



ASCLS-VA NEWSLETTER

ASCLS-VA.ORG

President's Corner



by Laura Link, MS, MLS (ASCP)^{CM}

Hello ASCLS-VA!

I hope this finds all of you and your loved ones well. I am enjoying the fall colors and cooler temperatures. Each fall I think about one of my aunts - she always said she hated fall, which I could not understand. Once I was old enough to question her, the response was that she hated fall because everything was dying. It was an early lesson in perspectives for me, although I did not know that at the time.

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Academic Spotlight

Virginia Students Participate in 5th Annual Cell Bowl

by Jennifer McBride MS, MLS (ASCP)^{CM}

The students in the Medical Laboratory Science (MLS) programs at Radford University and Old Dominion University along with Medical Laboratory Technician (MLT) students from Wytheville Community College are competing in the fifth annual Cell Bowl, a nationwide competition presented by Medical Lab Lady Gill and sponsored by the American Society for Clinical Pathology (ASCP) and Cellavision. There are 59 programs representing 30 states in this year's Cell Bowl, more information about this event can be found at Medical Lab Lady Gill's web site: <https://medicallabladygill.blogspot.com/>

An important role of the laboratory professional working in the hematology department is to perform a manual white blood cell differential and evaluate the peripheral blood smear for abnormalities. This competition challenges students in MLS and MLT programs across the nation to go head-to-head to demonstrate their speed and skills at recognizing normal and abnormal cells in the peripheral blood smear in a timed format. The annual Cell Bowl provides a fun way to practice becoming more automatic with cell recognition while encouraging friendly competition between colleges and universities across the country.

The students from each program come together weekly to play the CellAtlas cell quiz, which presents each participant with a total of 30 cells (normal, abnormal and malignant) to correctly identify within 60 seconds. The best score from the class is submitted to the competition judges and results are announced at the end of the week, providing schools with their respective ranks amongst other programs in their region and across the nation. The competition tests the skills and speed of MLS and MLT students at recognizing findings from the peripheral blood smear while enhancing their hematology knowledge.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

* ASCLS-VA Monthly Meeting

Every 3rd Wednesday

Join us for via Zoom from 5-6pm. Meeting Link sent via Connect Community.

* ASCLS-VA Spring Symposium

April 10-11, 2026

To be held on the campus of Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond. See page 3 for details.

Cell Bowl continued from page 1

Not only do students benefit from participating in these activities, there are benefits for the educational programs as well. Weekly videos of the competition are made and posted on Medical Lab Lady Gill's YouTube channel, as well as on the website of the American Society for Clinical Pathology. This helps to increase the visibility of the programs and the medical laboratory fields.



WCC 2025 Cell Bowl Team

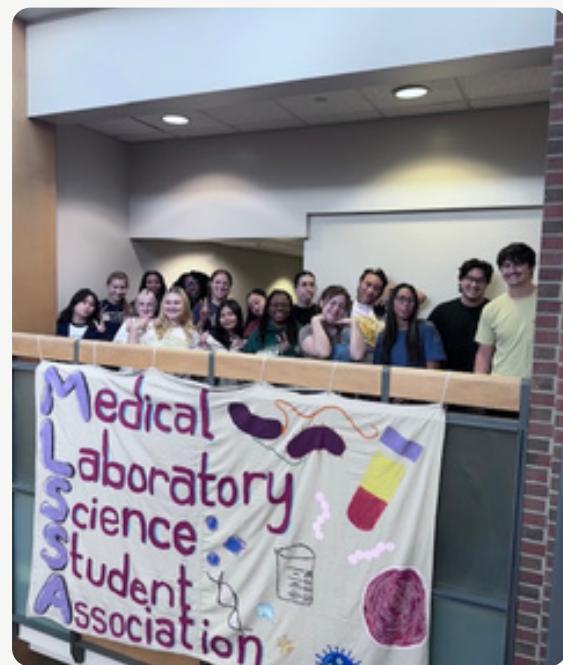
ASCLS Awards & Scholarships

by Ellie Coggins, MSHA, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}

Careers in the clinical laboratory can be challenging. Our work often involves high levels of stress and requires long hours. Many professionals in this field are motivated by a personal sense of purpose, finding meaning in their contributions rather than seeking praise or special recognition. Despite this, it is important that everyone receives acknowledgment for their individual efforts, whether these contributions are visible to others or not as they can serve as inspiration to us all during difficult times.

