

Charles R. Midkiff¹

College and University Forensic Science Programs—Graduate and Undergraduate

Four years ago, the journal published listings of worldwide educational programs in forensic science and closely related areas [J Forensic Sci 1994;39(2,Mar)]. One of the lists illustrated opportunities for graduate study for those active in the field and desiring further formal education. It could also be useful to individuals with an undergraduate degree in another area but interested in entering the forensic science field. The second list provided information on institutions offering undergraduate programs in forensic science, criminalistics or forensic chemistry. This list was intended to provide a guide of available programs to assist high school or college students initially considering a forensic career. It listed institutions offering undergraduate programs, the program type and points of contact for further information. The graduate list also included information on number of credits for the degree, internship or thesis requirements, areas of specialization, financial assistance, etc. This list encompassed primarily programs at the Master's level with a few options for study toward a doctoral degree.

Since the publication of those lists, considerable change has occurred in forensic education available throughout the world. Several of the programs on those lists no longer operate, but some newer programs are in operation and others are in the planning or developmental stages. With the considerable interest in forensic educational offerings shown by enrollment in forensic science courses and by applications for entry into existing forensic programs, changes are occurring rapidly. For lists of this type to be of value to interested students at any level, they should be as current, complete and as widely available as possible. To this end, both the previously published lists have been extensively revised and additional information added. In addition to information on several programs not previously included, supplemental material will improve student access to information about the program or programs offered by a particular institution.

Quite often, such information is available on the internet through a home page maintained at the department or program level. Such

pages can be accessed directly if the web address can be obtained, or they can sometimes be reached from the educational institution's homepage. Most institutions today provide information regarding admission, tuition, general program requirements, etc. on the internet through that institution's web page. For answers to more specific questions, prospective students can usually contact the individual responsible for coordinating the program. Use of e-mail or fax facilitates such contact even when the person is not immediately available.

Where available, web page addresses (URLs) are included as contact information in the updated educational program lists, as are e-mail addresses and fax numbers. Posting of material on the Internet improves its accessibility and has the potential for prompt distribution of accurate and current information. In any area subject to rapid change, however, information may not be totally current. And, since anyone can post almost anything on the internet, there is no assurance that the information is either current or accurate. Caution is advisable in accepting internet information as reliable. For example, listings of forensic science educational programs are found on several web pages but unfortunately, some of these are either outdated or indicate forensic programs at institutions which, although perhaps offering one or more forensic courses, have no formal forensic science or criminalistic programs.

The purpose of this communication is two-fold: first, to state that the lists described above will be kept as current and as accurate as possible; and second, to provide the internet locations of the lists themselves. Both lists may be found on Reddy's Forensic Home Page <http://haven.ios.com/~nyrc/homepage.html>. The graduate program list only is on-line at <http://www.criminalistics.com/gradprog.htm>, one of the Criminalistics pages administered by Peter Barnett. Both the webmasters have agreed to replace the on-line lists with newer versions as soon as they are available, so that material on either of these sites should be current and reliable. If a printed copy of either list is preferred, it is available from the author on request or, alternatively, can be sent via e-mail as either a WordPerfect or ASCII format attachment.

¹ BATF National Laboratory Center, 1401 Research Boulevard, Rockville, MD 20850 e-mail: Crmidkiff@aol.com.