

# The Kansas Scope Fall 2022



Ugly Christmas Sweaters, Political Action Committee, Employee Assistance Programs, and ASCLS Legislative Symposium

Pictured: ASCLS-KS President Elect Heather Santaniello and ASCLS-KS member Carlee Roberts represented Kansas at this year's ASCLS Legislative Symposium in Washington D.C.

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## The President's Corner

Greetings!

The ASCLS-KS Leadership Meeting was held on November 1. It was great to see everyone via Zoom, and to catch up on all the news of the society. Lots of things happening in the ASCLS World.

Two of our members attended the 2022 Laboratory Legislative Days in September. Heather Santaniello and Carlee Roberts visited the Kansas Legislative Delegation. Their topics for discussion included rallying support for the SALSA Act to correct some PAMA issues and sponsorship of a draft bill to help in the provision of clinical lab education among other things. Since this was a meeting of several laboratory groups, ASCP called upon all of us in the field to use the "MLS" designation for medical laboratory scientist and to cease using MT or MLT. The reasoning behind this is to bring unity to the profession, provide a consistent naming convention, and increase our visibility among other health professions.

The planning for our 2023 Annual Meeting has begun. Our dates are tentatively April 27-28 at Camp Aldrich, Barton County Community College, Great Bend. If you are interested in helping, please reach out to anyone in leadership and let them know that you want to help. The venue is an awesome retreat venue that we think will provide a little different atmosphere than usual- and it should be GREAT fun. It is hoped that the event will be a great way to celebrate Medical Laboratory Week 2023.

An "Unusual Christmas Sweater Contest" event is planned for December 3 at 8 pm with both virtual and onsite venues so think about joining your laboratory colleagues for a get together to get you into the holiday spirit. Information about upcoming events will soon be posted both on the ASCLS-KS website and Facebook page. This event follows a murder mystery event held earlier this fall. The society hopes to provide some lighter moments as everyone goes about doing their very important work.

If you haven't renewed your ASCLS membership, please do so as soon as possible. Join your 110 Kansas professional colleagues in supporting the profession and providing awesome, quality patient care.

The holidays are coming up, and things will become even busier. We hope you stay well, take care of yourself, and enjoy the holidays. If you have any questions, please feel to reach out to any ASCLS-KS members.

-ASCLS-KS President Beckie Hetrick

# Save The Date



**What:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual ASCLS-KS Ugly Sweater Christmas Party

**When:** December 3<sup>rd</sup> (Saturday) 8pm

**Who:** ASCLS-KS Members, friends, and family

**Where:** TBD (a virtual option will be available)

**Why:** Celebrate the holidays with your fellow ASCLS-KS members as you wear your weirdest, ugliest, and/or most unique sweater for a chance at winning the ASCLS-KS Ugly Christmas Sweater competition.



# The Red White and Blue Table

Heather Santaniello MLS(ASCP)<sup>cm</sup> MB(ASCP)<sup>cm</sup>

If you have been to the Joint Annual Meeting or the Legislative Symposium then you have certainly seen the table decked out in red, white, and blue that draws your curiosity the first time you lay eyes on it. For the ones that have not had the privilege to view this eye-catching display you are probably wondering what I'm talking about when I say the red, white and blue table. The table is set up by the Political Action Committee and is an important part of advancing, educating, and promoting the laboratory profession. It's imperative that it thrives and continues to catch the eye of ASCLS members at not only the National meeting but State meetings as well.

It was a little over a year ago that I decided I wanted to start volunteering with the ASCLS and as I was looking over the options I decided on the PAC. I had an urge to challenge myself in an environment I was not confident in. It was refreshing to find that the purpose of the PAC lined up with what I wholeheartedly believed was important to help the profession I love. Let this first time PAC trustee guide you through why there is a PAC table to set up and how to set it up. As I share my experience navigating my first time setting up my PAC table at the Kansas/Missouri meeting I hope it inspires others to recognize the importance of the red, white and blue table at various meetings. I hope this inspires you to gravitate to it and help us advocate for the laboratory profession.