The American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science actively recognizes the dedication and achievements of its members through a variety of awards and scholarships. These honors celebrate individuals who help the society function and those who make significant contributions to the profession. Awards are presented at the state, regional, and national levels, with some requiring an application and others based on nomination.

Members are encouraged to explore the Award and Scholarship opportunities offered by ASCLS. Consider nominating a colleague whose work deserves recognition or applying for an award yourself. Descriptions of many awards are listed in this article. A full listing can be found at <https://ascls.org/awards-and-scholarships/>. To highlight recent successes, several recent ASCLS-VA scholarship and award recipients are highlighted. To the award recipients, thank you for sharing your time and talents with ASCLS-VA and for contributing to the advancement of our profession. To the scholarship recipients, congratulations on your achievement. Keep striving for the best for yourself and the patients we serve!



ODU 2025 Cell Bowl Team

"Don't work for recognition, but do work worthy of recognition."

—H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Developing Professional Leadership & Achievement Awards

"Developing Professional Leadership Award: Recognizes student members of ASCLS who have demonstrated exceptional leadership and contributed to the growth of the Developing Professionals Forum."

"Developing Professional Achievement Award: Honors student members who have made significant contributions to the clinical laboratory science profession and ASCLS through innovation or collaboration within the past year."

2025 Recipient of the Developing Professional Achievement Award for Innovation

Amy Vinarao, MLS (ASCP)^{CM}, CPhT

Ascending Professional Leadership & Achievement Awards

"Ascending Professional Leadership Award: Recognizes a member in their first five years of practice who has significantly contributed to the clinical laboratory science (CLS) profession and ASCLS."

2024 Recipient of the Ascending Professional Leadership Award

Doryan Redding, (ASCP)^{CM}

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ANNUAL MEETING**2025 ASCLS
Virginia Spring
Symposium**

Advancing laboratory professionals to advance healthcare in the State of Virginia

Date & Location

Dates: April 10-11, 2026



**Location: VCU College
of Health Professions
900 E Leigh St
Richmond, VA 23219**

About the Conference

The Spring Symposium of the Virginia Chapter of the American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science brings together medical laboratory scientists, technicians, educators, and students from across the region to share knowledge, foster collaboration, and celebrate excellence in the laboratory professions. This event highlights emerging technologies, best practices, and innovative approaches that are shaping the future of diagnostic science. Join us in Richmond for a chance to network with fellow scientists and vendors as well as earn up to 5 CEs.

Student Quiz Bowl

Dates: April 10, 2026 (2-4 PM)

Info: Teams of 4 students compete to answer general medical lab questions

Registration: Contact Rachel Childs (rchilds@odu.edu) or Elizabeth VonCanon (emdraper@vcu.edu)

Top Golf Social Event

Dates: April 10, 2026 (5-7 PM)

Info: Join us for a round of golf and snacks!

Registration: Contact Natalie Case (calcaterran@vcu.edu)

Contact Information

Email: calcaterran@vcu.edu

Website: <https://www.ascls-va.org/events/spring-symposium>



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Pinnacle Award

"The purpose of the ASCLS Pinnacle Award is to recognize and honor an ASCLS member who has made a difference in ASCLS and the profession of clinical laboratory science. This award provides special recognition to an individual who has provided dedicated and outstanding service at all levels of the organization over a sustained period of time. In addition, the individual has demonstrated outstanding career achievements in clinical laboratory science and has significantly promoted the profession to the public and other health care professionals."

To be nominated for this award is an honor reserved for those who have contributed at the highest levels of our profession throughout their career.

2024 & 2025 Nominee of the Pinnacle Award

Teresa Nadder, PhD, (ASCP)^{CM}

"Dr. Nadder, recently retired Associate Professor and Chairwoman of the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences at Virginia Commonwealth University (Richmond, VA), has been a member of the Society for 38 years and has notably served the profession as a certified Medical Laboratory Scientist (then Medical Technologist) since 1978."

Natalie Case, MS, (ASCP)^{CM} SBCM

Dr. Nadder's professional achievements are impossible to summarize succinctly; however, I believe this quote does a nice job of summarizing her contributions and character:

"She has been educating MLS students for over 40 years at VCU. Over 1000 certified Medical Laboratory Scientists benefited from her tutelage as an instructor, professor, and/or Program Director. Teresa has a gift for being able to see who anyone is at their core and making them feel important as both a professional and as a person."

