



ASCP BOARD OF
CERTIFICATION

NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2024

CONTENTS

- 2 Chair's Message
- 3 A Journey in Microbiology
- 4 Update from the October 2023
ASCP BOC Board of Governors Meeting
- 5 2023 ASCP BOC Awards Presented in Long Beach
- 6 ASCP BOC 2023 Global Café:
A Hub of Synergy and Learning
- 7 ASCP BOC Advances Global Medical Laboratory
Standards with Outreach at the 55th Congress of SBPC/
ML in Brazil
- 8 ASCP BOC Enhances Presence in Korea:
Promoting Certification at the 61st Korean Association of
Medical Technologists and International Conference
- 8 ASCP BOC Showcases Expertise at PAMET, Philippines,
and Medlab Middle East
- 9 Mayo Clinic Enhances Retention and Education
Through Allied Health Scholarship Program:
Emphasizes Importance of Medical Laboratory
Professional Credentials
- 10 Advancing Medical Laboratory Careers:
Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Vision
- 11 BOC Examination Committee & Work Group Volunteers
2023 – 2024
- 12 ASCP BOC Board of Governors 2023–2024
- 12 New ASCP BOC Board of Governors Members
- 13 2024 BOC Partners Meeting Dates
- 13 Victory in Advocating Changes to CLIA Final Rule

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



**Vicki Freeman,
PhD, MASCP,
MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, SC^{CM},
FADLM**

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

On October 21 and 22, the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) Board of Governors (BOG) met in Long Beach, CA, under the leadership of Susan Graham, MS, MLS(ASCP)SH^{CM}. This meeting marked the end of Sue's term as Chair. As she leaves her role as Chair, I would like to thank her for the leadership that she has shown in the past two years. Although the pandemic is considered over, there were still many challenges that Sue helped the BOC Board address. As I assume the role of Chair, it is a bit daunting, but I feel prepared and ready thanks to Sue's mentoring and guidance.

The business of the meeting was both considerable and significant. While the details can be found in the following pages, I'd like to highlight a few items. The Value of Certification Task Force is continuing its work on highlighting why certification is important. The Board approved a new examination committee to begin the process of developing a Doctorate in Clinical Laboratory Sciences certification, a long-awaited development. Additionally, under the guidance of our new Executive Director, Amy Spiczka, MS, HTL(ASCP)^{CM}SCT, MB^{CM}, CPHQ, the BOC team is assessing the scope of BOC data derivatives and implementing data-driven decision-making with meaningful visualizations to benefit stakeholders (including program directors, students, and laboratory professionals). The BOC is working toward providing data using a new visualization platform that will allow program directors to obtain more information on their graduates who take the BOC exam.

Annually, the Board of Governors recognizes individuals who have served the Board of Certification with distinction. BOC Distinguished Service Awards were presented to Michael (Mike) Sovocool, MHS, PA(ASCP)^{CM}, Marissa Marques, MD, FASCP, and Linda Smith, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} BB^{CM} (who was traveling and unable to attend). It is a joy to honor and celebrate their contributions and accomplishments. Two members of the ASCP BOC Board of Governors completed their tenure on the Board. Always a bittersweet moment of celebration and sadness, we are grateful to Sue Johnson, MSTM, MLS(ASCP) SBB^{CM} and Alexandra (Ali) Harrington, MD, FASCP, MLS(ASCP), for their substantial and remarkable service to the ASCP Board of Certification and the Board of Governors. As they leave the Board, we welcome new members Phil Accooe, MBA, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM}, CLS, CABP, PMP, Michelle Nelsen, MS, HTL(ASCP)^{CM}, and Alexa Siddon, MD, FASCP. We look forward to the contributions of our new colleagues.

As the new year unfolds, the exam committees will meet to continue the important work of reviewing and revising the components of the certification and qualification exams. As the landscape of the medical laboratory changes, so must the certification process to ensure the competency of the individuals implementing those changes. In closing, I hope 2024 provides a safe, healthy, and successful new year.