The table the Political Action Committee sets up is for asking ASCLS members to donate to the PAC so we can financially support candidates that are friendly to the laboratory profession and its needs. These contributions help us acquire attention for legislative issues that directly affect the laboratory profession. The PAC aims to educate lawmakers of the importance of having healthcare legislation including legislation pertaining to the laboratory profession as a priority. A motto I have come to live by since joining the PAC and attending my first legislative symposium is that if you are not advocating for your profession then you are not advocating for yourself. This is why the PAC is so important to us as laboratory professionals. The importance of the PAC has been amplified since the start of the global pandemic. The government plays a vital role in the advancement and visibility of the laboratory profession. That is why it is crucial that state and region meetings also have a PAC table set up.

The Patchwork of Knowledge is the joint annual meeting of ASCLS-KS and ASCLS-MO, this year it took place in the beginning of June in Olathe, KS. As a PAC trustee, it is my responsibility to set up a table at the meeting which includes my constituent society. Thankfully Fourth of July merchandise is usually out in stores around Memorial Day and stays out all the way until Independence Day. I take pride in everything I set my mind to, so just grabbing random red, white and blue stuff was not an option. Yes, the table must catch the eyes of members at these meetings and a lot of red, white, and blue will certainly do that; but it must catch their attention and then spark the curiosity of the members gazing upon it to come up to the table and find out what it is all about.



I chose to use red, white and blue stars as kind of a theme of the table. Here is what mine looked like at the Patchwork of Knowledge 2022.



This table was set up in a great location; after the registration table and on the way to get to the snacks and drinks. Having the table by registration is the best location because everyone must stop by the registration table so if the PAC table is near it is easier to catch the eye of people. I wore red, white, and blue star necklaces (pictured on the table in front of the chair) so when I was away from the PAC table it was clear that I was the representative that could give them more information. Setting and preparing this table took less than \$10 and can be reused year after year. The brochure on the table is there to give more information to members and it has a QR code that will take you to where you can donate. The business cards on the table have the website where you can donate, and it also has a QR code on it to scan. On the back of the card is a brief overview of what the Political Action Committee does. This was my first year as a PAC trustee, so I was a little nervous to approach people I didn't know at first. I first focused on talking with the people I knew and was familiar with. This helped me get comfortable with what I should be saying to members. I then started to branch out and ask people that I didn't know that well. Next year I will be more confident than this year and my ability to educate members about PAC will improve as I progress.



Heather Santaniello **MLS(ASCP)<sup>cm</sup>**  
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# Employee Assistance Programs

Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) are benefits offered through employer insurance programs to help workers with personal problems. Services include health, financial, and social issues, including mental health.

Often these programs provide counseling services to help employees deal with personal problems such as balancing work and family life, and stress management.

We encourage laboratory professionals to reach out to management and health insurance carriers and ask about EAP services (learn more at the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration - SAMHSA, <https://www.samhsa.gov/workplace/employer-resources/provide-support>).

If you are a manager looking to encourage colleagues to use EAP services, you may find some useful tips by listening to the "Increasing Workplace EAP Utilization" episode of the Workplace Matters podcast (<https://hwc.public-health.uiowa.edu/workplace-matters-increasing-workplace-eap-utilization/>)





The ASCLS Legislative symposium offered ASCLS-KS members Heather Santaniello and first-time attendee Carlee Roberts the opportunity to connect with and learn from laboratory professionals across the country.

# Lobbying 101

Or: How I Learned to  
Stop Worrying and  
Enjoy the ASCLS  
Legislative  
Symposium

Carlee Roberts,  
MLS(ASCP)<sup>CM</sup>, MB<sup>CM</sup>



## Lobbyist.

The word itself conjures images of a person in an expensive, well-tailored suit, casually slipping a (monetarily) large check across a handmade mahogany desk to a politician sitting on the other side, fingers steepled. The politician nods, a silent arrangement made: You help pass my legislation, and I'll help fund your political career.