William Korzun, PhD, DABCC, MLS(ASCP)

2025 Recipient of the Ascending Professional Achievement Award for Innovation

Nicole Parham, MEd, MLS (ASCP)

Voices Under 40 Award

This award was developed "to honor ASCLS members who have shown exceptional commitment to ASCLS, the laboratory profession, and their community at large at a young age in their professional careers."

2025 Recipient of the Voices Under 40 Award

Krystina Angelini, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, SM(ASCP)

Constituent Society Member of the Year

"The purpose of the ASCLS Constituent Society Member of the Year Award is to recognize a member who has contributed significantly to the field of medical laboratory science and to the state and/or national ASCLS in the past 5-10 years and who has, by outstanding example, inspired others over that time as an active member in the organization."

2025 Recipient of the ASCLS-VA Constituent Society Member of the Year
Krystina Angelini, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, SM(ASCP)

2024 Recipient of the ASCLS-VA Constituent Society Member of the Year
Briana Shelton, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}, SH(ASCP)^{CM}



Teresa Nadder, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}

Alpha Mu Tau Scholarships

"Alpha Mu Tau is a national fraternity whose purpose is the advancement of professionals in the clinical laboratory sciences. One of the prime activities of the fraternity is the granting of graduate and undergraduate scholarships for clinical laboratory science students."

2025 – John Smith Graduate Scholarship

Alison Stitik

2024 – Ruth M. French Undergraduate Scholarship

Leah Louise Guillama

Education and Research Scholarships

"The ASCLS Education & Research (E&R) Fund, Inc., provides scholarships and grants for students enrolled in programs in medical laboratory technology, medical laboratory science, and graduate degrees related to our profession. In 2011, the E&R Fund began providing Memorial Scholarships that are intended especially for those who wish to honor or memorialize a friend, colleague, or family member with their gift."

2025 – Edward C Dolbey Memorial Scholarship (MLS)

Meagan Yates

Congratulations!

Hematology Case Study

by Connie R. Mahon, MS, MLS(ASCP)

The patient is a 13-year-old female who was seen at the clinic because of complaints of fever, fatigue, and decreased appetite for the past 2 to 4 weeks. She also complained of easy bruising, especially on arms and legs. On physical examination, the patient showed pallor, was febrile, and appeared weak and lethargic. The patient also revealed petechiae over her mouth, ecchymoses, and signs of weight loss that had occurred over the last 6 months. Complete blood cell count (CBC), electrolytes, glucose, and blood urea nitrogen (BUN) were requested. The results showed a highly elevated white blood cell count (WBC), decreased red blood cell count (RBC), extremely low hematocrit, and extremely low platelet count. Differential count showed neutropenia (1%) and 66 % blasts. Based on the presence of blasts on the peripheral smear, an initial diagnosis of acute myeloid leukemia (AML) was made.

The patient was given 6 units of platelets and 250 mL of packed RBCs followed by 10 mg of Lasix IV. The patient was stabilized and placed on chemotherapy.



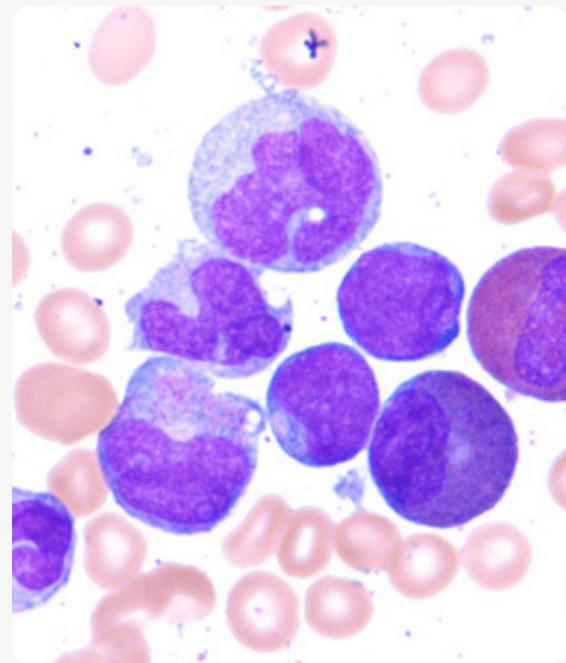
Behind every sample is a patient & every patient has a story...

