

NEWSLETTER

JANUARY 2023



ASCP
BOARD OF
CERTIFICATION®

**Providing excellence in
certification of laboratory
professionals on behalf
of patients worldwide.**

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**Susan Graham, MS,
MLS(ASCP)**

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

What inspired you, initially, to become a laboratory professional? It may have been an interest in science or medicine, the desire to help people, an experience with illness of a loved one, or something else entirely. For me, it was a happy coincidence. My mom worked as a switchboard operator in a small community hospital on the second shift. Occasionally, I would join her for dinner. Another person at our table was a medical laboratory scientist who worked alone on the evening shift. I was fascinated by the stories she told (never violating a patient's privacy, even though this was well before HIPAA). When she offered to show me the lab, I jumped at the chance and I decided, then and there, to follow in her footsteps. There was a feeling of excitement as I entered this field that has matured and grown as much as I have as a professional and I will always remember her inspiration.

Regardless of your initial stimulus to begin a journey in the laboratory, what has prompted the directions you have taken within the profession? I propose that multiple inspirations have informed those decisions and that you have evolved to become an inspiration to others. What form might those inspirations take? Perhaps it was an educator, colleague, and/or manager that recognized your potential. If so, they may have suggested a path that included educational or experiential opportunities followed by certification to demonstrate competence. Professional organizations provide a myriad of prospects to invigorate a professional journey. Establishing career ladders based on clear criteria is a direction many laboratories are taking to reenergize the workforce.

As laboratorians, we love organized data, spreadsheets, flowcharts, etc. Think of your career in terms of a concept map. At each juncture, a decision was made to pursue or not pursue an opportunity. It was likely not a linear progression of events as you grew in depth and breadth as a professional. It's never too late to return to one or more of those junctures and examine the choices you have today.

As you provide inspiration to others in the profession, advise them to document their journey with certification and professional volunteer opportunities. The ASCP BOC, working with its professional partners, is an excellent resource. Don't be afraid to take the time to recognize an individual for the good work that they do. Whether it be an informal thank you or a nomination for an award, the inspiration you provide may very well add to their concept map and professional career. As they reflect on their career, be a part of their memories.

I sometimes seek motivation through inspirational quotes. Today I am inspired by a quote from Dr. Suess,

"Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment, until it becomes a memory."

PROMOTING THE LABORATORY PROFESSION AND CERTIFICATION TO ENSURE DELIVERY OF QUALITY PATIENT CARE

**Gerardo Ramos, PhD, MLS(ASCP),
F-ABFT, FAACC**

Even when I was a college student at the University of Texas Health Science Center Medical Laboratory Science (UT Health) program in San Antonio, Texas in the early 1990s, the medical laboratory was a hidden profession within the healthcare field.

This article is for individuals who are 1) considering the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) Specialist in Chemistry (SC) or the Technologist in Chemistry (C) certification, 2) those who are qualified for ASCP certification but are unaware of the opportunity, and 3) those who may have undergraduate and graduate degrees in biology, chemistry, or other appropriate biological sciences who may be considering certification.

I want to impress upon readers the importance of ASCP certification, licensure, maintenance of professional standards, and specializations for the delivery of quality patient care.

First, let's start with a brief description of the Technologist in Chemistry, C(ASCP) and Specialist in Chemistry SC(ASCP). For context, the C(ASCP) and SC(ASCP) perform analysis on blood and body fluids to determine the quantity of chemical and/or hormonal content in a specimen to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases. The Specialist in Chemistry requires advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities; individuals with this credential serve as leaders, educators, and advisors within their specialty area and are seen as technical experts.

Other areas of interest to the clinical chemist are proteins, enzymes, acid-base, electrolytes, special chemistry, and laboratory operations.

One subset of special chemistry is independent, dedicated toxicology laboratories. Toxicology is a comprehensive term encompassing many facets of environmental and biological testing systems, some of which are for use in clinical and non-clinical applications. Best practices in pre-analytical, analytical, and post-analytical processes are key to generating the correct results.

I have had the humbling experience of working in a clinical, environmental, research, and forensic toxicology laboratory as an ASCP-certified medical laboratory scientist. The fundamental skill set obtained from being a medical laboratory scientist has been critical in successful careers at each laboratory.

