

# e-LABorate



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE CHOOSE TO LEAD

**Galina Dronova, MS, MLS(ASCP)**  
ASCLS-MN President  
Clinical Laboratory Development  
Specialist, M Health Fairview

Why should I attend conferences?  
Why should I volunteer time?  
Why should I lead?

These are all common questions I've heard asked over the years of recruiting members to a professional organization. For every person that joins ASCLS, ten people have scoffed and said, "I have better things to do" and I get it. We already work many hours a week, maintain many relationship dynamics, and let's be real - we love the precious hours of downtime to just read a book or be outside.

I never doubted the time spent being an active member of ASCLS because the benefits to me are simple and measurable. Here are some examples:

1. Personal Growth. I've always wanted to learn about marketing but didn't have the reason to start until there was a use case in front of me via promotion of ASCLS sponsored events. This work allows me to stay current on trends and practices used by companies to stay relevant in the digital space.
2. Networking. The most recent conference I attended allowed me to meet a vendor my organization actively uses that I knew little about. The rep was able to show me our company's statistics on the spot as a demo for the software. I now have a reference point for future projects and how this software fits into the workflow.
3. Exposure to New Ideas. 2023 is the year of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and everyone wants to know the implications for the medical field. By attending conferences, I am exposed to the knowledge base necessary to say that no, Medical Lab Scientists will not be replaced by AI and automation.

## Newsletter Highlights

- President's Message - 1
- Region V Symposium - 3
- Legislative Updates - 6
- ASCLS MN Board - 9

## Up-coming Events:

- 12/6 Student Night at Regions Hosp
- 1/14 Mid-Year House of Delegates
- 1/19 - 1/20 ELMC2
- 1/20 - Metro Scientific Assembly
- 2/22 - 2/24 CLEC
- 4/4 - 4/5 Clinical Laboratory Collaborative

Visit the ASCLS MN Facebook page  
for event information  
<https://www.facebook.com/ascls.mn/>

**NEW PODCAST  
EPISODE**

24 NOVEMBER 2023

**Tales from  
the Bench**

[ascls.org/offthebench](https://ascls.org/offthebench)



Episode sponsored by:





But how do you convince someone to get involved when they're not looking for professional growth or are too introverted for networking opportunities? Meet them where they are. Everyone has passions that can be combined with the mission of a non-profit organization.

Do you have an MLS friend that loves beer? Suggest they help coordinate a brewery tour for ASCLS. Do you have a brainiac co-worker that attends trivia night frequently? Work with them to create an MLS centered trivia night! And of course, if someone has more time and interest to commit as a board member, remind them that as a thank you for their hard work certain positions are eligible for reimbursement to attend in person conferences! After all, one event is all that someone needs to find a hidden passion.

Volunteering for an organization means choosing to be a leader. That correlation dawned on me as I stood on stage at the 2023 Joint Annual Meeting to receive awards on behalf of the Minnesota Constituent Society and its many phenomenal contributors. Together, we represent a culture of continuous learning, collaboration, and impact for the profession.

As a member of the Minnesota Constituent Society, I challenge you to do one of the following (or all three):

1. Consider volunteering your time by reviewing our open positions in the newsletter
2. Request more information on the Board Member Job Descriptions using the [asclsmn.org](https://asclsmn.org) Contact Us form located at the bottom of the home page
3. Invite a friend to join you at one of our next events!

*"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others." - Mahatma Gandhi*



PHOTO FROM THE 2023 ASCLS ANNUAL MEETING / JAM



## ASCLS Legislative Symposium A Trip to Washington, DC

Justin Johnson, MLS(ASCP),PBT

For those of you who have watched *The West Wing*, you'll remember the optimism portrayed in the show. It was witty, inspiring, poignant, and often made one empathize with the staffers trying to do what they thought was best for the country. Far be it from Washington to be a polarized place, even in a fictional TV show. *TWW* has episodes that frustrate viewers with scenes of obstructionism and unwillingness to work with the other side. Popular media and the news further reinforce the belief that Washington is where ideas go to die. The reality is that Washington hosts some of the best ideas and thinkers in the world. A lot of those great ideas come from constituents of Congress. This past October, a group of Minnesota constituents came to Washington with theirs.