My experience with lobbying was nothing near as dramatic as this.

The preparation wasn't particularly intense, but it started weeks before the Legislative Symposium as Heather Santaniello and I met to formulate a plan for scheduling appointments with our state representatives and senators. Heather was successful in landing appointments with all but one representative's office, which was sure to give us a busy day on Capitol Hill.

Our flight left for D.C. Sunday afternoon. I tried in vain to focus on reviewing information in preparation for the legislative symposium, but my inner child quickly squashed those dreams in favor of staring out the window at the clouds. Heather tried in vain to stream the Chief's game, but her dreams too were squashed by the airline's abysmal Wi-Fi. We did manage to catch the tail end of the game after we landed in D.C., huddling together to watch the Chiefs lose as the skies opened up and rain hammered down upon us. Fitting.



Devastated by the loss of the Kansas City Chiefs to the Indianapolis Colts, ASCLS-KS President Elect Heather Santaniello waits for a ride at the airport in D.C.



Carlee Roberts and Heather Santaniello toured the monuments at night during their trip to D.C. for the ASCLS Legislative Symposium



Because I had never been to D.C. before, we took Sunday evening to sneak in a bit of sight seeing. Heather guided us in a tour of the memorials at night, an experience I would highly recommend.

Monday put the “Symposium” in the Legislative Symposium. Starting bright and early, we heard from several speakers about how the federal government is organized, what was currently going on in the house and senate, updates on the current state of the laboratory workforce, and an overview of the legislation that we would be discussing with our representatives and senators.

To say it was a whirlwind would have been an understatement.

Fortunately, Monday evening offered us a chance to unwind. We spent the evening picking each others’ brains about the state of the profession, how best to pitch legislation to our legislators, and eating several plates of nachos before wandering down the street to an escape room. Let me tell you, if you ever get the chance to participate in an escape room with a group of laboratory professionals, I heartily recommend you take it. We beat the room in record time\*

Tuesday was the big day. My nerves and imagination kicked into overdrive, worsened by a lack of sleep following a late night of solving riddles. Caught in a feedback loop of anxiety, I found myself fixating on all the ways the day could possibly go wrong.

I had never been to D.C. before, never stepped foot into a politician’s office before, and I am certainly not the sort of person who possesses an innate skill for lobbying. What if they laughed us out of their office? The conclusion I came to was that I needed to lower my expectations for myself. After whittling away at my delusions of grandeur I was left with a simple mission: support Heather, learn how lobbying works, and don’t make a fool of myself.

Our first meeting was at Representative Mann’s office at 9:30am. We waited outside the Cannon House Office Building for one of the legislative aides to escort us inside. Entering the building was a surprisingly mundane experience: no cameras following us down the hallway a la West Wing, no suspenseful music playing as we waited for our appointment. On the contrary, the energy (or the vibes, as the kids say) in the meetings was downright casual; like we were chatting with acquaintances rather than participating in formal business meetings.



Heather gave an impassioned speech about the state of the workforce during the symposium



ASCLS Members from around the country participated in an escape room down the street from the hotel.

\*the escape room employee may have said that to make us feel better about ourselves, but the claim was never actually verified.





We had the opportunity to meet with Senator Marshall during our appointments on capitol hill



It's a small world after all! We ran into ASCLS members from Tennessee and, of course, took a picture in front of the capitol building.

All the offices we visited that day were tastefully and strategically decorated: maps of the state of Kansas, books featuring Kansas history, sunflowers in vases on the tables, newspapers and magazines on coffee tables precisely positioned to show off relevant headlines. Representative Mann's office was no exception. We were asked to take a seat on a leather couch and asked what brought us to Representative Mann's office. I mostly watched as Heather gave her pitch asking for support of the SALSA and VALID acts and chimed in when I felt I had something worth contributing.

