



THE CULTURE

Ascending Professionals Forum

E-Newsletter

Introduction to the Ascending Professionals Forum Chair

Elizabeth LeFors, MLS (ASCP) ^{CM}



I am so excited to be serving as your Ascending Professionals Forum Chair (that is going to take some getting used to) this year and to see what we can

accomplish together. We have several projects we will be working on this year, including our annual Lab Week Run, a digital welcome packet, and the creation of an ASCLS 101 Crash Course web series.

We have already started working on making this year's Lab Week Run the biggest and best one yet. We had so many people tell us how they missed out on last year's run because we sold out so quickly (myself included). While that is a wonderful problem to have and speaks volumes to how rapidly this event is growing, we will be ordering more medals this year!

Issue 1, January 2019

Inside This Issue:

- How are you preparing for LAB WEEK 2019? ; by ALLY STORLA
- Oh, to be verified! By: Kyleigh Ellis
- Introduction to the APF Advisor: by Gilma Roncancio-Weemer
- From student to new professional: keeping up with the changes by Maria Rodriguez, MLS(ASCP)CM
- Oh, the places you can go!!! My eye-opening experience at the Career Options for MLS workshop: Shannon L. Smothers-Wansley
- Get to Know your Ascending professional forum
- Times Are Changing by Alexa Pierce-Matlack

Keep an eye out for more information about the 2019 Lab Week Run so you can recruit all your family, friends, and colleagues and help us to raise even more money for scholarships and travel grants to the Annual Meeting and Legislative Symposium. We can't do any of this without you, so thank you for all your hard work, dedication, enthusiasm, passion and commitment to our organization and profession. Let's make this a great year!

How are you preparing for Lab Week 2019?

by Ally Storla



The ASCLS Lab Week Run will be back for its 4th year in 2019. The ASCLS Lab Week Run is a virtual run fundraiser hosted by the Ascending Professionals Forum (previously the New Professionals New Members Forum) which takes place during Medical Laboratory Professionals Week and rewards participants with a fun, unique laboratory themed finisher medal for completing a 5K (3.1 mile) run/walk. Virtual runs are runs that can be done anytime, anywhere so for our run we specify the time Lab Week and then the how and where are on the participant. We have had participants walk it, run it, hike

it, climb it, kayak it, walk the dog to finish it, mow the lawn, or just finish it doing the typical running around we all know too well from working in our laboratories. We encourage participants to dress up and make it fun and take pictures to share. This is our week celebrate it, while helping to share our profession with your community!

The previous lab week runs have featured medals ranging from a microscope with a dangling acrylic slide, a gold streaked out micro plate, and a centrifuge with tubes that really spin. All race packets sold out for the previous runs and fundraised several thousand dollars for travel grants for first time attendees to the ASCLS Annual Meeting and the Legislative Symposium. We also fundraise for Education and Research Grants and recently dedicated \$10,000 in Cynthia Breen's honor. Cynthia Breen was a hematologist and shared her career with her son, John Breen of Ashworth Awards, who helped the Lab Week Run get off the ground by being our amazing finisher medal designer.

For the 2019 Lab Week Run all participants will receive a finisher medal, a race bib, a magnetic 2019 Calendar featuring ASCLS 2019 meeting dates, and a 2019 Lab Week Run T-Shirt! We have also nearly doubled the amount of available race packets so even more people can participate. Finally our last addition to this year will be opening registration much earlier. January 1st-31st, 2019 participants can sign up and take advantage of our Early Bird registration price of \$35 per packet. From February 1st– March 31st, 2019 participants can sign up for our Early Bird registration price of \$40 per packet and from April 1 until Lab Week packets will be \$45 each. We encourage signing up ASAP as we have sold out 3 years in a row with last year selling out before the Early Bird pricing deadline. Registration will be available at www.labweekrun.com, we encourage you to get a group together and don't wait! Happy Lab Week!

OH, TO BE VERIFIED! BY: KYLEIGH ELLIS



The long-awaited dream and scheme of every social media sensation is to be verified. A little blue check by your name to say that the industry and social media platform recognizes your widely known fame. Unlike the rest of social media, becoming verified, or even remotely popular, isn't instant. But the ASCLS Ascending Professionals Forum is ready to put in the work. Our Regional Representatives and Forum officers are tackling that task week by week three times a week. Every one of us is assigned a week to post three times. The posts are informative articles, updates on what we're doing as group, funny pictures, polls, or reminders. Multiple post a week and increased followings with input from group members will add credibility as a possible means for verification. The main goal is to grow

our followers. Hopefully, causing those within the group to stay involved with ASCLS, all while encouraging friends and other ascending professionals to get involved with ASCLS.