Admittedly, I was nervous when my plane touched down at Reagan International Airport, as I had never lobbied on Capitol Hill before. I thought one required the right suit, tie, connections, and words to be a lobbyist. The Legislative Symposium changed my perspective on lobbying. There, I learned about citizen advocacy and its importance. It turns out that most legislation Congress passes is bipartisan, including laboratory-focused acts. Further, members of Congress and their staffers enjoy hearing from their constituents. In their eyes, constituents know what's best for their local community. Meeting with community members gives congressmen and women a glimpse of life in their district or state. As medical laboratory professionals, we have a unique perspective to offer when discussing legislation. I did not need to feel intimidated by elected officials, as we are considered the experts in laboratory needs.

My fears left after being prepped at the symposium. Because I went with a delegation of Minnesotans, I assumed I would only need to do a little talking. However, when we arrived at my congressman's office, everyone in the group turned to me to begin our conversation with his staffer. I was nervous, but I told the staffer about my laboratory experiences. While I told stories, I saw the staffer's face soften. Hearing someone give a laboratory issue a personal connection helped solidify our asks of Congress: support clinical laboratories nationwide.

Participating in democracy allows our government to see the humans behind the issues. Our diverse Congress has physicians and nurses in its ranks but still requires the expertise of its medical laboratory professional constituents. I encourage every laboratory professional to participate in democracy at the local, state, or federal level. Making our voices heard is the best way to make a difference for the lab. President Bartlet from *The West Wing* put it best: "Decisions are made by those who show up." Laboratorians let's show up.



Advocate



## The Value of Volunteering at Any Level

Ali Nussbaum, MHSA, MLS(ASCP)cm, caPM



In the last quarter of 2023, I signed up to speak to University of Minnesota healthcare students about the importance of interdisciplinary communication and partnership. As any 20-minute talk to students goes, I blabbered on as they sat silently just trying to meet the requirements of their class. I took the opportunity to get on my soapbox about the value of joining a professional society. If it had not been for the connections I made through ASCLS, I never would have had the opportunity to speak to those students nor would I be where I am today.

My personal position about volunteering for a professional organization is based on the wonderful experiences I've had with various organizations including ASCLS. I have been absolutely blessed with opportunities allotted to me through the years. Between volunteering at constituent society state, regional, and national levels, I have done an array of activities that have developed, harnessed, and aligned my skill set to tackle any future endeavors. As a national director for ASCLS, my volunteer activities have endorsed my ability to lead a group. And given me a public recognition to be supported by the membership for one of the highest positions in ASCLS.

Everyone's volunteer journey is different and that is what makes volunteerism limitless. Mine started at the constituent society level in Wisconsin. Volunteering near to where you live/work/ attend school is so rewarding and highly needed. There is greater accessibility to roles at the constituent society state level than that of either the regional or national. Additionally, it is a great place to "get your feet wet" especially for young professionals looking to get involved. Whatever your interest or passion, there is an opportunity and if there is not, there is space to create a project that encapsulates individual passions.

What volunteering in the constituent society state level allows is the ability to meet colleagues from local facilities where future employment opportunities may become available. This is a great way to learn about the culture in other labs and work towards a recruitment reference for a new position. In careers as small as a clinical lab, the value of networking at the state level is invaluable. Additionally, performing quality volunteer work can demonstrate the effectiveness of working as a team, which is an attribute any employer is excited to have join their lab. Interested in learning more about ASCLS at the state level? Minnesota has a few positions open that involve planning local events and gathering other laboratory professionals.

Volunteering on the regional level can strengthen your commitments while seeing how other states in your geographical area are solving similar problems.

Volunteer

Regional volunteer work expands your network to potential future partners. As healthcare enterprises grow and state lines for healthcare are no longer a barrier, having a strong network of laboratorians across state lines can have many benefits! Region V has always had a wonderful working relationship with all the states in our region and volunteering with this group has always been very positive and worthwhile.

When you volunteer regionally, the scale feels larger because the cohort of individuals spans across numerous states. However, on a national scale the feelings grow to a US and beyond measure. Your actions, even if small, feel somehow more grandiose because the input you give has a much further reach. There are numerous opportunities at the national level to become a part of, including committees, task forces, and other working groups; the work done within these clusters impact the widest range of laboratory professionals. Benefiting the larger community of laboratory professionals is admired with great pride from members.