A JOURNEY IN MICROBIOLOGY

MaryAnn Brandt, SM(ASCP)^{CM}

I knew, during my undergraduate studies, that I had a passion for microbiology. As I investigated what I could do for a career after college it became apparent that clinical microbiology was where I wanted to focus my interest. I applied for a laboratory assistant position at a local medical center in 2006. The microbiology supervisor at that time interviewed me and informed me about working as a medical laboratory scientist with the expectation of getting my microbiology certification [M(ASCP)] within a year of employment. This was how I was introduced into the ASCP certification process and, as they say, the rest is history.

During my career, I know that working toward and achieving my M(ASCP) certification allowed me to take pride in my position. There are different routes to take to be eligible to sit for a certification exam. I chose the route in which I needed to establish experience in multiple areas of the clinical microbiology department before my supervisor at the time would sign off for approval. The certification exam, along with my passion for the field, has had a positive influence in my career.

I started in the field with, in my opinion, the best mentors one could ask for. The average experience of my mentors was 10+ years. Each had their own specialty in antimicrobial susceptibility testing, troubleshooting bacteriology and mycology, parasitology, anaerobes, cystic fibrosis population, and quality assurance. I was also surrounded by others who had been where I was trying to go and they made time to quiz me and ask me those hard questions. It was our own study group at work. I would not be where I am without those individuals taking the time to help me grow in my professional development. I take them with me wherever I go.

Due to the exceptional training I obtained on the job, I was able to sit for my SM(ASCP) and passed. Once

I had my SM(ASCP), I was able to take advantage of advancing in my career to an adjunct professor position, and I volunteered on the ASCP BOC Microbiology Exam Committee. I have served two, three-year terms on the ASCP BOC committee in the hopes that I could contribute to making the certification more “on the job” related (what most MLS professionals will come across working in the field) rather than what they will read in a textbook. ASCP is focused on making sure they achieve these different perspectives when they accept volunteers for exam committees.

Obtaining my certification has provided me opportunities that my experience has allowed me to maintain. As a certified specialist in microbiology, I intend to serve as a leader to help others in the field grow, reach outside their scope, and provide quality patient care. The field of medical sciences is dependent on collaboration both within the department and with other departments. Working together is how we achieve the best patient care, no matter what laboratory, hospital, clinic, etc.

To those who are thinking about obtaining certification within the laboratory, it is hard work; however, it will allow you a seat at the table when your expertise is sought for difficult clinical cases, networking at conferences (regional or large), and volunteer opportunities. Most importantly, you will be in a position to serve as mentor to those just beginning in the field. After COVID-19, this has become essential in keeping the passion alive. From burn-outs to retirements, it is evident that those with expertise in the microbiology department are becoming extinct. For the sake of patient care, it is essential that those who remain use this opportunity to build up those who are new to microbiology and clinical laboratory practice.



UPDATE FROM THE OCTOBER 2023 ASCP BOC BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEETING

The ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) Board of Governors met October 21-22, 2023, in Long Beach, CA. Several motions were passed that impact eligibility requirements, as summarized below. **All updated eligibility requirements will be available on the ASCP BOC website in early 2024.** www.ascp.org/certification

Updates to Eligibility Requirements

Qualification in Biorepository, QBRS

A new route, route 7, has been added for graduates of master's level programs in biorepository science. This route became available in early January 2024. See www.ascp.org/boc/qbrs for complete information.

Qualification in Donor Phlebotomy, QDP

The Qualification in Donor Phlebotomy will only be offered until June 30, 2024. All applications must be received by April 30 to take this examination. See www.ascp.org/boc/qdp for complete information.

Revised Examination Content Guidelines

The Examination Content Guidelines for the below exams administered beginning January 1, 2024, have been revised. The revised content guidelines are currently available on the [Get Credentialed](#) page of the BOC website.

- Phlebotomy Technician (PBT)
- Technologist in Blood Banking (BB)
- Specialist in Blood Banking (SBB)
- Technologist in Cytogenetics (CG)
- Technologist in Hematology (H)
- Specialist in Hematology (SH)
- Technologist in Microbiology (M)
- Specialist in Microbiology (SM)
- Diplomate in Laboratory Management (DLM)

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

The new PhD level Immunology exam is now available for application and testing; the exam was launched April 1, 2023. See www.ascp.org/boc/dmli for complete information. It is important to note that CMS has approved the DMLI exam as qualifying doctoral individuals for directing high complexity labs. See www.cms.gov/clia/certification-boards for further information.