Throughout the day reactions to our pitch were mixed, some positive and some less so, but even in the face of implied rejection, our pleas were received with professionalism and grace. Nobody laughed us out of their office. Crisis averted. We continued to practice and polish our pitch, adjusting our approach as we learned more about our audience. Our fifteen-to-twenty-minute appointments continued throughout the day and while we mostly met with legislative aides, we did have the opportunity to meet with Senator Roger Marshall. Meeting a senator in person was less intimidating than I expected. As it turns out, Senators are just people like you and I, though I will say Senator Marshall had very nice teeth.

Contrary to the approach of other symposium attendees, Heather and I attempted to schedule appointments with all our state representatives, regardless of whether we lived in their district or not. This approach had its pros and cons. While it filled up our schedule and had us running back and forth across capitol hill, we wanted to make it clear that we were there to represent the interests of laboratory professionals across the entire state of Kansas.

For those who have never attended the legislative symposium before and are trying to decide whether to attend, I would recommend that you take the plunge. The number one most important thing for new attendees to know is that you are NOT alone. There will always be other ASCLS members (even if not from your home state) who have attended legislative symposiums before and who will be happy to help guide you and let you tag along while you learn the ropes. The number two most important thing to know is remember to pack good walking shoes or you'll end up walking across capitol hill in your socks...I may or may not have learned this one the hard way.

On our flight home I found myself staring out the window once more, trying to decide if another legislative symposium will be in my future. The experience made me more confident in my ability to talk with politicians and advocate for laboratory professionals, and that's worth spending a couple days in D.C.



## LEADERSHIP DIRECTORY 2022 – 2023

<b>BOARD OF DIRECTORS</b> (* Denotes Voting Members of the Board )			
<b>OFFICERS</b>		<b>BOARD MEMBERS</b>	
<b>*President</b>	Beckie Hetrick	<b>*Board 2023</b>	Norma Battle
<b>*President-Elect</b>	Heather Santaniello	<b>*Board 2023</b>	Julie Hutchinson
<b>*Past President</b>	Jennifer Jones	<b>*Board 2024</b>	Lety Nunez-Argote
<b>*Secretary</b>	Ruby Brower	<b>*Board 2024</b>	Celestia Seymour
<b>*Treasurer</b>	Megan Neill	<b>*Board 2025</b>	Kevin Staats
<b>*Developing Professional</b>	Andrew Samon	<b>*Ascending Professional</b>	Leah Ade
<b>AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVES</b>			
Kasey Edwardson		Richard Harmon	Jan Hudzicki
<b>STANDING COMMITTEES</b>			
<b>Annual Meeting Coordinator</b>	Ruby Brower	<b>Membership Develop</b>	Renee Hodgkins
<b>Awards</b>	Eric Elsinghorst	<b>Nominations</b>	Jennifer Jones
<b>Bylaws</b>	Marla Williams	<b>PACE Administrator</b>	Beckie Hetrick
<b>Education</b>	Eric Elsinghorst	<b>Promotion of Profession</b>	Drew Jones Leah Ade
<b>Finance</b>	Megan Neill, Linda Hickok	<b>Public Relations</b>	Heather Santaniello
<b>Government Affairs</b>	Linda Hickok, Lety Nunez-Argote	<b>Publications</b>	Carlee Roberts

### SCIENTIFIC ASSEMBLY CHAIRS

<b>Chemistry/Urinalysis</b>	Linda Reed	<b>Informatics</b>	Beckie Hetrick
<b>Education</b>	Jan Hudzicki	<b>Lab Administration/Consult/ Quality/Accr/Industry</b>	Ruby K Brower
<b>Generalist</b>	Julie Hutchinson	<b>Microbiology/Public Health</b>	Norma Battle
<b>Hematology/Hemostas is</b>	Jennifer Jones	<b>Molecular</b>	TBD
<b>Immunology/ Immunohematology</b>	Dana Powell Baker	<b>Point of Care/Phlebotomy</b>	Jessica Dirks