



NEWS RELEASE

Release Number: 18

Release Date: February 24, 2006

JUDICIAL COUNCIL OF
CALIFORNIA
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE
OF THE COURTS
Public Information Office
455 Golden Gate Avenue
San Francisco, CA 94102-3688
www.courtinfo.ca.gov

415-865-7740

Lynn Holton
Public Information Officer

Science and Technology Meet the Law: New Education Guidelines for Judges

San Francisco—In the first action of its kind in California, the Judicial Council today approved a set of guidelines to increase the “science literacy” of California jurists.

The education guidelines pave the way for the creation of an ongoing formal education program to assist judges in evaluating scientific evidence and expert testimony in cases that come before them.

“I would like to commend my colleague, Justice Ming Chin, for taking the lead with this important effort and making it a success,” noted Chief Justice Ronald M. George, chair of the Judicial Council.

Justice Chin chairs the Science and Law Steering Committee, which the Chief Justice appointed last year to assess the training needs of judges. That committee and the Science and Law Education Committee, chaired by Judge Michael T. Garcia, developed the new guidelines.

Both panels also planned and produced a Science and the Law Conference, held last October at the Salk Institute. As part of that meeting, participants discussed what types of science education would most benefit the judiciary, and that discussion helped form the basis for the guidelines.

When implemented, the program will include such topics as computer science and digital technology, medical science, pharmacology, genetics, and physics and engineering.

California is one of several states that will develop educational programs for judges in the areas of science and technology. The Education Division/Center for Judicial Education and Research of the Administrative Office of the Courts will make the programs as widely available to state judges as possible.

(over)

What sets California apart from other states is that the education guidelines are part of a larger assessment of how the judicial branch can better respond to the increasing demands of science and technology. Later in the year, the steering committee will make further recommendations to the Judicial Council on these issues.

The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.

#