



ASCP BOARD OF  
CERTIFICATION

# Newsletter

September 2025

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Our mission is to provide  
**excellence in certification**  
of laboratory professionals on  
behalf of patients worldwide.

Our vision is to be  
the **gold standard in**  
**global certification** for all  
laboratory professionals.



## CHAIR'S MESSAGE:

**Vicki Freeman, PhD, MASCP,  
MLS(ASCP)<sup>CMSCM</sup>, FADLM**

Do you have a passion to be involved in the credentialing of individuals in the laboratory field? When I ask this question, I am reminded of Howard Thurman's profound quote: "Don't ask what the world needs. Ask what makes you come alive and go do it. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive."

My own journey in clinical laboratory science has been driven by a deep passion for providing leadership in education across the globe. I firmly believe that ensuring quality laboratory practitioners for clinical laboratories is paramount to appropriate patient care. This conviction has led me to work through professional organizations to set educational standards, review programs

and faculty, and collaborate on innovative teaching methods to expand opportunities for students and practitioners, especially in underserved areas.

My involvement with the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) has been a testament to this belief, offering immense opportunities for professional growth and advancement. I've had the privilege of serving on numerous committees, including the Joint Generalist Examination Committee, where I contributed to setting standards and developing examination questions for new graduates. This experience solidified my conviction that by establishing robust certification standards, we are directly ensuring that clinical laboratories receive highly qualified practitioners who provide exceptional services to the public. Additionally, my time on the Research and Development Committee not only honed my research skills but also played a crucial role in my career progression from instructor to Professor Emeritus.

Now, as Chair of the ASCP BOC Board of Governors, I have the honor of working alongside incredibly talented individuals from all areas of the laboratory. Together, we are dedicated to upholding the ASCP BOC's reputation as the premier credentialing agency for laboratory professionals, maintaining the high quality that is expected of us.

Perhaps you're wondering how you can contribute to this vital work. Did you know that you can volunteer for the ASCP BOC's advisory boards, committees, or task forces? While many volunteers contribute to examination committees, there are also numerous other committees and task forces that require your expertise and dedication. Currently the ASCP

BOC has 149 volunteers doing 185 volunteer positions. In addition, there are 161 ASCP<sup>i</sup> Advisory Board volunteers. Every year, we seek new individuals to fill various roles on these committees, task forces, and advisory boards.

Howard Thurman's quote beautifully encapsulates the essence of what we're seeking: individuals who are truly "alive" in their passion for the laboratory field. Volunteering with your certification agency is a powerful way to make a tangible difference in the lives of patients and contribute to a more vibrant and engaged society. It's about focusing on your inner motivation, pursuing what authentically ignites your spirit, and making a positive impact on the world. This pursuit is not self-serving; rather, it cultivates a more robust and engaged professional community.

ASCP BOC certification holds immense significance for medical laboratory professionals, validating our skills, opening doors to opportunities, enhancing credibility, and serving as a symbol of our commitment to excellence. I can personally attest to the profound professional growth and advancement my involvement with the ASCP BOC has provided.

Becoming involved with the ASCP BOC is a vital step toward a successful and fulfilling career in medical laboratory science, allowing you to contribute to maintaining the high standards that define our profession.

If you are ready to make a difference and contribute your passion and expertise, I encourage you to explore the volunteer opportunities available.

You can find more information and apply as a volunteer for ASCP BOC committees and task forces at:

[www.ascp.org/boc/volunteer](http://www.ascp.org/boc/volunteer)

To apply for an ASCP<sup>i</sup> Advisory Board Volunteer position, submit your curriculum vitae (CV) to:

[volunteerASCPi@ascp.org](mailto:volunteerASCPi@ascp.org)



# MIND THE GAP, BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

**Walter Oliveira, MASCP, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>SI**

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If you travel on the London Underground, you may hear or see signs to “mind the gap” as you transition across the divide between train and platform. This phrase was introduced in 1968 and is still in use today. It is sage advice to all who need to make a transition, so they arrive at their destination safely.

