



NEWSLETTER

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

CHAIR'S MESSAGE



Kathleen Hansen,
MLS(ASCP)^{CM}

The Board of Governors of the Board of Certification met in late April and conducted much business on behalf of the BOC, including approval of a budget, election of officers and members of the Executive Committee, and election of new members of the BOG.

One feature of the April meeting was Board education, focusing on communication styles and how preferred methods of communication differ among generations. The result of this was the appointment of a BOG task force to study this issue further and recommend how the BOC might use various forms of social media more effectively.

A major topic of discussion and action was the relationship of the ASCP and ASCPⁱ credentials.

The BOC offers its gold standard credentials in the form of international certification to eligible individuals worldwide. The ASCPⁱ credential certifies professional competency among new and practicing laboratory personnel in an effort to contribute globally to the highest standards of patient safety. Graduates of medical laboratory science programs outside the United States are challenged with content identical to the standards of excellence established by U.S. ASCP exams.

A major emphasis of the ASCPⁱ program has always been to offer validation to laboratory practitioners world-wide, in order to improve patient safety globally. However, a need has emerged to clarify the status of the international credentials to employers and laboratorians in the U.S., as some holders of ASCPⁱ credentials immigrate to the U.S. Some state licensure boards and

individual employers have recognized ASCPⁱ as meeting their standards, while others have only recognized ASCP.

The BOG has devised a method whereby holders of ASCPⁱ credentials can convert these to the corresponding ASCP credential without re-taking an exam. Holders of valid and current ASCPⁱ credentials who meet a U.S. eligibility route will be able to convert to the corresponding ASCP credential. The specifics of how to qualify for the conversion are being finalized and will be published as soon as they are available.

As always, I am impressed with and grateful for the dedication of the volunteers who serve on the BOG, and their sharing of expertise in all areas of laboratory medicine. Beyond the BOG, we have many, many dedicated volunteers who serve on Exam Committees and in other roles. Finally, the members of the BOG and I are grateful to our dedicated staff for their guidance and hard work. We have an awesome team!

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UPDATES FROM THE BOC BOARD OF GOVERNORS' MEETING

The Board of Certification Board of Governors met in Miami on April 28 and 29 and took the following actions:

Revisions in eligibility requirements:

- Minor revisions in eligibility requirements for the following categories: Technologist in Chemistry (Route 4), Specialist in Chemistry (Route 2), Technologist in Hematology (Route 4), and Specialist in Hematology (Route 2) were approved. (See [C, SC, H, SH eligibility requirements.](#))
- Specialist in Blood Banking (Route 1) – the mathematics requirement was eliminated. (See [SBB eligibility requirements.](#))
- International Specialist in Hematology (Routes 4, 5, and 6) – corrections were made in the requirements. [See [SH\(ASCP\)[®] eligibility requirements.](#)]

Eligibility requirements for two new certification categories were approved – Specialist in Cytometry, SCYM(ASCP) and International Specialist in Cytometry, SCYM(ASCP)[®]. These new certifications will be offered in conjunction with the International Society for Advancement of Cytometry (ISAC) and the International Clinical Cytometry Society (ICCS). [See [SCYM\(ASCP\) and SCYM\(ASCP\)[®] eligibility requirements](#) and [SCYM FAQs.](#)]

The Board will develop policies so that international (ASCP) credential holders will be able to transition to the (ASCP) credential. Additional information will be provided in future issues of the BOC Newsletter as it becomes available.

The Core Values that Define the BOC:

COMPETENCE

EXCELLENCE

RESPECT

TRUST

INTEGRITY

STEWARDSHIP

LONGTIME ASCP AND BOC STAFF MEMBER RETIRES

After 37 years of dedication and service to ASCP, Felicia Nelson, MEd, Associate Project Manager for BOC Examination Activities, retired on May 26, 2017. A retirement celebration was held in her honor.

