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Subject: Local Student Presents Research
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Attachments: [Forensic Biology.FSU.jpg](#)

Included below is a press release regarding a research presentation by a local student who is attending Ferris State University. Further information is available by contacting Leah Nixon, assistant director of News Services.

For Immediate Release
March 19, 2008

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Forensic Biology students present research

BIG RAPIDS – One of the most important details in any whodunit – from “Law and Order” and “CSI” to “Monk” – is determining the time the unfortunate victim expired. Three Ferris State University Forensic Biology students recently presented real-life findings that could help investigators in actual murder cases.

Angela Pierson, Tara Lang and Cheri Heinzelman presented “The Effect of Clothing on Decomposition Rate: A Teaching Model” at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Forensic Sciences and at the Young Forensic Scientist Forum Feb. 18 through 23 in Washington, D.C.

The students documented that clothing did significantly affect the ability to biologically determine time of death. The findings were based on approved animal protocol field research performed during the summer of 2007. In addition to the AAFS presentation, the data and findings will be submitted to the *Journal of Forensic Sciences*.

“In any field, hands-on experience and exposure to professionals working in the field are critical to the success of students entering the work force,” said Phillip Watson, professor of Biology and Forensic Biology program coordinator. “The Academy’s meeting provided not only a venue for our students’ research, but an opportunity for them to network with potential employers and graduate school programs. Most importantly, their work was very well received.”

The nearly 6,000 members of the AAFS – including physicians, attorneys, toxicologists, physical anthropologists and psychiatrists – actively practice, teach or conduct research in forensic science. The AAFS represents its membership and profession of forensic science to the public.

- 30 -



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(L-R) Ferris Forensic Biology students Angela Pierson, Cheri Heinzelman and Tara Lang.

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