

Society for College Science Teachers

Press Release to Accompany Position Statement on the Teaching of Evolution

(April 30 2007)

The Society for College Science Teachers (SCST) has released a position statement on the teaching of evolution that “recognizes the centrality of evolutionary theory to modern science and encourages the teaching of evolution at an appropriate level throughout primary, secondary, and higher education science curricula.” SCST was founded in 1979 and has a national membership of nearly 1,000 college science educators.

“We think it is important to add our voice to the list of organizations who support a robust and central role for evolution in the science curriculum”, said SCST President Thomas Lord, a Biology Professor at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. “We do students a great disservice if we fail to teach evolution as one of the key principles in science today”.

First proposed by Charles Darwin in 1859, the theory of evolution through natural selection now stands as a core idea of modern biology. Evolution states that organisms share common ancestry through a process of descent with modification that has taken place over billions of years. Despite being widely accepted by scientists, evolution remains under attack by religiously motivated legislators and special interest groups who want non-scientific interpretations of creation to be taught in public school science classrooms.

“We welcome recent court decisions that favor evolution education,” commented Jerry Waldvogel, a biologist at Clemson University and co-author of the SCST statement. “But even though the legal system continues to affirm the foundational role of evolution in science and the inaccuracy of many of the criticisms leveled against it, special interest groups continue to try and confuse the general public by blurring the line between scientific and non-scientific ways of thinking. Our hope is that the SCST position statement will give teachers additional confidence to maintain a high level of educational integrity in the science classroom”.

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For more information about SCST and its activities, visit www.scst.org.

For further information about evolutionary theory, the role of evolution in science education, and the problems with non-scientific “alternatives” to evolution, SCST recommends the following print and online resources:

- Alters B. J. & Nelson C. E. (2002). Teaching evolution in higher education. *Evolution* 56 (10): 1891–1901.
- American Physical Society (http://aps.org/policy/statements/81_1.cfm)

- Freeman, S. & J. C. Herron (2004). *Evolutionary Analysis* (3rd ed.). Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- National Academies of Science (<http://www.nationalacademies.org/evolution/>)
- National Center for Science Education (<http://www.ncseweb.org/>)
- National Science Education Standards (<http://www.nap.edu/readingroom/books/nse/>)
- National Science Teachers Association (<http://www.nsta.org/220>)
- Scott, E. C. (2005). *Evolution vs. Creationism: An Introduction*. Univ. of California Press.
- Talk.Origins Archive (<http://www.talkorigins.org/>)
- Understanding Evolution (<http://evolution.berkeley.edu>)