During her tenure at ASCP, Ms. Nelson worked in various departments, starting with the Board of Registry in 1980. She also worked in the ASCP executive offices and later for teleconferences in ASCP Education. Most recently, she circled back to the Board of Certification, accepting the position of Associate Project Manager where

she provided support to volunteers, board members, customers, and colleagues. At her celebration, she was praised for her smile and a perpetually positive attitude by ASCP CEO E. Blair Holladay, SCT(ASCP)^{CM}, and BOC Executive Director Pat Tanabe, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}.

Ms. Nelson said she looks forward to spending time with family and friends, and perhaps even sleeping in during the morning.



Patricia Tanabe (right) honors Felicia Nelson for 37 years of service.

PROGRAM DIRECTORS' UPDATE

Bulk Purchase of Online Practice Tests by Check or Money Order

As previously announced in the April 2017 issue of eLinks for Program Directors, the ASCP Board of Certification will no longer accept purchase orders for bulk purchases of the online practice tests. Bulk purchase orders paid by credit card will continue to be handled through Internet Testing Systems.

If you wish to pay by check or money order, orders will now be placed through ASCP. A revised order form will be available on the web site with updated information within the next few weeks. Please follow the revised instructions on this form before submitting your payment.

BOC Program Directors Group on ONELab

As a Program Director, there are probably many times when you have a question about BOC certification for your students. The BOC Program Directors Group is an open group for program directors of laboratory programs. This peer-based group can answer any of your certification related

questions. Supported by volunteers with several years of program experience, the group aims to become the program directors' resource for information and support. [Join the BOC Program Directors Group today.](#)

Helpful BOC Links

[Understanding ASCP BOC Certification Examinations](#)

[Students' Eligibility and Transcript Requirements](#)

[2017 User's Guide for Program Performance Reports](#)

[BOC Web Address Shortcuts](#)

TRANSITION FROM QUALIFICATION TO CERTIFICATION IN CYTOMETRY

The Qualification in Cytometry (QCYM) will be changing to a Specialist in Cytometry, SCYM(ASCP) certification effective October 1, 2017. The last date to take the QCYM examination will be June 30, 2017, with a deadline date of April 30, 2017, for receipt of online applications. Beginning October

1, 2017, all individuals currently holding QCYM will be automatically transitioned to the new certification in cytometry and will continue to participate in the Credential Maintenance Program (CMP). For detailed information regarding this transition, please see the [QCYM-SCYM FAQs](#).

DISPLAY OF CERTIFICATES ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Please remember **not** to display your ASCP Board of Certification certificate on social media. Images of certificates can be used by unscrupulous individuals to copy the certificate and change the name to their own. This copy is then used to obtain employment. To maintain the value of ASCP

BOC certification and, most importantly, for patient safety and welfare, it is important for individuals to protect their certificates from misuse.



SPECIALIST IN MICROBIOLOGY, SM(ASCP) CERTIFICATION

By Marie Pezzlo, MA, MT(ASCP)SM^{CM}
and Robert Durrant, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SM^{CM}

What is a certified Specialist in Microbiology (SM)?

• Someone with a baccalaureate, Master's, or Doctorate degree who has completed an accredited training program or work experience qualifications and who has successfully passed the ASCP Board of Certification (BOC) examination for the Specialist in Microbiology.

• This lab professional will have advanced knowledge, skills, and abilities in at least four of the six microbiology subspecialties, which include Bacteriology, Molecular Microbiology, Mycobacteriology, Mycology, Parasitology and Virology.

Individuals who have an SM certification serve in the areas of microbiology described. These individuals:

- Serve as leaders in the microbiology subspecialties
- Serve as regulatory, technical, procedural, and research advisors
- Develop, validate, implement, and perform laboratory procedures
- Analyze quality issues and prepare and implement corrective and preventive actions
- Design and present educational programs
- Provide technical and scientific training in clinical microbiology
- Perform clinical evaluations on new technologies
- Conduct research in clinical microbiology

How does one become an SM?

There are six routes to attain the ASCP SM Certification:

- Routes 1-6: Qualify for exam based on both education and laboratory experience as established by ASCP ([ASCP BOC eligibility routes](#))

Who are SMs?