Currently, I consult with toxicology laboratories offering traditional drug screening and confirmation testing, pharmacogenetics testing to assess drug response profile, and molecular testing. In these laboratories, most individuals are well-educated, expertly trained professionals; yet, most are not ASCP certified.

Results of an unofficial survey I conducted of 10 individuals working in six independent laboratories—reference laboratories or physician-owned laboratories having fewer than eight professional staff—revealed that all have undergraduate or graduate degrees in biological science. None attended formal medical laboratory science schools, but all gained laboratory skills from undergraduate/graduate experience and learned the clinical portion of laboratory skills on the job. Eight out of 10 of these individuals were unaware of existing certification organizations, nor of the pathways for certification. In addition, eight out of 10 became aware of ASCP certification and the pathways to achieve certification after meeting a laboratory professional with a certification and/or during the pandemic spotlight on the profession.

Granted, this was a small survey. Other laboratories of varying sizes or in another region may have different results, but this is the same trend seen as I travel the region. My point is, again, to impress upon those considering these careers the importance of certification through an organization such as the ASCP Board of Certification, considered the “gold standard” within the laboratory profession.

Readers may surmise that those who are qualified, yet unaware of ASCP certifications, may not have access to certification information. It is our responsibility to promote the profession as well as certification. There are many things to consider regarding the laboratory profession—licensure and changes to science coursework or clinical training requirements under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments (CLIA). However, building professional relationships with the entirety of laboratory consortiums should be at the forefront. Reaching out to fellow laboratory professionals will promote the collegial environment required for harmonization and holistic change and perhaps provide encouragement for advanced education and certifications.

It's up to all of us to do our part to promote the medical laboratory profession and certification to ensure our profession is helping to deliver the highest quality of diagnostic testing and care.

2022 ASCP BOARD OF CERTIFICATION AWARDS PRESENTED IN CHICAGO

The ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) recognized two volunteers at an awards ceremony in Chicago on September 10, 2022. The BOC Board of Governors (BOG) Chair, Sue Graham, MS, MLS(ASCP)SH^{CM} presented the BOC Distinguished Service Award (DSA) to Laura Bilodeau, MD, FASCP and Kathleen Finnegan, MS, MLS(ASCP)SH^{CM} at a luncheon in their honor.

The DSA is presented to volunteers who have served the BOC for a minimum of six years and made significant contributions involving extra time and effort toward the mission to provide excellence in certification of laboratory professionals on behalf of patients worldwide.

- Dr. Bilodeau served as American Society for Clinical Pathology Fellow (ASCP) representatives to the BOG from 2012 – 2021. She served as Member at Large from 2016 – 2018 and BOC Financial Officer and Chair of the BOC Finance Committee from 2019 – 2021. Dr. Bilodeau was the BOG Liaison to the Clinical Chemistry Examination Committee from 2014 – 2021 after having been a member of the same committee from 1997 to 2002.
- Ms. Finnegan served as one of the five ASCP laboratory professional representatives to the BOG from 2012 – 2021. She served as the Member at Large on the BOG Executive Committee from 2019 – 2021. A longtime volunteer, she was on both the Hematology and Phlebotomy Examination Committees and currently is Chair of the Medical Laboratory Assistants Examination Committee. Ms. Finnegan served on the International Credentialing Committee from 2015 – 2021 and was active on the Program Directors Advisory Committee.

Earlier in the year several BOC volunteers were awarded the BOC Board of Governors Service Award. Five volunteers were recognized for having made noteworthy contributions during their tenure as a committee or Board member and received an engraved rosewood clock. The 2022 recipients of the BOG Service Award include the following volunteers:

- Michael Berry, SCT(ASCP)^{CM}MB^{CM} was recognized for his service on the Cytology Examination Committee from 2014 – 2021.
- Susan Higgins, MS, MLS(ASCP)SC was recognized for her service on the Medical Laboratory Assistant Examination Committee from 2014 – 2021.
- Malinda Browning, MPH, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} was recognized for her service on the Hematology Examination Committee 2014 – 2021.
- Stacey Robinson, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SH^{CM},SCYM^{CM} was recognized for her service on the Hematology Examination Committee from 2014 – 2021.
- Ann Crowley, MB(ASCP)^{CM} was recognized for her service on the Molecular Biology Examination Committee from 2013 – 2021.