The American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) has been in the business of “minding the gaps” in laboratory medicine and pathology since 1928 to keep patients safe and provide a meaningful and rewarding career to laboratory professionals and other experts. From the first generalist certification examination in 1931 (Medical Technologist) to categorical examinations to specialty certifications, ASCP BOC has been minding the gap for almost 100 years. Much has changed over this time: the Board of Registry became the Board of Certification, Medical Technologist, MT(ASCP), became Medical Laboratory Scientist, MLS(ASCP), some certifications were discontinued like the Specialist in Immunology, SI(ASCP), and new certifications have been added like the Medical Laboratory Assistant, MLA(ASCP), in 2016. As you well know, healthcare is a changing environment that requires vision, ideas, innovation, passion, and energy to care for our patients.

The MLA(ASCP) certification examination was created to fill the gap between the art/skill of talented phlebotomists (PBT examination created in 1989) who collect specimens, and the diagnostic testing performed within the laboratory. MLAs are known by different names: Specimen Management Technician, Clinical Lab Assistant, Specimen Processor, Laboratory Assistant. This pre-analytic gap has been highlighted many times as the source of error for patient results due to improper handling, processing, and storage. Our testing menus have grown and the requirements for how to properly handle specimens continue to change based on assay method, vendor requirements, analyte stability, add-on needs, and reflex testing, to name a few factors. For our patients to get the best care we need to ensure the specimen they provided is handled

appropriately to prevent a re-collection that may delay a diagnosis and effective treatment.

The ASCP BOC Board of Governors authorized the creation of the MLA examination, performed the practice analysis, convened discussion groups with educators, stakeholders, and thought leaders to identify a scope of practice, and began the work of creating the certification examination. The newly formed certification examination committee was chaired by Dr. Sue Beck, PhD, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, a talented educator from the University of North Carolina. The hard but rewarding work of writing examination questions is an ongoing activity the committee performs every year, so the examination is relevant and matches the defined practice analysis.

Lessons learned since the first examination was offered continue to drive us forward to address the challenges in creating an examination to fill a real need.

- First, defining eligibility routes that allow for different training experiences: individuals who have attended a certificate program, or who have two years of experience, or who have an associate's degree with experience, or who have PBT certification with experience can be successful.
- Second, trying to be all things to all facilities; an academic health system versus a smaller community hospital versus a reference laboratory versus a physician's office. While we have a scope of practice, we know not every individual will perform all the elements defined in the content outline. Some states have licensure laws that restrict what activities an individual may perform. Individuals may not have hands-on experience for a specific activity and will need to use references to study. You can see challenges exist.

Our True North, a combination of values, beliefs, and purposes, is, and will always be, the patient. To perform healing work for our patients and make a difference every day, we need the specimen to be collected from the right patient, handled properly, processed correctly, and stored in a manner that does not compromise the quality of the results. A credentialed MLA has proven they have the foundation and knowledge necessary to safeguard the quality of patient results from collection to testing. They are the pre-analytic leaders who have stepped into this space to bridge the gap that exists. If you want to be part of this team, hop on the ASCP BOC train!



# Q&A WITH CHEMISTRY EXAMINATIONINATION COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

**Leslie Nakagawa, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, and Michele McAfee, PhD, MLS(ASCP)SC<sup>CM</sup>,SBB<sup>CM</sup>**

Leslie Nakagawa, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, is a former volunteer of the Chemistry Examination Committee who served as chair of the committee from 2022–2024. She has been practicing in the field for 20 years as a generalist and is currently working in the core laboratory at Overlake Medical Center in Bellevue, Washington.

Michele McAfee, PhD, MLS(ASCP)SC<sup>CM</sup>,SBB<sup>CM</sup>, is a current volunteer on the Chemistry Examination Committee and is serving her last year on the committee. She has been practicing in the field for 25 years and is currently working as the blood bank technical supervisor for Medical City North Hills in North Richland Hills, Texas.

## **Describe the impact that your ASCP BOC credential has had on your career.**

**Leslie:** Having an ASCP BOC credential provides confidence and assurance of quality. It has provided open doors for professional opportunities, leadership development, and community engagement.

**Michele:** Because of my ASCP BOC credentials, I have worked in a large trauma hospital in the blood bank and microbiology departments. I have worked as a generalist in a small rural hospital. I have taught chemistry, urinalysis, blood banking, microbiology, and immunology in a Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) and Medical Laboratory Scientist (MLS) program, and I now work at a medium-sized hospital as the blood bank technical supervisor. As part of my current job, I continue to rotate into the clinical chemistry laboratory to perform patient testing.