Professional organizations have numerous benefits, with the best being the connections you make with other like-minded people. This organization encourages sharing and building great bonds between state lines and across the nation. It boosts opportunities, especially in leadership and areas of professional growth that you may not get otherwise, which can be mutually beneficial for career growth. ASCLS invests in each individual's personal growth and has directed their mission to lift up its members. Through this goal, ASCLS, at all levels, works to bring forward a family-like atmosphere that includes mentorship, knowledge sharing and creating problem-solving units.

If you are not currently volunteering with a professional society, now is the perfect time to start this journey. So where do you start? A great place to begin is the organization's website followed by events put on by the society. Opportunities are all around, but you have to be willing to go after them.

## Help Us Plan the 2024 Great Laboratory Get Together!

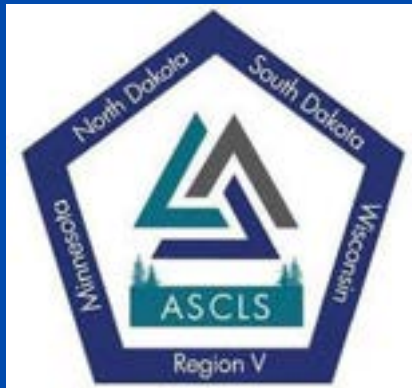
Planning is underway for the 2024 Clinical Laboratory Collaborative Meeting, but it's not too late to join in the fun! Our theme this year is the Great Laboratory Get Together! We are planning to have a State Fair vibe with games and fair food.

If you are interested in helping plan the meeting, please contact Charlotte Romain, [marsh397@gmail.com](mailto:marsh397@gmail.com). There are many ways to help. There is the pre-meeting planning: getting speakers, registration, planning the Silent Auction, planning the social activities, recruiting vendors and publicity! At the meeting we will need moderators and AV helpers, people to help at the social booth and help with door prizes and silent auction. No matter where your talents lie there is a place for you!

Professional Growth







## REGION V SYMPOSIUM HIGHLIGHTS

**Deb Rodahl, MS, MLS(ASCP)cm**

ASCLS Wisconsin was a wonderful host for this year's **ASCLS Region V Symposium**, which was held at the Lismore Hotel in Eau Claire, Wisconsin on September 28 and 29th. The best part of the meeting for me was reconnecting with Region V friends from North Dakota, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Minnesota. Many are colleagues that I have met over the years and some that I have not seen since the arrival of Covid. Of course, there were new friends to make, networking to be done and to be honest, just a chance to relax and enjoy the meeting!

There was a full slate of sessions and speakers, which made it difficult to decide which sessions to attend. Kudo's to the planning committee for putting together such a wonderful program!

The keynote speakers were terrific with very timely topics! **Dr. Pat Tille** (ASCLS-President Elect) spoke about leadership being transient change (The Key Performance Indicators of a Successful Leader) and how strategic leadership changes the present in order to create a desired future. It was a new way of thinking about change and why it is so important that change occurs. **Susan Stalewski** shared an important aspect of advocacy (Advocacy for Medical Laboratory Science: What is Your Value Proposition?) that we can all engage in every day. How do we share the story of what we do and why and how it is important in our everyday conversations. **Miles Thompkins** (Director, ASCLS Board of Directors) shared what he sees as some of the reasons impacting our laboratories including burnout, workforce shortages, etc (A Breakdown of Breakdowns: What's Tearing the Laboratory Sciences Apart and How to Put it Back Together Again) but from the perspective of how things we are doing that might be part of the cause and therefore how we can be part of the solution.

One of my favorite sessions was put on by the Region V Leadership Academy graduates, **Clayton Fraker** (WI), **Jessica Fry** (ND), and **Elizabeth Jones** (ND). They shared their wonderful leadership Academy project, in which they pulled together the broad range of professionals who are part of the medical laboratory community and the types of work that they do by sharing real stories from a variety of different laboratory professionals. They shared their personal stories from the more traditional path to the not so traditional path to get to their roles. Their final project will be up on the Region V website and will be able to be openly shared with others including school counselors as a way to invite students to join the profession.

Of course, one of the largest benefits for attending an in-person meeting like this is the connections we make with our peers and the chance to visit with vendors, who really go "all-out" to support our meetings and for which a lot of networking and education happens in the vendor hall, too!



ASCLS-MN & HEALTHPARTNERS PRESENT

**Laboratory Student Night**

5-8PM  
**6 DEC**

FREE INTERVIEW ADVICE?