Volunteers are the cornerstone of the BOC, and it is through them that the mission can be fulfilled.



Pictured left to right: Sue Graham, MS, MLS(ASCP)SH^{CM}; Laura Bilodeau, MD, FASCP; Kathleen Finnegan, MS, MLS(ASCP)SH^{CM}; and Amy Spiczka, MS, HTL(ASCP)^{CM}SCT,MB^{CM}, CPHQ.

ASCP BOC CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL CREDENTIAL HOLDERS AND ATTENDEES AT THE 2022 ASCP ANNUAL MEETING

Over 300 ASCPⁱ credentialed and International individuals attended the ASCP 2022 Annual Meeting in Chicago, IL, from September 7 - 9, 2022. The meeting marked the 100th anniversary of ASCP.

To make the ASCPⁱ credentialed and International attendees feel welcome, the ASCP BOC held an International Breakfast for ASCP BOC international volunteers, and hosted the ASCPⁱ & International Attendees Café for all ASCPⁱ credentialed and international attendees.

International Breakfast

On September 7, the ASCP BOC held a breakfast for its international volunteers and advisory board members who travelled to Chicago to participate. Volunteers from Peru, the Philippines, Singapore, Trinidad & Tobago attended.



ASCPⁱ Café

From September 7 - 9, 2022, the ASCP BOC hosted the first ever ASCPⁱ and International Attendees Café in Hyatt Skyway Room 272. The 2022 ASCPⁱ and International Attendees Café was an immersive multimedia experience designed to celebrate the important contributions of international certificants, students, and other stakeholders.

Friendly and knowledgeable ASCP BOC international staff welcomed everyone who stopped by the café. Once inside, attendees had the opportunity to have a complementary cup of coffee or tea while enjoying the art-gallery-like setting. ASCPⁱ Credential holders also had the opportunity to participate in interviews that will be streamed on the ASCP BOC's social media channels.





Cristina Gonzalez del Riego

ASCP BOC PRESENTS AT THE 3RD LATIN AMERICAN CONFERENCE OF BIOMEDICINE AND LABORATORY SCIENCE

The ASCPⁱ Ambassador to Latin America and the Caribbean, Cristina Gonzalez del Riego, was recently invited to present at the 3rd Latin American Conference of Biomedicine and Laboratory Science, held in Florianopolis, Brazil.

The Southern Brazilian Association of Biomedicine was interested in a discussion around certification and motivators for recent graduates and new professionals. On September 8, 2022, the virtual presentation titled “ASCP BOC Certification: The Key to Professional Development & Continued Competence” was broadcast at the conference for approximately 600 attendees in Florianopolis. The presentation was also live at the ASCP 2022 Annual Meeting’s ASCPⁱ & International Attendees Café.



2023 PROGRAM PERFORMANCE REPORT (PPR) INVOICES AVAILABLE

Emails with a link to access the 2023 Program Performance Report (PPR) invoices were sent to all program directors of NAACLS, CAAHEP, and ABHES accredited/approved programs and BOC documented structured phlebotomy and MLA training programs. The invoice covers the period for January 1 – December 31, 2023 and payment instructions are included on the invoice.

CLINICAL LABORATORY EDUCATOR'S CONFERENCE (CLEC)

The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) will host the 2023 Clinical Laboratory Educator's Conference (CLEC) on March 2 – 4, 2023 in New Orleans, LA. The ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) looks forward to providing updates on ASCP BOC activities, and meeting with program directors and educators. BOC representatives will have an exhibit booth and will be available to answer questions about certification, qualification, and CMP. Additional information about the CLEC meeting can be found at the [ASCLS website](#).

UPDATES FROM THE FALL BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

The ASCP Board of Certification Board of Governors met September 10 - 11, 2022. Several motions were passed that impact eligibility requirements, as summarized below. All updated eligibility requirements and fee increases will be available on the ASCP BOC website by early 2023. www.ascp.org/certification

All ASCP BOC certifications

Acceptable education

After checking with NAACLS, CAAHEP, and ABHES regarding the institutions at which an accredited program may be housed, all ASCP eligibility requirements will be updated to allow education from either a regionally or a nationally accredited institution. Currently, only education from regionally accredited institutions is acceptable to meet the eligibility requirements.