• Supervisors and Technical Specialists of clinical microbiology, public health, industry, pharmaceutical and reference laboratories; Educators; and Research Scientists.

The following two articles go through the different journeys of two certified SM(ASCP) professionals.

YOU'LL PAY ME TO DO THAT?!

By Robert Durrant, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}SM^{CM}

I love microbiology. The day that someone told me I could get paid to play with microorganisms was a day that changed my life. Who wouldn't want to play microbe detective, solving these complex clinical puzzles that required you to use your schooling, think critically, and apply what you learned to new situations? That day set me on my path. I quickly obtained an entry-level position at a local laboratory and, as luck would have it, I ended up in the infectious diseases section. I stayed in that laboratory, soaking up every bit of microbiology knowledge I could as I worked my way through a university Medical Laboratory Science program.

The day after I passed my MLS(ASCP) certification exam, I promptly applied for an open position in the microbiology lab. I joined that team and spent several happy years working with my team and playing with my friends (the bugs). During that time, I realized I wanted to challenge myself with opportunities beyond benchwork. I applied

for an open Education Coordinator position within infectious disease to help broaden my knowledge base and encounter new challenges. However, I made sure that I was still scheduled on the bench regularly to retain my competency (and mostly for fun, let's be honest).

A year after I graduated from my baccalaureate program, I was contemplating moving into management or exploring education as future career tracks. Enough time had passed for me to romanticize my college experience and forget just how much work it required. I applied, and was accepted into, a master's degree program in laboratory medicine.

Fast-forward two very long years later: I thought if I had survived writing a thesis, I could probably challenge myself to the Specialist in Microbiology exam, and it would certainly help better prepare me for a position in management or education. I spent the next three months studying. I worked with my employer to rotate through all of the sections in infectious disease to

strengthen areas where I was technically weak, I purchased several books from the Suggested Readings list on the ASCP website, and I took as many practice exams as I could find and used them to find additional weak spots. After many long nights of studying and much panicking about the results, I passed the exam. What now?

I took some time to reflect on my experiences and future goals. My graduate degree had prepared me to move into management, research, or education. My SM certification provided additional training and helped me feel confident in my technical knowledge. The possibilities were suddenly endless. I knew that my education and technical expertise would greatly assist me in achieving my goals. I'm not sure I would have been as challenged to succeed had I not had a benchmark, such as the SM certification, to work towards. Learning theory and advanced practical knowledge in microbiology gave me strong marketability in my field.

AN UNUSUAL PATHWAY TO SPECIALIST MICROBIOLOGY CERTIFICATION

By Marie Pezzlo, MA, MT(ASCP)SM^{CM}

My introduction to clinical laboratory science was when I was a freshman college student. Prior to that time I knew I wanted to work in a hospital, however I was only aware of two professions, medical doctor or nurse. Fortunately a neighbor was aware of my desire and encouraged me to apply for a weekend job as a phlebotomist. Although I had no idea what a phlebotomist did, I applied. This was the beginning of a lifelong profession that has continued for many years.

Throughout college I worked as a phlebotomist on the weekends and became fascinated with what I experienced during that time. The area that fascinated me the most was microbiology. Microbiologists seemed like detectives, searching for an answer. I wanted to become a microbiologist. Following some excellent advice, I entered a medical technology training program, became certified as Medical Technologist, MT(ASCP), now known as a Medical Laboratory Scientist, MLS(ASCP). I began my career in the Medical Microbiology Division of a large tertiary care medical center hospital. At the same time, I began working on a Master's degree.

Another major opportunity for me was that the Medical Director/Pathologist, Dr. Raymond Bartlett, was an innovative

person who was later recognized as a pioneer in clinical microbiology because of his many contributions, such as quality control, infection control and clinical relevance of laboratory results. Being in the midst of these exciting ideas increased my interest and desire to learn as much as possible about clinical microbiology. I was most fortunate to have Dr. Bartlett serve as my mentor while working in the laboratory and researching a thesis project in pursuit of my Master's degree. We also co-authored my first publication, which appeared in the American Journal of Clinical Pathology. I also had an opportunity to teach workshops, each of which I have continued for many years.