## **In your opinion, what has been the best aspect of being a part of the examination committee?**

**Leslie:** I didn't know what to expect when I was invited as a guest to my first committee meeting — a mentor had suggested applying as a professional development opportunity, but I hadn't known anyone who had served before. I was welcomed by a group of engaged, intelligent, and humble laboratory professionals, who made me feel like my perspective was valuable to the committee. Each year, I have been challenged to add more depth to my laboratory knowledge, be proud of the work we do in our profession, and inspire the next generations of certified scientists. The ongoing work on the committee and dedication of committee members motivates me to continue learning and excelling as a medical laboratory scientist even beyond the conclusion of my time volunteering with the ASCP BOC.



*From left: Michele McAfee, PhD, MLS(ASCP)SC<sup>CM</sup>, SBB<sup>CM</sup>, and Leslie Nakagawa, MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>.*

## **What advice would you give to those who are thinking about volunteering for an ASCP BOC examination committee or work group?**

**Michele:** Definitely do it! It is an amazing experience and doesn't take as much time out of your schedule as you might think. It is worthwhile, and you will learn so much about current practices in other laboratories as well as other volunteers' thought processes as you're reviewing examination questions.

## **What advice would you give to potential examinees who are thinking about becoming credentialed in your field or are thinking of taking a specialist examination?**

**Leslie:** Enjoy the process and journey towards gaining your credential—celebrate the knowledge that you already have and apply the knowledge that you may gain while preparing for the examination. Lastly, share your accomplishment when you obtain your credential!

**Michele:** The ASCP BOC Specialist in Chemistry (SC) examination is one of the best specialist examinations, in my opinion. I think it is straightforward and if you have similar qualifications to other candidates, it can give you an edge in a job application. I highly recommend for potential examinees to study and take the ASCP BOC Specialist in Chemistry, SC(ASCP) examination!

## **COMING SOON!** ASCP BOC TO LAUNCH CREDLY DIGITAL BADGING TO BENEFIT CREDENTIAL HOLDERS

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In early 2026, the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) will launch digital badging through Credly, a trusted provider that increases the visibility of ASCP BOC credential holders by securely showcasing and sharing professional credentials. This exciting advancement marks a major milestone in how the ASCP BOC supports credentialed professionals to evidence their expertise and communicate the value of ASCP BOC credentials to the global laboratory community and beyond.

Digital badges issued via Credly offer a modern, secure, and accessible way for ASCP BOC-credentialed laboratory professionals and other experts to highlight the credentials they have attained. Each badge contains embedded, individualized, fraud-proof metadata that includes the credential earned, issue date, and current credential status.

For credential holders, digital badging removes the limitations of traditional wall certificates. These badges can easily be shared on professional networks like LinkedIn, included in digital résumés or email signatures, and linked to personal websites, making it easier than ever to highlight achievements to peers and employers. Digital badging offers real-time authentication with a single click.

Employers will also benefit from the added transparency and security that Credly provides. Digital badges are backed by cryptographic protections and hosted on a trusted platform, which ensures enhanced fraud prevention and verified authenticity, helping organizations verify qualified personnel more efficiently and with greater confidence.

This shift to digital badging represents more than a technical update; it highlights the ASCP BOC's commitment to integrity and trust. This is a strategic leap forward that strengthens the ASCP BOC's ability to elevate professional standards and credentialing evidence in laboratory medicine, pathology, and other related specialties in support of improved patient outcomes. In short, it ensures that the laboratory professionals responsible for critical diagnostic decisions are exactly who they say they are—ASCP BOC-credentialed and committed to excellence.

More information about the rollout timeline and digital badge processes will be shared soon. We look forward to seeing ASCP BOC digital badges proudly displayed across the profession, and to continuing to recognize the remarkable individuals who elevate patient outcomes every day.