NEW in 2024: Increase in Dedicated CMP Points

CMP requirements will be revised to **increase from 2 to 8 points in certification** for the following categories: BB, C, CG, CT, H, HT, HTL, M, and MB. This will be in effect for all certification categories noted above expiring in **January 2024 and moving forward, regardless of when you submit your completed online declaration form.** This does **not** increase the overall total CMP points required.



2023 ASCP BOC AWARDS PRESENTED IN LONG BEACH

The ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) recognized three volunteers at an awards ceremony in Long Beach, CA, on October 21, 2023. The BOC Board of Governors (BOG) Chair, Sue Graham, MS, MLS(ASCP)SH^{CM} presented the BOC Distinguished Service Award (DSA) to Marisa Marques, MD, FASCP, Linda Smith, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM}, and Michael Sovocool, MHS, PA(ASCP)^{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. Marques served as a member of the Apheresis Qualification Work Group since its inception in 2014. The first QIA exam was given in 2016 and, to date, 230 people have been credentialed.
- Mr. Sovocool served on the Board of Governors as the representative for the American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA) from 2013–2022 and served as the Participating Society representative on the Executive Committee from 2018–2022. During his tenure on the BOG, he served on the BOC Finance Committee (2018–2022), and the Credential Maintenance Committee (2013–2020). Mr. Sovocool was instrumental on both the International Eligibility Task

Force (2013–2015) which later became the International Credentialing Committee (2014–2020), and on the Social Media Task Force (2017–2021), now the Social Media Committee (2021–2022). As the AAPA representative to the BOG, Mr. Sovocool served as the BOG Examination Committee Liaison to the Pathologists Assistant Examination Committee (2013–2022). Prior to serving on the Board of Governors, he served as a volunteer on the PA Exam Committee from 2005–2011, where he was committee Chair from 2005 until 2009.

- Dr. Smith served as one of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) representatives to the BOG from 2016–2022. She served as a member of the BOG Executive Committee from 2017–2020 as well as the Credential Maintenance Committee (2016–2022); the Ethics Review Committee (2016–2019), and the Policy and Procedure Committee (2019–2020). Dr. Smith served as the BOG Liaison to the Medical Laboratory Assistant Examination Committee from 2018–2022. She continues to serve on both the Nomenclature Task Force and was a member of the Doctorate in Clinical Laboratory Science (DCLS) Task Force that will be dissolved to make way for a DCLS examination committee in 2024. Dr. Smith was unable to attend the ceremony in Long Beach.

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 2023 recipients of the BOG Service Award include the following volunteers:

- Lela Buckingham, PhD, MSc, MB(ASCP)^{CM}DLM^{CM} was recognized for her service on the Molecular Biology Examination Committee from 2015–2022.
- Laurie Gillard, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM} was recognized for her service on the Blood Banking Examination Committee from 2015–2022.
- Terri McElhattan, MHA, CLASCP)PBT^{CM} was recognized for her service on the Phlebotomy Examination Committee from 2015–2022.
- Josh Simons, MBA, MS, HT(ASCP)^{CM}DLM^{CM} was recognized for his service on the Laboratory Management Examination Committee from 2015–2022.

All the BOG Service Award winners served as the chair of their respective examination committees.

The BOC congratulates all the 2023 award recipients and reminds everyone that volunteers are the cornerstone of the BOC, and it is through them that the mission can be fulfilled.



Pictured left to right: Susan Graham, MS, MLS(ASCP)SH^{CM}; Michael Sovocool, MHS, PA(ASCP)^{CM}; Marisa Marques, MD, FASCP; and Amy Spiczka, MS, HTL(ASCP)^{CM}SCT,MB^{CM},CPHQ. Not pictured: Linda Smith, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM}

ASCP BOC 2023 GLOBAL CAFÉ: A HUB OF SYNERGY AND LEARNING



The ASCP 2023 Annual Meeting, held at the Long Beach Convention Center in California, recently hosted a remarkable event, the ASCP BOC Global Café, from October 18-20, 2023. This innovative space was a collaboration between the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC), ASCP's Center for Global Health, and ASCP's Continuing Professional Development Department. It provided an opportunity for attendees to engage with the ASCP BOC team and immerse themselves in a multicultural environment that celebrated the diverse contributions of ASCPⁱ stakeholders.