A few years later, I began to think about another certification, specifically in microbiology. At that point I was a member of ASCP and the American Society for Microbiology (ASM). I learned that ASM had a certification, entitled Specialist Microbiologist in Public Health and Medical Laboratory Microbiology (SM). My pathway to certification was very different from the current one. If an individual had a Master's degree, with experience in a clinical microbiology laboratory and three letters of recommendation, the candidate could be granted certification if approved. Once again, I was fortunate to be granted certification as an SM.

I am very proud of my SM certification and feel strongly that it has had an impact on my career advancements. A few years after receiving my certification, I moved from Connecticut to Southern California. My SM certification was recognized during my interviews during my job searches. It also afforded me the opportunity to serve on ASM's National Registry of Certified Microbiologists Committee. This led to other volunteer opportunities including ASCP's Board of Certification's Microbiology Exam Committee that I now Chair. Current SM certification is now a collaboration between ASCP and ASM to conjointly develop and administer certification exams to those with Bachelor's Master's and PhD degrees and who work in clinical microbiology. Individuals must meet ASCP eligibility requirements to take the exam. Those who pass the exam are certified as a Technologist in Microbiology, M(ASCP) or Specialist in Microbiology, SM(ASCP) by the ASCP and are issued a certificate with both organizations' names on it. I would strongly encourage clinical laboratory scientists working in clinical microbiology to consider certification in either M(ASCP) or SM(ASCP). It is an incentive to continue to learn more about a profession that is extremely dynamic and continually changing.

KEEP YOUR INFORMATION CURRENT

**Moving?
Changing Jobs?
Got a new email address?**

It's extremely important that you keep your demographic information up to date with the BOC. Without your current address and email address, the BOC won't be able to send you recertification information. Don't run the risk of your certification expiring. To keep your demographic

information up to date, simply log in with your username and password by going to www.ascp.org/login, then click on Profile & Settings to update your demographic information.



BOC PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS MEETING DATES

<p>JULY 2017</p> <p>69th AACC Annual Scientific Meeting & Clinical Lab Expo American Association for Clinical Chemistry (AACC) San Diego, CA July 30 – August 3, 2017</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER 2017 CONT</p> <p>41st Annual Continuing Education Conference American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA) San Antonio, TX September 23 – 29, 2017</p>	<p>FEBRUARY 2018</p> <p>ASCLS Clinical Laboratory Educator's Conference (CLEC) The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) Houston, TX February 22 – 24, 2018</p>
<p>AUGUST 2017</p> <p>2017 Annual Meeting & Clinical Lab Expo American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS) San Diego, CA August 1 – 4, 2017</p>	<p>OCTOBER 2017</p> <p>AABB Annual Meeting AABB San Diego, CA October 7 – 10, 2017</p>	<p>MAY 2018</p> <p>CLMA KnowledgeLab 2018 Clinical Laboratory Management Association (CLMA) Long Beach, CA May 6 – 9, 2018</p>
<p>SEPTEMBER 2017</p> <p>2017 ASCP Annual Meeting American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Chicago, IL September 6 – 8, 2017</p>	<p>NOVEMBER 2017</p> <p>ASC 65th Annual Scientific Meeting American Society of Cytopathology (ASC) Phoenix, AZ November 10 – 13, 2017</p>	<p>JUNE 2018</p> <p>ASM Microbe 2018 American Society for Microbiology (ASM) Atlanta, GA June 7 – 10, 2018</p>
<p>SEPTEMBER 2017</p> <p>2017 NSH Annual Symposium/Convention National Society for Histotechnology (NSH) Orlando, FL September 15 – 20, 2017</p>	<p>DECEMBER 2017</p> <p>59th ASH Annual Meeting & Exposition American Society of Hematology (ASH) Atlanta, GA December 9 – 12, 2017</p>	



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American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA)

American Society of Cytopathology (ASC)

American Society for Microbiology (ASM)

Clinical Laboratory Management Association (CLMA)

National Society for Histotechnology (NSH)

Collaborating Societies

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