internship/research experiences and opportunities to attending workshops on various aspects of the forensic sciences. This organization will also serve as a means to mentor first and second year students entering the FIVS program. Doing so will hopefully ease the stress of adapting to college life and increase the bond between students- both young and new.
2. **FIVS Newsletter:** I, along with Dr. Brundage, will continue to develop the FIVS newsletter as a means to remain in contact with graduates of the program. We want you to

know about the many accomplishments that you have made since graduating from the program as well as keep you updated on what current students are doing.

3. **Endowment:** When I arrived in the FIVS program in 2007, I initiated an endowment for the FIVS Program. The endowment is currently at \$14,000. Once we reach \$25,000, we will be able to offer a scholarship, which could allow us to recruit someone from out of state that possesses the character and academic aptitude necessary to represent the FIVS program. With that said, Dr. Ragsdale has indicated he would offer a match of any donation made up to our reaching the \$25,000 goal!!! This offer is amazing and greatly appreciated. If you are interested in making a contribution- please contact me via email, and I will let you know how to make such a contribution.
  
4. **Develop statewide network for students:** I am currently working to develop a workshop that will allow students from different undergraduate and graduate programs in the forensic sciences to come together and present their work from internships or research. This opportunity would be a great way for students to network and participate in an activity that would enhance their resume.

These are just a few items developed for the near future. But, I want you to know this list is only the beginning! My hope is that students that graduate from the FIVS program continue to be active and involved with it. I am open to ideas and

suggestions you might have with regards to enhancing your program. So, please, feel free to drop me an email or give me a call as I am always happy to hear from you.

With that – I believe I have said enough for now!  
Thanks for your support and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,

Dr T

Jeffery K. Tomberlin, PhD, D-ABFE  
Associate Professor  
Director, Forensic & Investigative Sciences  
Program

### Shout Out!

Something new for the newsletter is a small sample of the many successes of our previous students! These recognitions are also listed on the FIVS Forever Facebook page (you should join). And, I am sure I have missed some due to there being so many – and I apologize in advance. But, with that said, here are some items that I am aware of:

- **Tyler Smith** and **Sunday Saenz (Class of 14)**- received their MS in Forensic Science from Oklahoma State University this spring.

- **Hannah Robyler (Beckerdite) (Class of 13)**- has been extremely active during her second year in law school at Texas University- I mean, the University of Texas- as she and her moot court team have been recognized numerous times for their outstanding abilities!
- **Kortney Parchman (Class of 12)**- received the 2015 Rookie of the Year award from the city of College Station, Texas.
- **Miguel Carpio (Class of 14)**- was part of a team in the Department of Chemical Engineering during his undergraduate years in the FIVS Program that developed drone technology that be used to monitor and control infectious disease outbreaks. Even more cool- he was accepted into medical school this year!
- **Charlotte Dearman and Kelsey Garner (class of 15)** – are both police officers now! Charlotte is with the Navasota Police Department and Kelsey is with the City of Bryan Police Department.
- **Samantha Brit (Class of 13)**- is an author! She has published two books (the second being, “Will of Fate”) that can be located through Amazon.

Again- these are just a few of the major accomplishments of the many that have occurred. Please let me (Dr T: [jktomberlin@tamu.edu](mailto:jktomberlin@tamu.edu)) know if you have something you would like to announce- we are a family- and we all want to know what has been happening your life!

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## Summer 2015 – Spring 2016 Research and Internship Experiences

During this past year our students were involved in a number of interesting and diverse Research and Internship experiences. The College Station Police Department continues to support the program by taking several interns each semester.

Our students also completed internships at the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office Crime Lab, and the Forensic Science Unit at the Austin Police Department. Students were able to find internship experiences that matched their future career interests, including Forensic Nursing, Law Offices, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department was a first time destination this year.

Research experiences were provided in the laboratories of Dr. Aitkenhead-Peterson, Dr. Spencer Johnston, Dr. Aaron Tarone, and Dr. Jeffery Tomberlin; with the research projects covering a variety of topics of forensic relevance from soils, genome size, fly development, and microbe-insect interactions.



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## Outreach Updates

I am Dr. Adrienne Brundage, and I am the current Outreach Coordinator for the Forensic and Investigative Sciences Program. This past year has seen a wide variety of outreach opportunities seized by our FIVS students. The end of spring semester saw the kick off of a new upper division Forensic Science group, populated by juniors and seniors in the program. The group started with a social and planning session, where we mapped out outreach and mentoring activities for the next year. This group plans to focus on working with lower division students to help them reach their goals, and recruit new students to the program.

We also had three forensic-based papers published in the departmental journal: [Instars: A Journal of Undergraduate Research](#). This journal is open to all undergraduate students doing research in or out of a lab, and features peer-reviewed articles on forensics and entomology. Congratulations to the newly published authors!



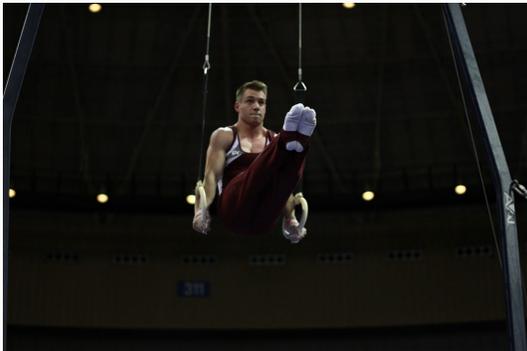
Finally, ten of our students earned their Forensic Technician Certifications through TEEEX, a culmination of their hard work and dedication to the science. [Read more about their accomplishments here.](#)

This coming year will include many new outreach opportunities, starting with the Youth Adventure Program in July. Forensics students will teach aspiring young forensic scientists the ins and outs of crime scene investigation for a full week, passing their knowledge on to a new generation.