Increasing followers and making ourselves known isn't an easy or short task, but we have persistence and a plan. Special thanks to the Region Representatives and officers that are helping out an active practice of One Voice, One Vision. [Join our group on Facebook – ASCLS APF Forum](#)

INTRODUCTION TO THE APF ADVISOR BY

GILMA RONCANCIO-WEEMER



My name is Gilma Roncancio-Weemer and I'm the program director for a hospital based clinical laboratory science program at HSHS St. John's Hospital Springfield, IL. I am the appointed Advisor to the APF and as such I provide the Forum officers with guidance and mentoring, educating them about ASCLS protocols and operating procedure. I have served ASCLS in many leadership

positions from the local to national level. When I was the ASCLS Secretary/Treasurer I served as the Board liaison to the task force that recommended the restructure resulting in the formation of the APF. I have been fortunate to be involved with the Forum since its inception and so proud of the ongoing Forum accomplishments. If you're an ascending professional, you're in great hands so let the Forum leaders know what ASCLS can do for you!

FROM STUDENT TO NEW PROFESSIONAL: KEEPING UP WITH THE CHANGES

MARIA RODRIGUEZ, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}

My high school counselor used to quote Pablo Neruda at the end of every academic year: “Nosotros, los de entonces, ya no somos los mismos.” This quote was his eloquent way of making us reflect on how everything is constantly changing. At the time, I thought this phrase was the cheesiest thing I had ever heard. “We, of that time, are no longer the same.” What does that even mean? It was not until last year I realized how right he was. The only thing constant in life is change, and our likelihood to succeed depends on our power of adaptability. We evolve to harmonize with our surroundings. Nonetheless, navigating those changes is not always smooth sailing. Changes are usually subtle. They approach you slowly, so you have time to adjust to them. Nonetheless, some changes strike you like a lightning bolt. From one day to another, you are in a completely different situation.

Graduating from my Medical Laboratory Science program was one of those lightning bolt changes. One day I was a student living in Bozeman, a town located in southwest Montana. Three days later I was a new professional residing in Las Vegas. For most of us, that’s how it works. One day we are shadowing seasoned MLSs, and the next day we are running departments by ourselves. It’s scary, I know. It even makes you question, “Am I ready for this?” Soon, all the changes start to

overwhelm you, as you are now dealing with a new job, new coworkers, and a new city. It feels like even breathing is not the same anymore. Then, an email pops up in your inbox with the subject line: “It is time to renew your ASCLS membership.” Your membership in the society you have been part of for almost your whole college career is about to expire. You wonder whether it’s worth it to renew your membership. You are going through enough already. Your routine has changed, and you feel maybe it’s time to take a break and focus on your job. Plus, the new membership fee is not in your budget. Does any of this sound familiar? It’s not a secret that going from a student to a new professional can be hard. Nonetheless, for every reason you have not to renew your membership, I have a thousand reasons why you should.

Two Forums, One Goal

For starters, ASCLS has two forums that help students and new professionals find their place in the profession and the society. The Developing Professionals Forum (for students) and Ascending Professionals Forum (for new professionals) work hand in hand to provide students and new professionals a voice to express their ideas, opinions, and concerns.

Both forums also raise funds to support travel grants for students and new professionals to attend the ASCLS Annual Meeting and Legislative Symposium.

The Developing Professionals Forum will be there through your college career. It will give you tips on how to find a job, how to study for the Board of Certification (BOC) exam, and more. Being part of the Developing Professionals Forum is only the beginning of a fantastic journey full of opportunities to grow not only as a laboratory professional, but also as a leader. The Ascending Professionals Forum will be there to help you get through those stressful changes that come after graduation. Why go through all of that by yourself when you can do it with people who are going through similar situations? No one is going to understand you more than your fellow Ascending Professionals.

Change is a Constant

OH, THE PLACES YOU CAN GO!!! MY EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE AT THE CAREER OPTIONS FOR MLS WORKSHOP: SHANNON L. SMOTHERS-WANSLEY

When I entered the MLS program last year at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, I pretty much figured I was destined to a lifelong career in a laboratory. Little did I know that there are so many different things that I can do once I graduate and become certified. I

Remember what I said before? “We, of that time, are no longer the same.” Well, laboratory professionals, of that time, are no longer the same either. Part of the beauty of our profession is that it is always moving forward. New diseases are being discovered, technologies are being developed, and standards and requirements are being revised and updated. The political climate is also constantly changing and shaping the profession. It is hard to keep up with so much innovation at once. Thankfully, ASCLS can help.