Definition of a clinical laboratory

Clinical Laboratory Improvement Program (CLIP) laboratories, run by the Department of Defense, were added to the list of acceptable clinical laboratories.

Medical Laboratory Technician, MLT(ASCP)

For routes 3 and 4, those that require education and training, the language has been clarified to more clearly indicate that those with an Associate's degree must also have specific chemistry and biology coursework.

Specialist in Microbiology, SMB(ASCP) and SMB(ASCP)ⁱ

An additional route has been added for the SMB examination requiring previous MB certification, a Master's degree, and two years of acceptable experience. The new route 6 will be available in January 2023.

New Credential – Diplomate in Medical Laboratory Immunology, DMLI(ASCP)

Eligibility requirements for the new PhD level Immunology exam were approved. The first applications for this exam will be accepted in early 2023 with the first examination being offered April 1, 2023.

Fee Increases

Application Fees

As of **July 1, 2023**, application fees for all ASCP and ASCPⁱ certification and qualification exams will increase by \$10, with the exception of scholarship pricing for resource limited countries.

Program Performance Report (PPR)

As of **January 1, 2024**, the PPR subscription cost will increase from \$150 per program to \$175 per program. The 2024 PPR invoice, which will be sent in October of 2023, will reflect this new price of \$175.

CMP CONTINUING EDUCATION (CE) ACTIVITIES AND POINT VALUES REVIEWED

As part of their annual review of the Credential Maintenance Program (CMP) the Credential Maintenance Committee (CMC) reviewed all suggested Continuing Education (CE) activities and point values assigned for the CMP. They determined that several point values needed to be modified due to the amount of time required and the passive vs. active engagement in the activity. In addition, a new CE activity, reviewing journal articles or books related to the laboratory, was added to provide more opportunity for earning CMP points for recertification.

Points were increased for the following:

- clinical teaching
- preparation & presentation of a poster/exhibit
- serving on committees/boards related to the laboratory profession
- role of on-site inspector/paper reviewer for laboratory accreditation or training program accreditation

These changes will go into effect January 1, 2024.

BOC COLLABORATION TO PROMOTE NOMENCLATURE

The ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) and the American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) with the support of the ASCP BOC sponsoring and participating societies collaborated to write the position paper [“Standardizing the Professional Title of Medical Laboratory Scientists.”](#) The paper serves to address the inconsistency of professional nomenclature and the impact this has had on the profession.

Following publication of the paper, the ASCP BOC Board of Governors (BOG) created the Nomenclature Taskforce to make recommendations for gaining acceptance and adoption of a unified title of Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS). The Taskforce identified the complexities to be addressed and has published those recommendations in a new paper [“Promoting the Medical Laboratory Science Profession through Standardized Titles.”](#)

The ASCP BOC has moved to standardized nomenclature and all MT(ASCP) credentialed individuals may begin using the MLS(ASCP) credential immediately.

The Credential Maintenance Program (CMP) will continue to be voluntary for those individuals transitioning from MT to MLS. Those credentialed prior to 2004 are not required to do CMP.

What's in a name?

Everything important to our profession -- professional identity, as well as recognition from the healthcare team, administration, government agencies, and the public. The lack of understanding affects recruitment and retention in the profession. It is time to move to one name -- Medical Laboratory Scientist.

Join us now and take the pledge at www.ascp.org/boc/i-am-mls

I pledge to:

- Refer to myself as a “Medical Laboratory Scientist” (MLS) instead of Medical Technologist (Med Tech, MT) or Clinical Laboratory Scientist (CLS)
- Refer to myself and colleagues as MLS, not as technologist or tech
- Work with my managers, administrators, Human Resources (as applicable) at my organization to revise job titles to MLS
- Tell at least one student, community member or colleague about the role and value of MLS



MEDICAL LABORATORY PROFESSIONALS WEEK (MLPW)

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week (MLPW) is scheduled for April 23 – 29, 2023. MLPNW provides the laboratory profession with a unique opportunity to increase visibility and appreciation for medical laboratory personnel.