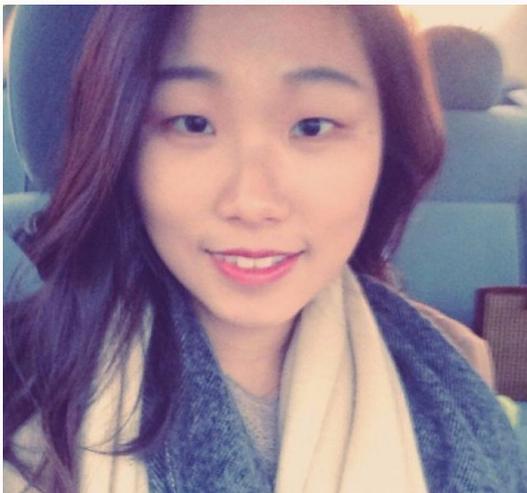
Do you have an outreach opportunity you would like to include in this list? Or would you like to have our forensic science students be a part of your activity? Contact [adrienne.brundage@tamu.edu](mailto:adrienne.brundage@tamu.edu) for more information.

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## Graduating Seinors



**Andrew Archer** is from Houston, Texas and he claims to be the loudest and proudest member of the fightin' Texas Aggie Class of 2016! Beginning May 23<sup>rd</sup>, he will be pursuing a J.D. at University of Oklahoma College of Law in Norman, Oklahoma. After law school, he plans on pursuing a career in Intellectual Property or Criminal Law.



**Hyojung "Sarah" Choi** is from South Korea, and she will be graduating from the Forensic Investigative Sciences major with Chemistry and Genetics minors this spring. After completing her BS, Sarah will be moving to London, England in order to pursue a MS in Security Science with an emphasis on forensic geoscience at University College London (UCL). After the completion of her MS, Sarah plans to pursue a PhD at the UCL Security Science Doctoral Research Training Centre, also known as SECReT. Sarah hopes to work with an international crime investigation organization such as INTERPOL or a research institute.



**Stephanie Stratta** is from Hearne, Texas and will also be receiving her BS in Forensic & Investigative Sciences this spring semester. Stephanie was recently accepted into the University of Maryland to obtain her MS in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Along with writing and defending a thesis, she will be taking classes such as statistical analysis and other courses that discuss the criminal justice system. Stephanie hopes that her work experience in a law office and sociology minor will prove valuable during her time in graduate school.

## Internships



**Casey Hearn** is a junior FIVS major with a double-major in Sociology. She has applied and been accepted to intern with the Naval Criminal Investigative Service's General Crimes Division in Pearl Harbor, Hawaii in the Summer of 2016. Based on the description of the position, Casey will be learning to identify crime patterns, assist in review of the Death Review Team and Death Review Board guidelines to make sure they are maintained in death investigations, evaluate criminal investigations, maintain crime scene equipment, shadow agents during investigations, including autopsies, and attend training with the agents.



**Caleb Bickham** is from Mauriceville, Texas- Crawfish capital of Texas! At the College Station Police Department, I work with and for the Detectives by assisting in handling their caseload, however that may be. Each day at the PD is a different and exciting experience. Somedays I may be doing paperwork, and others I could be going out on investigations or even training with the SWAT Team. I have seen and worked with detectives on a range of cases including assault with a deadly weapon, theft of a habitat, and sexual assaults. I have developed my communication skills by talking with complainants and sitting in on interviews or other investigations. My critical thinking skills are always challenged when working on cases, I have seen firsthand how the detectives operate and learned some of the tricks of the trade in investigating crime. Oftentimes I am entrusted with evidence and sensitive information within the police department, and I have gone out to recover stolen property from pawn shops local to the area, destroyed sensitive materials, and reviewed video evidence for on cases. On small scale cases, I have even been afforded the chance to lead the investigation personally by making phone calls, retrieving evidence, and cross-referencing facts in the case. All things considered the internship opportunity is a great and rewarding experience that I would highly recommend. Not only will you gain personal skills and abilities, but being a part of the CID camaraderie is highly rewarding.

This picture was taking of me at the kill house during a SWAT Training exercise, which is one of the highlights of the internship so far. Great experience playing as the “bad guy” on missions.



**Jennifer Pecina** (left) and **Jasmin Arevalo** (right) are San Antonio, Texas. They have the privilege of interning with the San Antonio Police Department this coming summer. During the internship, both will be participating in shadowing detectives in the CID or Homicide Unit, go on ride-a-longs across different sections of the city, and visit other areas of the San Antonio Police Department.



**Tanner Truelove** is from Salado, Texas. Tanner will be interning with the Banks and Banks law firm in downtown Bryan, TX. There I will be working with lawyers with almost half a century in combined legal experience in criminal, civil, and family law. Some of the duties I will be charged with include legal research, attending trials, and delivering legal documents. This will be an incredible experience for me because I have recently considered attending law school after graduation and pursuing a career as an attorney. I believe that with my education in Forensic and Investigative sciences I will be able to make considerable contributions to their clients cases and hopefully ensure that justice is served.



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