A Welcoming Environment for Learning and Networking

The aim of the Global Café was to facilitate learning and networking among attendees. The ASCP BOC team, always on hand, provided invaluable insights and guidance on ASCP BOC credentials. The café was a hub for ASCPⁱ related information and dialogue, easily identifiable by its "Global Café" signage, offering a warm and inviting atmosphere to all ASCP 2023 attendees.



Immersive Multimedia Experience

The Global Café stood out as an immersive multimedia experience, showcasing the significant contributions of ASCPⁱ certificants, students, and volunteers.

A major highlight was the availability of electronic copies of ASCPⁱ informational materials. These resources were invaluable for those looking to apply for or maintain their ASCPⁱ credentials. The setting also allowed for casual interactions, fostering a sense of community among professionals.

Complementing the educational aspect, the café offered complimentary coffee and tea, allowing attendees to relax while enjoying various displays, including ASCPⁱ videos and an ASCPⁱ photo gallery. The inclusion of video and in-person presentations added an interactive dimension to the experience.



Informative Presentations

Significant presentations included:

- Lumar L. Alves, MLS(ASCP): Mr. Alves shared insights on building a successful career with ASCPⁱ from a Brazilian perspective.
- Silvia Flores: As Chair of the ASCP BOC Peru Advisory Board, Ms. Flores discussed the unique challenges faced by the Latino/Latina community in the laboratory profession.

- Dr. Maher Sughayer: The Chair of the ASCP BOC Jordan Advisory Board, Dr. Sughayer, delved into the challenges and opportunities of promoting ASCPⁱ in Jordan.

Special Highlights of the Event

- New ASCPⁱ Logo Launch Party: The café hosted a launch party for the new ASCPⁱ logo, marking a significant milestone for the organization.
- BOC Lab Superstar Nominations: This activity recognized the outstanding contributions of peers in the field.
- My BOC Credential Photobooth: A fun and engaging way for attendees to capture memories, this photobooth encouraged participants to share their credentialing journey.

The Global Café at the ASCP 2023 Annual Meeting was not just a space, but a vibrant community that brought together professionals from around the globe, fostering a spirit of collaboration and learning. It served as a testament to ASCP BOCs commitment to nurturing a global community in the field of pathology and laboratory medicine.



ASCP BOC ADVANCES GLOBAL MEDICAL LABORATORY STANDARDS WITH OUTREACH AT THE 55TH CONGRESS OF SBPC/ML IN BRAZIL

Representatives of the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC), Amy Spiczka, MS, HTL(ASCP)^{CM}SCT,MB^{CM},CPHQ Executive Director of the ASCP BOC, and Cristina González del Riego, MS, ASCP^I Ambassador to Latin America & the Caribbean, participated in the 55th Congress of the Brazilian Society of Clinical Pathology/Laboratory Medicine (SBPC/ML) in Sao Paulo, Brazil, marking a significant advancement in the ASCP BOC's outreach efforts in Latin America.

From September 5-8, the ASCP BOC hosted an engaging exhibit booth, fostering dialogue with key thought leaders in Latin America and representatives from the World Association of Societies of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine (WASPaLM). This event underscored the growing importance of standardized and high-quality pathology and laboratory medicine on a global scale, and at all levels of the laboratory.

Impactful Meetings and Collaborations

The delegation participated in several targeted meetings. Discussions with the Regional Council of Biomedicine (CRBM1), led by Federal Council Chair Dr. Silvio José Cecchi, focused on incorporating ASCP BOC standards in Brazilian biomedical training. Visits to DASA, one of Latin America's

largest diagnostic companies, with Dr. Alvaro Martins, a former president of SBPC/ML and medical specialist at DASA, highlighted the need for integrating global best practices in medical diagnostics.

Dialogue with WASPaLM, represented by Walter Allalon, Gabriela Moreira, and Roberto Verna, emphasized the significance of international standards in pathology and laboratory medicine. The BOC is looking to gain a further understanding of the Brazilian laboratory landscape and professionals' needs.