Attendance at the Annual Meeting is highly encouraged, but it’s not the only way to stay up to date with the Society and the profession. Publications, such as *ASCLS Today*, *Clinical Laboratory Science*, and the Developing Professionals Forum and the Ascending Professionals Forum newsletters will keep you informed with timely updates on Society activities, professional topics, and political issues.

attended a workshop called Career Options for MLS and was shocked at all the wonderful opportunities out there for future MLS’. So, let’s dig into these opportunities. First, I could become a CLIA Laboratory Surveyor. CLIA stands for Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments. CLIA surveyors inspect clinical laboratories to ensure that scientists and technicians who examine human specimens for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease maintain specimen controls and follow testing procedures. This job is available at both the state and

(Continued from page 5)

Next, I could potentially teach the future. As a professor, I would teach new comers in the field about the wonderful worlds of Hematology, Chemistry and Microbiology to name a few. The last job that was discussed was about becoming a traveling MLS. This job basically paid and housed you to travel the country

working in different labs.

The opportunities are endless and wide ranging when it comes to becoming a Medical Laboratory Scientist. This workshop was truly eye opening and I left feeling completely confident that choose a field that is growing, changing, and limitless.

Continued from page 5



On top of that, our new online member communities allow you to connect with hundreds of professionals with one click. Do you need help solving a complicated case? Write a question in the ASCLS Open Forum and you will get multiple responses from your colleagues all over the nation within a day.

Give Back to Your Profession

It is always a good time to advocate for your profession. We are the hospital's best-kept secret. Thus, we united our voices to educate the public on what we do and the importance of lab professionals in the medical field. Right now, it may seem like you don't have time to dedicate to the Society. That is okay. You don't

have to withdraw from all the other benefits your membership offers. It's always a good time to network with other members. It's always a good time to keep yourself up to date with new trends and technologies linked to our profession. You can volunteer when the time is right for you. The next time you wonder whether it's worth renewing your ASCLS membership, I hope your answer is, "YES!" You will gain access to outstanding resources that will help you in your future endeavors. You will connect with seasoned professionals who are willing to share their knowledge. Clinical laboratory science is changing; navigating those changes with your professional society will be the best investment of time and money you will ever make. In a life full of changes keep something constant. Renew your ASCLS membership!

Get to Know your Ascending professional forum



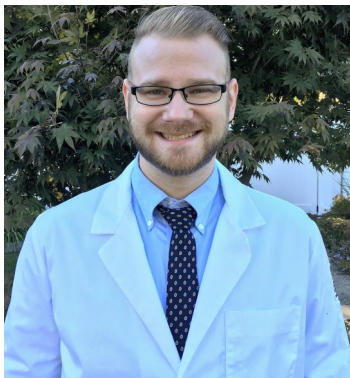
Elizabeth LeFors
Chair



Kyleigh Ellis
Vice-Chair



Jessica Lawless
Secretary



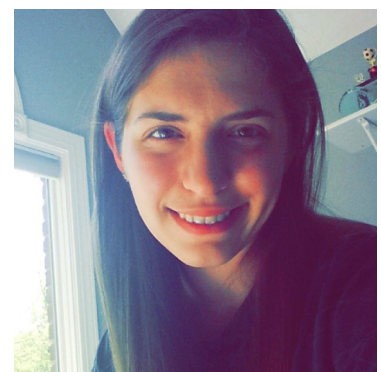
Nathan Howell
Region I



Joshua Cannon
Region II (3 yr term)



Ally Storla
Region III (3 r term)



Darby Naheedy
Region IV (3 yr term)

Get to Know your Ascending professional forum Leadership roster



Esther Iheme
Region V (1 yr term)



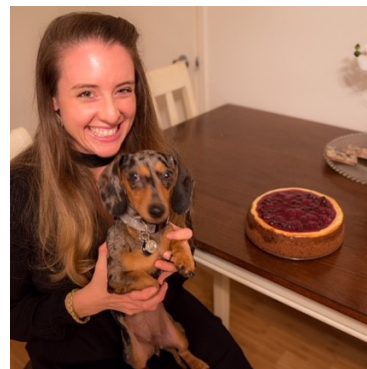
Franki-Marie Herdt
Region VIII (3 yr term)