# ASCP BOC SEEKS EXAMINATIONINATION COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS

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The important work of the American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) can only be accomplished through the dedication and hard work of its valued volunteers. The ASCP BOC has more than a dozen examinationination committees and work groups that are comprised entirely of volunteers from a variety of laboratory specialties, areas of expertise, professional roles, and facilities of all types and sizes. These groups are responsible for the development and review of examinationination questions, as well as setting the standards for examinationinations and performing practice analyses. They are also responsible for reviewing examinationination eligibility requirements, examinationination content guidelines, and suggested reading

lists for examinationination preparation.

There is currently one vacancy each on the Hematology and Microbiology Examinationination Committees. To learn more about these vacancies and to submit a volunteer application, visit the website [here](#). Volunteer applications submitted by October 1, 2025, will be prioritized for the current vacancies.

If you would like to volunteer but live outside of the United States or Canada, international volunteer opportunities are available. The ASCP BOC has advisory boards, ambassadors, and representatives in more than 30 countries across the world. More information about international volunteer opportunities can be found [here](#).

## REVISED EXAMINATIONINATION TOPIC OUTLINE

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The Qualification in Apheresis (QIA) Examinationination Topic Outline has been revised for examinationinations administered beginning September 1, 2025. The revised topic outline is currently available at [www.ascp.org/boc/qia](http://www.ascp.org/boc/qia) on the ASCP BOC website.

## PROGRAM DIRECTOR LIVE EVENT SCHEDULE

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The Program Directors Advisory Committee (PDAC) supports educators, including program directors, faculty, and education and clinical coordinators, by sharing resources, offering guidance, and creating a space for networking and collaboration. This year, we're thrilled to host a series of live events designed to keep educators connected and up to date on current practices. These events will cover impactful topics, best practices, and give everyone a chance to learn from and engage with each other.

You can find more details on the [BOC Program Directors' Facebook](#) group and the [event calendar](#).





# ASCP BOC TEAM SPOTLIGHT:

## Debby Basu, PhD

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The American Society for Clinical Pathology Board of Certification (ASCP BOC) Team welcomed Debby Basu, PhD, in July 2025, as the Senior Manager of ASCP<sup>i</sup> Credentialing. Dr. Basu has been with ASCP for seven years and served as the Senior Manager of Global Health & Workforce Development Grant Programs at ASCP prior to joining the ASCP BOC. In her new position she will focus on providing strategic support for ASCP<sup>i</sup> credentialing processes and engaging with ASCP<sup>i</sup> credential holders.

Dr. Basu earned her bachelor's degree in biology at Indiana University. She earned a master's degree in biology at Purdue University and completed her doctoral degree in Immunology and Molecular Pathogenesis at Emory University. Her PhD dissertation focused on evaluating HIV-1 viral evolution and immunological responses in Zambian and Rwandan patients who were HIV-1 superinfected. She currently resides in the Chicago area, but is a proud Hoosier through and through, having grown up in Carmel, Indiana. She returns home frequently to visit family and friends.

Dr. Basu did her post-doc as a Fogarty Global Health Fellow, where she lived and worked outside of Lusaka, Zambia. Her job was to help the local clinical laboratory set up their molecular testing laboratory section for acute HIV-1 testing. She loved her work there and how she has maintained several close friendships with her former laboratory teammates. She added that it was by far the most interesting job she has had to date. During her time in Zambia, she rode in a two-person microlight plane over the incredible Victoria Falls in Livingstone, Zambia, and still believes it was the craziest thing she has ever done and that was before finding out, after the fact, that it was the pilot's first day on the job!

When not at work Dr. Basu's favorite thing to do is to play with her two-year-old daughter Meera Sihaya. Her daughter's middle name reflects another of Dr. Basu's favorite hobbies, reading fiction and fantasy/sci-fi. Other sci-fi fans may recognize Meera's middle name as a reference to the beloved character in her favorite sci-fi classic book *Dune*.

Dr. Basu is quick to share that her favorite Beatle is George Harrison. Her love of the Beatles is



demonstrated by the fact that her two-year-old daughter can recognize and identify all four Beatles—an unusual talent for her daughter and an amazing accomplishment as a mom!