LAB TOURS?




**ASCLS METRO AREA  
SCIENTIFIC ASSEMBLY**

**SATURDAY, JANUARY 20, 2024**

**3.0 Hours of PACE Education**





Recent studies indicate nearly 1/3 of managers in the core lab planned to retire in the next five years. For some areas like hematology and microbiology, that percentage is higher. As an entire generation of laboratory professionals leave the workforce, younger, less experienced laboratory professionals are being pressed into service in management positions they didn't train for. A need exists to prepare these professionals to take on new roles.

Visit the [ELMC2 Website](#) for more details.

## 2024 Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference

Attend February 22-24 in Las Vegas, NV, or virtually. Enhance your instructional skills, discover innovative teaching techniques, and explore trends and strategies to manage the changing profession.

Register by Dec 20 and Save





## ASCLS Member Benefits: Mentor Matching for Career Development



# MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The ASCLS--MN Mentor/Mentee Program is a great new FREE benefit available to members of ASCLS! Whether you are looking for a specific shadowing opportunity, tips for preparing for the Board of Certification (BOC), a dose of uplifting encouragement and validation, or anything in between – we are here to help! Best of all, this program is built to offer a personalized experience for everyone involved. Once enrolled, we work with you to identify your areas of interest and match you up with an experienced laboratory professional who can best address your specific needs. In addition to the opportunity for face-to-face experiences, mentors may be available through email and phone to best accommodate your busy schedules!

### Mentors can look forward to:

- Playing a part in a student's success
- Sharing knowledge that comes with experience
- Being a personal cheerleader for a young member
- Inspiring students to get involved in specific areas of the laboratory profession
  - Much More!

### Mentees can look forward to:

- Tips for job applications and BOC exams
  - Exciting shadowing opportunities
    - Helpful study habits
- Sincere encouragement and support
  - Much More!

To inquire about becoming a mentor or a mentee, please contact Charlotte Romain: [marsh397@gmail.com](mailto:marsh397@gmail.com)



# ASCLS-MN BOARD MEMBERS 2023-2024

President: Galina Dronova  
President-Elect: Kelsi Steffen  
Past-President: Charlotte Romain MS, MLS(ASCP)  
Secretary: Austin Korczak  
Treasurer: Tami Alpaugh  
Ascending Professional Forum Chair: Justin Johnson  
Developing Professional Forum Chair: Gabrielle Burk  
Area Directors:

- Northeast - Mary Rauvola / Kelsi Steffen
- Northwest/Central - Open / Open
- Metro – Tori Contreras / Austin Korczak
- Southeast - Open / Open
- Southwest - Open / Open



## A Word from the Editor:

Deb Rodahl (drodahl@outlook.com)

If you have any comments, suggestions, or would like to contribute an article to the newsletter, please feel free to reach out!

## For More Information Visit:

<https://www.asclsmn.org>

<http://www.regionvascls.online>

[www.ascls.org](http://www.ascls.org)

[facebook.com/ascls.mn](https://facebook.com/ascls.mn)

## ASCLS MINNESOTA MISSION STATEMENT

THE MISSION OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE - MINNESOTA (ASCLS-MN) IS TO PROMOTE THE PROFESSION OF CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE IN MINNESOTA AND PROVIDE BENEFICIAL SERVICES TO THOSE WHO PRACTICE IT.

THE SOCIETY IS COMMITTED TO:

PROMOTING HIGH STANDARDS IN CLINICAL LABORATORY PRACTICE, EDUCATION, AND RESEARCH.

ELEVATING THE PROFESSIONAL STATUS OF THOSE PRACTICING CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE THROUGH PUBLIC ADVOCACY.

PROMOTING MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, COOPERATION AND NETWORKING BETWEEN CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE PROFESSIONALS, PHYSICIANS, AND ALL OTHERS WHO ARE EMPLOYED IN THE INTEREST OF INDIVIDUAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH.

PROVIDING AND SUPPORTING CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR PRACTITIONERS AT ALL LEVELS.

## ASCLS MINNESOTA VISION STATEMENT

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE - MINNESOTA (ASCLS-MN), THE STATE'S CONSTITUENT SOCIETY OF THE AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE (ASCLS), AS THE PREMIERE ORGANIZATION FOR CLINICAL LABORATORY SCIENCE PRACTITIONERS.