SBPC/ML: A Hub of Clinical Pathology Excellence

SBPC/ML, a non-profit association founded in 1944, plays a pivotal role in enhancing clinical pathology and medical laboratory standards within Brazil. Their commitment to quality, ethics, and innovation, coupled with their ISQuA accreditation (The International Society for Quality in Health Care), positions them as a leading voice in the field. The SBPC/ML Congress is SBPC/ML's largest annual event, congregating over 5000 laboratory professionals from around Latin America. It offers a platform for professionals to discuss advancements and challenges in the medical laboratory sector, fosters a collaborative environment for continuous learning and discussion on key issues affecting laboratory medicine.

Why Brazil?

ASCP BOC's outreach to Brazil is strategic for several reasons:

Growing Healthcare Infrastructure

With Brazil's expanding healthcare sector and a population exceeding 200 million, there is a burgeoning demand for high-quality medical diagnostics and lab services. ASCP BOC's global credentials can significantly contribute to this growth.

Bridging Skill Gaps

Brazil's need for advanced training and specialization aligns with ASCP BOC's objectives to elevate the expertise in laboratory medicine, benefiting healthcare providers and patients alike.

Regulatory Alignment and Standardization

Brazil's aspiration to align with international healthcare standards resonates with ASCP BOC's mission, promising improved quality and efficacy in laboratory medicine.

Growing Private Healthcare Sector

ASCP BOC-credentialed professionals are an asset to Brazil's robust private healthcare sector, seeking international accreditations.

Interest in Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing

This initiative illustrates a mutual interest in elevating healthcare standards and fostering international collaboration.

Why it Matters

The ASCP BOC's participation at the 55th Congress of SBPC/ML not only highlights its commitment to global healthcare standards but also opens new avenues for collaboration and knowledge exchange, reinforcing the role of standardized medical laboratory practices and the value of ASCP BOC credentials towards improving patient care worldwide.



ASCP BOC ENHANCES PRESENCE IN KOREA

Promoting Certification at the 61st Korean Association of Medical Technologists and International Conference

Recognizing the growing interest in ASCP BOC credentialing within Korea, the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) remains committed to advancing the laboratory profession. At the 61st Korean Association of Medical Technologists and International Conference held in Gunsan, South Korea, from October 13-14, the ASCP BOC was represented by Amy Spiczka, MS, HTL(ASCP)^{CM}SCT,MB^{CM},CPHQ, Executive Director of ASCP BOC, and Jennifer Young, CT(ASCP)^{CM}, Director of International Partnerships.

Held at Gunsan Saemangeum Convention Center, this event brought together over 4,000 laboratory medicine leaders from both local and international circles. As one of over 60 exhibitors, ASCP BOC provided insights into topics such as the reinstatement of lapsed credentials, eligibility requirements,

and the diverse ASCP BOC specialist categories, including the Specialist in Cytology and Pathologist Assistant.

In addition to interacting with potential applicants and certified professionals, ASCP BOC's team cultivated valuable connections with prominent leaders in the region. Noteworthy introductions were made with Yoshifumi Miyajima, President of the Japan Association of Medical Technologists (JAMT) and Tomoji Yuno, JAMT Congress Chair, laying the groundwork for ASCP BOC's participation in the 2024 JAMT Congress. Additionally, ASCP BOC had the privilege of meeting Jang Ho Lee, President of the Korean Association of Medical Technologists (KAMT), Hyo-Chan Kang, Ph.D., Chair of the Korea Advisory Board, and fostering connections with esteemed laboratory directors and students throughout the region.



ASCP BOC SHOWCASES EXPERTISE

AT PAMET, PHILIPPINES, AND MEDLAB MIDDLE EAST

The 59th Philippine Association for Medical Technologists (PAMET) Annual Convention, themed "Navigating the Future of Medical Technology with Cohesive Collaboration and Transparency," took place at the Manila Hotel on December 5 - 7, 2023. Amy Spiczka, MS, HTL(ASCP)^{CM}SCT,MB^{CM},CPHQ, Executive Director, delivered a presentation titled "The Value of ASCP BOC." This conference presented unique opportunities to glean insights from leading industry experts, featuring an exhibition hall showcasing cutting-edge breakthroughs and innovations.

Subsequently, on February 5-8, 2024, ASCP BOC was prominently featured at Medlab Middle East 2024, now in its 23rd year. The annual event brought together over 30,000 laboratory professionals from across the region and hosted more than 600 exhibitors.