When asked what the best advice she's ever received, Dr. Basu shared that "my mom has always been my role model. One bit of advice she gave me was that best way to lead a team is to lead by examinationple. I've done my best to embody that leadership framework, and I've been so fortunate to work with so many incredible teams at ASCP and the ASCP BOC!" Dr. Basu also loves Andy Bernard's line in the series finale of *The Office*, "I wish there was a way to know you're in the good old days before you've actually left them." She often thinks about that quote, and it helps her stay present in the moment. When asked if money and time were no object, what would you be doing right now, she replies "reading in a really cozy, pillow-laden treehouse with some taro milk boba tea." Towards that end her current short-term goal is to finish reading *Project Hail Mary* by Andy Weir. Dr. Basu loves reading, but between work and mom life, it has been hard to create free time for it.



# BOC PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS MEETING DATES

2025	SEPTEMBER		
	<a href="#">50th Annual Conference (AAPA)</a>	September 7 – 11, 2025	Denver, CO
	<a href="#">2025 NSH Convention</a>	September 26 – 30, 2025	Long Beach, CA
	<a href="#">40th International Clinical Cytometry Meeting &amp; Course (ICCS)</a>	September 26 – 30, 2025	Philadelphia, PA
	OCTOBER		
	<a href="#">2025 AABB Annual Meeting</a>	October 25 – 28, 2025	San Diego, CA
2026	NOVEMBER		
	<a href="#">ASC's 73rd Annual Scientific Meeting</a>	November 5 – 9, 2025	St. Louis, MO
	<a href="#">ASCP 2025 Annual Meeting</a>	November 17 – 20, 2025	Atlanta, GA
	DECEMBER		
	<a href="#">67th ASH Annual Meeting &amp; Exposition</a>	December 6 – 9 2025	Orlando, FL
	FEBRUARY		
2027	<a href="#">ASCLS Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference (CLEC)</a>	February 5 – 7, 2026	Bellevue, WA
	APRIL		
	<a href="#">ISBER Global Biobanking Congress</a>	April 21 – 23, 2026	Shenzhen, China
	<a href="#">2026 ASFA Annual Meeting</a>	April 22 – 24, 2026	Denver, CO
	MAY		
	<a href="#">APHL 2026 Annual Conferene</a>	May 4 – 7, 2026	Baltimore, MD
2028	JUNE		
	<a href="#">ASM Microbe</a>	June 4 – 5, 2026	Washington, DC
	<a href="#">2026 Joint Annual Meeting (ASCLS/AGT)</a>	June 28 – July 2, 2026	St. Louis, MO
	JULY		
	<a href="#">ADLM Annual Scientific Meeting &amp; Clinical Lab Expo</a>	July 26 – 30, 2026 6	Anaheim, CA
	JUNE		
2029	<a href="#">CYTO 2027 (ISAC)</a>	June 5 – 9, 2027	Helsinki, Finland



# ASCP 2025 ANNUAL MEETING

NOVEMBER 17–20 | ATLANTA

## JOIN THE ASCP BOC AT THE 2025 ASCP ANNUAL MEETING IN ATLANTA FROM NOVEMBER 17 – 20, 2025.

We're hosting a range of exciting activities:

### Exhibit Hall:

November 18 – 19, visit with ASCP BOC team members at the main ASCP Booth to learn about ASCP & ASCP<sup>i</sup> credentials.

### Global Café

Located in Exhibit Hall in 2025, the Global Café showcases the global contributions that strengthen the value of ASCP BOC credentials.

### Barbara M. Castleberry Lecture

Rodney E. Rohde, PhD, MS, SM(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>SV<sup>CM</sup>MB<sup>CM</sup> shares how his foundation as an ASCP BOC-credentialed microbiologist shaped his journey to becoming a global public health and medical laboratory advocate, revealing how one voice can spark meaningful change. Don't miss this inspiring presentation on November 18, 2025, at 10:30 – 11:30 am ET.

Register today at [ascp.org/2025](https://ascp.org/2025)

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## BOC PROFESSIONAL PARTNERS

### Sponsoring Societies

American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science (ASCLS)

American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP)

Association of Genetic Technologists (AGT)

### Participating Societies

American Association of Pathologists' Assistants (AAPA)

American Society of Cytopathology (ASC)

American Society for Microbiology (ASM)

Association for the Advancement of Blood & Biotherapies (AABB)

National Society for Histotechnology (NSH)

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Association for Diagnostics & Laboratory Medicine (ADLM)