After reading the patient clinical history, consider the following questions:

- What clinical manifestations and symptoms indicate the patient's condition and initial diagnosis?
- Which of the laboratory results support the initial diagnosis? What morphologic characteristics led to the diagnosis of this patient's condition?
- How should the investigation be carried out to confirm the diagnosis?
- How do cell markers differentiate this disease from others?
- Why are chromosomal analyses important as diagnostic and prognostic markers?



["Designed by Freepik"](#)



[AML M4e on Hematology.org](#) Author John Lazarchick

The patient's final diagnosis was acute myelomonocytic leukemia with dysplastic eosinophils (AML-M4e). M4e is a variant of M4.

AML is the most common type of myeloid malignancy in children. With appropriate induction of chemotherapy, 75% to 85% of children with AML can achieve complete remission. A prognostic factor for AML in children that seems to be consistent is the WBC count at diagnosis. Children who have a WBC count greater than 100,000/mm³ have poor prognosis.

Peripheral blood and bone marrow cell morphology, histochemical classification, cell surface marker differentiation and cytogenetic evaluation are used to confirm the diagnosis of AML (M4e). In AML (M4e), both granulocytic and monocytic precursors are present. Each cell line constitutes 20 to 80 percent of nucleated bone marrow cells. M4e is closely associated with an abnormal chromosome 16, including either a deletion or an inversion of the long arm (16q). Patients with a 16q abnormality and bone marrow eosinophilia have a longer median survival than patients with typical M4. The nuclei of these eosinophils are abnormal in morphology, cytochemical reactivity, and ultrastructure. The nucleus is not segmented, and, unlike normal eosinophils, these cells stain positive with naphthol ASD, chloroacetate esterase, and PAS.

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I feel so fortunate to live in a place where we have changing seasons, and most of the weather is not oppressively hot or cold, with enough precipitation for things to grow. Fall feels like rest and renewal to me, with some understanding that things go in cycles. I feel excited to grow things in the spring, I enjoy summer's activities and produce, and I am mesmerized by falling snow. I won't lie - there are days when I must pause and reflect before I can see the greatness, but it's usually right there.

I'm asking all of you to do the same, and to give honest feedback to yourselves. Are you feeling stuck or unchallenged? Are you feeling overwhelmed and wrung out? Are you ready for an employment change? Are you thinking about an additional certification or degree? Are you contemplating a personal move? We have a group and a profession that can support these things! I absolutely know that you have people to help because one of them is typing these words.

While you're looking at everything, remember to look at it more than one way. Or reach out and ask one of your people what they think. Or see. Or feel. Maybe fall is not your favorite season, but I encourage you to enjoy something it offers. I know my aunt loved cider, which we make by crushing beautiful apples. Sometimes it's about how you choose to see it. Hoping your mug is more than half full, I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve our group and profession.

~Laura

Hematology Case Study Continued from Page 5

The age of the patient at the time of diagnosis has an important impact on the duration of survival. Excluding those diagnosed in the neonatal period, children diagnosed in the first 15 years of life have the highest rate of remission and are more likely to have a relapse-free remission. Also, an elevated white cell counts greater than $30 \times 10^9 / L$, or a blast count greater than $15 \times 10^9 / L$ at diagnosis decreases the probability of remission and the length of remission. If the patient does not receive any treatment or chemotherapy for the disorder, the median survival will be about 6 weeks. About 3 percent will survive for about a year. About 1 percent will survive longer. In pediatric cases, a combination of intensive chemotherapy, transfusions, and antibiotic therapy yields a 90% remission rate, with a strong likelihood of complete remission.

Newsletter Editor
Ellie Coggins, MSHA, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}

Send submissions to:
ascls.virginia@gmail.com



Autumn Roads photo by Joyce K. Taylor

Get Involved!

ASCLS-VA is seeking volunteers for the following positions:

Awards Chair

Work with President to gather and submit nominations for Awards and Recognition.

Newsletter Editor

Gather submissions, edit and publish a biannual newsletter.

Nominations Committee

Solicit interest for elected and volunteer positions on the Board.

Board of Directors

Serve as a voting member of the Board and advise, offering assistance and ideas, as needed.