The ASCP BOC continues to attend exhibit at such international conferences, providing a platform to address inquiries pertaining to certification, qualifications, and the credential maintenance program (CMP). The conferences serve as pivotal moments for networking,

allowing the BOC to reconnect with esteemed ASCP BOC Advisory Board members and reaffirm partnerships with organizations like PAMET. The BOC eagerly anticipates additional opportunities to collaborate with international colleagues, advancing the profession through robust credentialing and engaging in substantive discussions with field experts in laboratory medicine.



MAYO CLINIC ENHANCES RETENTION AND EDUCATION THROUGH ALLIED HEALTH SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Emphasizes Importance of Medical Laboratory Professional Credentials

Phoenix, AZ – Mayo Clinic in Arizona, Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology (DLMP), has launched a pioneering allied health scholarship program, aiming to bolster retention and professional development among its staff, particularly in the wake of challenges posed by COVID-19. This initiative, significant in its scope and potential impact, offers a nuanced approach to professional certification, that takes advantage of the popularity of the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) credentials.

Starting Point: A Response to Retention Challenges

In July 2022, a comprehensive survey revealed that Mayo Clinic was encountering some staff retention issues due to certification costs and other COVID-related issues. In response, DLMP's administration inquired if scholarships for certification would encourage staff to stay. The overwhelming response was affirmative, leading to the birth of the Allied Health Scholarship Program. The program, first initiated as a pilot, has been met with enthusiasm, especially from younger employees who are traditionally more likely to engage in job hopping.

The Value of BOC Credentials

While Mayo Clinic does not officially endorse any particular medical laboratory credentials, ASCP BOC credentials have emerged as a popular choice among staff. Certification is necessary for several roles, though not all, within the Mayo Clinic Laboratory. A number of employees are pursuing scholarships to obtain mandatory certifications, as well as additional certifications to enhance their career growth and professional skills. The most common scholarship applications are for medical laboratory scientist (MLS)

and phlebotomy (PBT) certifications, with a preference for ASCP BOC credentials and Continuing Maintenance Program (CMP).

This preference for ASCP BOC credentials is understandable considering that the ASCP BOC assures high-quality outcomes through meticulous and comprehensive processes when building and maintaining exams. The exams are led by vetted practice analyses which reflect current expertise and emerging concepts that contribute to enhanced patient outcomes. Recognized volunteer experts and practice leaders contribute to examination content. Credential-related processes are overseen by dedicated, skilled BOC team members who are likewise experts in psychometrics, laboratory sciences, operations, education, examination development and assessment, association management, as well as data governance. Examination questions are reviewed annually for relevancy and accuracy, with new content incorporated to allow for industry and technological advancements. The ASCP BOC ensures that its exams and exam questions are psychometrically fair, valid, and reliable.

Program Details and Future Prospects

For the upcoming year, the Clinic has increased the scholarship amount from \$200 to \$250, an amount that will cover the expense of most new certifications. The scholarship, funded entirely by Mayo Clinic, covers costs related to certification and renewal, as well as educational materials such as study aids and exam simulation programs, and professional society memberships for active engagement and society leadership. The Clinic's commitment to this program is evident in its budget allocation of \$5,000 and plans to expand it to include other certifications in the future.

Implementation and Outreach

The main challenge lies in effectively communicating the availability of this opportunity to all staff members. Efforts are being made to spread awareness through various channels including newsletters, emails, and even flyers in break rooms.

Stakeholder Engagement and Feedback

The program has received positive feedback from both faculty and students. It is seen as a testament to Mayo Clinic's recognition of the value of professional credentials. The involvement of numerous key stakeholders in the development and implementation of this program, such as the Department of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology: Fiona Craig, MD, Chair; and Tonya Winder, MBA, MLS(ASCP)SBB, operations administrator & the education support staff: Jessica Frank, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, Program Director; Theresa N. Kinard, MD, DLMP, Associate Chair of Education; and Charlie D. Metz, MS, MA, MLS(ASCP), Education Specialist II, underscores its importance.

Conclusion

The Allied Health Scholarship Program at Mayo Clinic in Arizona stands as a testament to the Clinic's commitment to staff retention and professional development and underscores the popularity of ASCP BOC credentials. Furthermore, this initiative not only addresses immediate retention challenges but also sets a foundation for sustained educational advancement within Mayo Clinic in Arizona, reinforcing its motto, "the needs of the patient come first."