2022 – 2023 EXAMINATION COMMITTEE & WORK GROUP VOLUNTEERS

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2022 – 2023 BOC BOARD OF GOVERNORS VOLUNTEERS

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Lori Schmitt, HT(ASCP)QIHC^{CM} – PA

Geoffrey Talmon, MD FASCP – NE



Front row (left to right): Alexandra Harrington, MD, FASCP, MLS(ASCP); Lori A. Schmitt, HT(ASCP)QIHC^{CM}; Ericka Hendrix, PhD, MB(ASCP)^{CM}; Susan Graham, MS, MLS(ASCP)SH^{CM}; Vicki Freeman, PhD, MASCP, MLS (ASCP)^{CM} SC, FAACC; Andreana Rivera, MD FASCP; Barbara McGahey-Frain, MS, SCT(ASCP)^{CM}; Michelle Montgomery Butina, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}. Second row: Rex Famitangco, MSc, MASCP, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}QLC^{CM}; Dana Altenburger, MD, FASCP; Denise Anamani, MA, I(ASCP)MB^{CM}; Joan Polancic, MEd, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}; Thomas Alexander, PhD, D(ABMLI); Elaine Francis, Med; L.J. Atieh, MHS, PA(ASCP)^{CM}. Back row: Catherine Gebhart, PhD, D(ABHI), MB(ASCP)^{CM}; Amanda Harrington, PhD, D(ABMM); William Finn, MD, MASCP; Geoffrey Talmon, MD FASCP; and J.R. Constance, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}. Not pictured: Sue Johnson, MSTM, MLS(ASCP)SBB^{CM}.

BOC Professional Partners Meeting Dates

2023

March

[2023 Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference](#)

March 2 – 4

New Orleans, LA

April

[2023 ASFA Annual Meeting](#)

April 26 – 29

Minneapolis, MN

May

[ISBER 2023 Annual Meeting](#)

May 3 – 6

Seattle, WA

June

[ASM Microbe 2023](#)

June 15 – 19

Houston, TX

[2023 Joint Annual Meeting \(ASCLS & AGT\)](#)

June 26 – 30

Providence, RI

July

[2023 AACC](#)

July 23 – 27

Anaheim, CA

September

[2023 NSH Convention](#)

September 8 – 12

Baltimore, MD

[48th Annual Conference \(AAPA\)](#)

September 18 – 22

Minneapolis, MN

October

[2023 AABB Annual Meeting](#)

October 14 – 17

Nashville, TN

[ASCP 2023 Annual Meeting](#)

October 18 – 20

Long Beach, CA

November

[ASC's 71st Annual Scientific Meeting](#)

November 16 – 19

Austin, TX

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: MICHELE REA

The ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) experienced some growing pains in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Processes that relied on paper files had to be accommodated to keep business moving. While there was never a complete stoppage of work, some bottlenecks developed and the BOC needed more help. A few temporary employees were brought on to catch up with the backlog as electronic processes were put into place. In March 2022 Michele Rea joined the BOC as a temporary employee. She began by assisting those who process wall certificates, and later began doing name changes and processing primary verification of certification requests.

Michele was born in Hoffman Estates, a suburb northwest of Chicago. Her father was in the military, and she moved quite a bit. She graduated from Hoffman Estates High School and attended the local college there. Michelle has had a variety of jobs, both in banking and restaurant work. When asked about her most interesting job, she replied it was as a home health care provider. In addition to working at the BOC, she also works at a local Italian restaurant. When not working, she enjoys spending time with her children.

To get to know her better, we asked her a few questions.

What's your favorite movie or book?

My Best Friend's Wedding

What's the craziest thing you've ever done?

I moved to Springfield, MO, with my then-two-year-old child, without knowing anyone there.

If you could visit anywhere in the world that you've never been, where would you go?

My answer to this would change weekly. This week, I would enjoy traveling to someplace in the mountains where there is a huge snowfall, with a cup of coffee and a hot tub nearby.

If you could have dinner with any two people, living or dead, who would it be and why?

I would love to sit down and have dinner with my mom. She passed in 2000, and I would love to just have more time with her

Who inspires you?

My children.

What was the best advice you've ever received?

Never make a permanent decision based on temporary feelings.

BOC STAFF PAINTING



Executive Director, Amy Spiczka, took ASCP BOC staff out in October so they could show off their artistic skills. A fun afternoon was had by all.



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**The mission of the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC)
is to provide excellence in certification of
laboratory professionals on behalf of patients worldwide.**