Ellis McVoy
Region VII (1 yr term)



Jess Sheffield, Region
VI. (5 years term)



Amanda Fulton Region X
(3 year term)

TIMES ARE CHANGING

BY ALEXA PIERCE-MATLACK

The field of healthcare is rapidly evolving and so is the need for advanced degrees in laboratory medicine. There is an ever expanding catalog of diagnostic tests and changing specimen and ordering requirements. This poses a huge challenge, as physicians may struggle with keeping current on all of the changes in the laboratory and how to determine the best tests to order. There is often a disconnect between the laboratory and the ordering physicians, creating gaps in communication and confusion with proper laboratory test ordering. Behold the Doctorate of Clinical Laboratory Science; this advanced degree allows the gap between the physicians and the laboratory to be bridged, enhance patient care while decreasing unneeded testing and excessive healthcare costs.

In 2018, the first DCLS graduated from Rutgers University and opened the door to many opportunities! Brandy Gunsolus DCLS, MLS (ASCP)^{CM} has become the first of hopefully many DCLS to help strengthen the field of laboratory medicine and allow fellow laboratory professionals to directly impact patient care. There are currently three DCLS programs throughout the country and multiple hospital locations providing residency opportunities. While the job market doesn't show DCLS jobs, there will be job openings as hospitals learn of the benefits to having a DCLS employed at their facility. Initially DCLS graduates will most likely find employment at the hospitals they complete their residency as more hospitals learn of the benefits of hiring a DCLS.

Currently medical errors are the third leading cause of death in the U.S., causing 250,000 deaths each year. This is a huge problem and causes a trickle down effect throughout healthcare of physicians over-ordering laboratory testing an excessive medical costs to cover the physicians and hospital if there is a poor outcome. Over-ordering can lead to more issues down the line, as there are more test results to interpret and that can generate more confusion or misleading results, further complicating patient care. This could easily be solved with better collaboration between physicians and the laboratory; the clear solution is a DCLS!

The main goal of a DCLS is to address the gap in quality care and delivery of clinical laboratory services. This can be accomplished through four aspects: patient care intervention (PCI), diagnostics management intervention (DMI), utilization review intervention (URI), and community intervention (CI). PCI utilizes an interprofessional healthcare team, made up of a clinician, residents, Pharm D, DCLS, nurses, and other health professionals, to perform daily patient care rounds. With the DCLS involved from the beginning, they can see the entire clinical picture and help create the best care plan. In one case, Dr. Gunsolus successfully prevented a patient from undergoing unnecessary IV antibiotic therapy, which would have delayed surgery for placement of a PACEmaker and also increasing the length of stay for no true clinical reason. Not only did this provide a better outcome for the patient, it also saved the

(Continued on page 10)

hospital money.

DMI also focuses on an interprofessional team approach with the pathologist, the DCLS, clinicians, laboratory staff, and other healthcare providers. This aspect of a DCLS' role is to identify problems with healthcare and laboratory processes and figure out how they can be resolved from happening again. Often cases are brought to the attention of the DCLS when a significant error occurs, like sending down unspun tubes for 72 hours of bloodwork at room temperature, after initiating an extended fast for the patient. It was determined that multiple protocols weren't followed and physicians used a medical guideline that did not apply to the patient. Through the work of the DCLS, the policies were changed and prior approval is required for certain testing to prevent this from happening again.

URI uses pathologists, DCLS, clinicians, other laboratorians, and other healthcare professionals to review test utilization and ensure that the proper tests are being ordered on patients, ensuring cost effective utilization of hospital resources and proper care. This also allows the DCLS to educate physicians about laboratory testing and what tests

might be best based on patient conditions and helping to interpret laboratory results. For CI, the DCLS works to make laboratory medicine more visible to the community. More visibility allows people to have a better understanding of their laboratory tests and what results mean for their conditions.

With only the first DCLS working for 9 months, there was a documented savings of \$628,493 from cancelled testing, appropriate results for discharge, discontinued drug therapy, joining rounds, among some things. There is also a constant demand for DCLS rounding on all service lines and monthly physician continuing education requests, creating a better healthcare setting overall, giving patients better outcomes. As more hospitals begin to recognize the benefits of a DCLS, the need for laboratory professionals becoming DCLS will continue increasing to provide great patient care and cost savings for healthcare. DCLS is the key to breaking down the walls between physicians and the laboratory and providing the best patient care.