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ADVANCING MEDICAL LABORATORY CAREERS: Vanderbilt University Medical Center's Vision

At the forefront of shaping medical laboratory careers, Bruce Greig, MLS(ASCP)SCYM^{CM}, Associate in Pathology, Microbiology and Immunology at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (VUMC), champions the integration of laboratory professional credentials into career development. In a recent interview, Greig shed light on how VUMC has developed a robust career ladder system, emphasizing the value of credentials, including ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) credentials, in the medical laboratory field.

Within a professional framework, the ASCP BOC's portfolio provides the opportunity to acquire additional or advanced specialty credentials that are proven to provide career advancement. In this same vein, ASCP BOC credentials serve employers, like VUMC, who are seeking validated evidence of knowledge and competency to effectively model and implement career ladders which affirms recruitment and retention in today's ever-changing healthcare workforce environment.

Vanderbilt's innovative Professional Advancement Ladder Program, in place for nearly a decade, originated from a desire to retain nursing staff but has since expanded to encompass various medical fields, including laboratory science.

Greig describes this evolution:

Innovative Career Ladders at Vanderbilt

"Our career ladder program is a testament to Vanderbilt's commitment to not only train but also retain top talent. It's designed to transform a position into a fulfilling career, steering staff through a structured progression from a basic level of competency to higher levels. From radiology to laboratory sciences, we're cultivating an environment where our staff see their roles as long-term careers, not just jobs.

The challenge has been in efficiently elevating new recruits to higher levels of proficiency. Our career ladder program addresses this by setting individuals on a definitive career path, thereby retaining talent and enhancing our operational efficiency.

The program is nearly 10 years old now, and has expanded beyond its initial scope, positively impacting various departments within the hospital vis-à-vis its emphasis on credentials and professional development."

Credentials: A Cornerstone of Professional Development

"Credentials aren't just a requirement; they're a testament to the professional's expertise and commitment to excellence in laboratory science. At VUMC, these credentials play a crucial role in decisions regarding promotions and lateral moves within the organization. It's a foundational requirement for any test reportable job."

Greig added that the pursuit of specialty certifications, such as Specialist in Cytometry, SCYM(ASCP) offered by the BOC, is also highly encouraged and recognized at VUMC.

Adapting to Emerging Trends and Future Outlook

"There is a growing awareness and value placed on credentials for laboratory professionals, including BOC credentials, especially in terms of their role in career advancement and salary considerations. Looking ahead, I envision a future where credentials will play an even more significant role in staffing strategies at VUMC. We're focusing on overcoming staffing challenges while maintaining quality. The broad range of opportunities laboratory professional credentials offer is something we're keen on leveraging, and I'm optimistic about the expansive possibilities that credentials offer those in the medical laboratory field.

The program is in the process of adding additional laboratory health professionals including MLA's, cytologists, histologists, and molecular geneticists to increase the scope of practice throughout the different levels of laboratory testing. Of course, these jobs also include the requirements of being credentialed."

For more information about the Professional Advancement Ladder Program contact:

Holly Covas at holly.covas@vumc.org, Holly is the faculty advisor for the VUMC Professional Advancement Ladder Program, (as well as the 2018 ASCP Educator of the Year), and Chery Arnott, Director of the VUMC Professional Advancement Ladder Program, at cheryl.arnott@vumc.org.

BOC EXAMINATION COMMITTEE & WORK GROUP VOLUNTEERS 2023 – 2024

APHERESIS QUALIFICATION WORK GROUP

Yossi Schwartz, MD, MPH, QIA^{CM} – FL

Chair

Betty M. Doggett, AT(ASCP)^{CM} – TX
Christine Fernandez, RN, MSN – CO
Antonia Hagen-Coonradt, RN, BSB – MT
Cheryl Pacheco BSN, RN, CPN, QIA^{CM} – MA
Chrissy Anderson, RN, BSN, HP(ASCP) – TX

BIOREPOSITORY QUALIFICATION WORK GROUP

Kathy Mangold, PhD, HCLD, MB(ASCP)^{CM} – IL

Chair

Mary Ann Clements, BS – VA
Annemieke De Wilde, MS – Belgium
Carol Elliott, MS, CG(ASCP)^{CM}, RAC, CCRP – AZ
Piper Mullins, MIS – Washington, DC

BLOOD BANKING EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Lisa Shave, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM} – NJ

Chair

Lay See Er, MSTM, SBB(ASCP)^{CM} – WA
Yunchuan Delores Mo, MD, MSc, FASCP – VA
Max Louzon, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM} – WA
Leon Su, MD, FASCP, QIA^{CM} – AZ
Sue Johnson, MSTM, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM} – WI

CHEMISTRY EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Leslie Nakagawa, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} – WA

Chair

Jeannie Guglielmo, MS, MAT, MLS(ASCP)^{CM} – NY
Kelly Hankal, MBA, MLS(ASCP) – OK
Michele McAfee, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SC^{CM},SBB^{CM} – TX
Gerardo Ramos, PhD, MLS(ASCP), F-ABFT, FAACC – TX
Maja Chloupkova, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SC^{CM} – OR

CYTOGENETICS EXAMINATION COMMITTEE

Shannon Gaskin, BS, CG(ASCP)^{CM} – WA

Chair

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NEW ASCP BOC BOARD OF GOVERNORS MEMBERS

At the October 2023 ASCP BOC Board of Governors (BOG) meeting in Long Beach, three new members were welcomed to the BOG.



Phil Accooe, MBA, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SBB^{CM}, CLS, CABP, PMP, joins the Board of Governors as the Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies (AABB) representative. He is the Transfusion Service Laboratory Supervisor at U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Long Beach, CA.



Michelle A. Nelsen, MS, HTL(ASCP)^{CM}, joins the Board of Governors as one of the American Society for Clinical Pathology laboratory professional representatives. She is the program director of the Histology Technician Program at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, MN, and Assistant Professor of Laboratory Medicine and Pathology.



Alexa Siddon, MD, FASCP, joins the Board of Governors as one of the American Society for Clinical Pathology Fellow representatives. She is a pathologist and Hematopathology Fellowship Director, and Director, Molecular Diagnostics Laboratory, Laboratory Medicine; Director, Flow Cytometry, Laboratory Medicine; Associate Director, Hematology Laboratory, Laboratory Medicine at Yale New Haven Hospital and Yale School of Medicine.



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VICTORY IN ADVOCATING CHANGES TO CLIA FINAL RULE

Collaborative efforts by the ASCP Board of Certification and its many professional partners have scored a major advocacy victory reversing the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) proposal to recognize nursing degrees for high complexity testing. The Final Rule also reverses the CMS proposal to consider nursing degrees as equivalent to biology degrees. Through our collective advocacy, it's clear CLIA also recognizes that nursing degrees do not provide sufficient instruction in the applicable sciences to perform high complexity laboratory testing under CLIA.

While a notable victory, the ASCP BOC will continue to assess the full scope of the [CMS CLIA final rule](#) and promote other points of significance that benefit laboratory professionals and patients. For more information on the Final Rule, ASCP and the ASCP BOC have developed and promoted a detailed memo found [here](#).

2024 BOC PARTNERS MEETING DATES

FEBRUARY		
2024 Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference	February 22 – 24	Las Vegas, NV
APRIL		
ISBER 2024 Hybrid Annual Meeting	April 9 – 12	Melbourne, Australia
44th ASFA Annual Meeting	April 26 – 28	Minneapolis, MN
JUNE		
ASM Microbe	June 13 – 17	Atlanta, GA
JULY		
2024 Joint Annual Meeting (ASCLS/AGT)	July 7 – 11	Pittsburgh, PA
ADLM Annual Scientific Meeting & Clinical Lab Expo	July 28 – August 1	Chicago, IL
SEPTEMBER		
ASCP 2024 Annual Meeting	September 4 – 6	Chicago, IL
49th Annual Conference (AAPA)	September 15 – 19	Fort Lauderdale, FL
2024 NSH Convention	September 20 – 24	New Orleans, LA
OCTOBER		
2024 AABB Annual Meeting	October 19 – 24	Houston, TX
NOVEMBER		
ASC's 72nd Annual Scientific Meeting	November 7 – 10	Orlando, FL
DECEMBER		
66th ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition	December 7 – 10	San Diego, CA

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