

Tech's Talk

Spring 2021



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From the Director's Desk



This past year is one that none of us could have even imagined and one none of us will ever forget. In last year's *Tech's Talk*, I said that it would be my last article as program director. But so many things have happened since I wrote those words. Although I have begun my phased retirement and I am working remotely from my home in Oregon, I am still serving as the program director.

The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted us in every aspect of our lives as well as impacting the University, the MLS program, students, faculty, and staff. But we're still here; we are resilient. When things get rough we band together to get the work done. This is one of the many reasons I am so proud of our profession and the UMN team. We watch out for each other, we take care of each other – we're a family.

When the pandemic began and the whole University shifted to distance education, we were one of the few programs that was given an exemption to bring students back to campus for their laboratory classes. We had to add face masks and shields to our existing protective equipment and keep students and faculty socially distant, but we were successful. When all clinical training sites closed to students, we developed a complete clinical simulation on campus allowing our students to graduate on-time and enter the workforce at a time of critical need (see pages 6-7 for more on our clinical simulation).

Because our lecture courses were already partially online in a hybrid format, it was easier than most departments on campus for our faculty to convert to completely online delivery of courses. We just held our lecture meetings through Zoom. It was perhaps a bit awkward at first, but we got the hang of it quickly.

We also witnessed the tragic loss of George Floyd in May. Many people in the community witnessed first-hand the anguish and fear that people of color, minority, and marginalized communities face every day. This is a pivotal moment in time and we cannot afford to ignore this problem any longer. It is more important now than ever that we advocate for justice and the eradication of systemic racism that has resulted in so much harm and senseless loss of

life, bringing immense grief to our community. We continue to stand in solidarity with the Black communities, indigenous communities, and communities of color supporting their demand for justice. The faculty developed this position statement in response to this tragedy.

We say unequivocally that we are committed to racial justice and equal opportunity in our Medical Laboratory Sciences program; to remove barriers and systems that impede or limit the access and success of students of color; and to work today, and every day in support of the role that education plays in advancing a more just and equitable society.
<https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/mls/commitment-inclusion-equity>

This year of change and uncertainty has given us some perspective on what is truly important in our program, for our students, and for our faculty. We miss seeing each other in the hallways or by the copier or by the microwave at lunch time. We miss gathering with students in the study lounge between lab classes and talking about their plans for the future.

But there have also been some positive outcomes from this stressful time. I have encouraged our students to ask "What is the up-side?" We learned a lot about the program by doing the clinical simulation on campus. We saw a lot of the successes but we also saw some gaps. We know we can teach our program lectures online successfully, which provides us and our students with a lot of flexibility. We streamlined our laboratory courses and focused on the essentials, but we also know which additional exercises are really helpful. We learned that our friendships are important to our wellbeing on campus and at home. Finally, we learned that we are capable, strong, and resilient, but that we need to take time to care for ourselves too.

We are looking forward to a time when the gathering restrictions are lifted or at least softened so we can gather again. And when we do, we will appreciate how precious that time together really is. One great thing that happened for the program this year was winning a HRSA

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From the Director's Desk (continued)

grant for \$3.2 million in scholarship. Please read about this scholarship on page 15.

As always, we want to express gratitude to all of our alumni and program friends for your continued financial support through donations to student scholarships. Every donation makes a difference to our students. This year, we were able to give out almost \$60,000 in scholarships and financial aid to our students. As you all know, our senior year of courses is very intensive with lots of time spent in laboratory courses each week. If we can help our students financially so they don't have to work, or if they must work, they can work fewer hours, it supports their success in the program. Page 10 lists the students we were able to help this year with your generous support. Thank you so very much.

Save the Date!

Due to the overwhelming positive response to the virtual alumni banquet that was held last

December and the ongoing pandemic, we have decided to host a virtual alumni event on Thursday, May 13th, with the possibility of an in-person banquet in October 2021. For questions about upcoming alumni events, please contact Jireh Mabamba or Linda Maleitzke at mlsalumni@umn.edu. Look for event information on the alumni page of the website: <https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/mls/alumni/news-events>.

As you can see, we've had yet another very busy but also very productive and rewarding year in our program. I hope you enjoy this issue of *Tech's Talk* and hope to see you at our virtual 2021 alumni event in May.



Janice Conway-Klaassen
PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}/SM^{CM}, FACSc

MLS Program Annual Report

NAACLS accreditation requires that each program report three key outcomes and provide this information to the public. We host this information on our web site, in our student brochures, and now here in our alumni newsletter. In addition, the University requests that we report student demographics and other statistics related to program effectiveness.

NAACLS accredited programs must demonstrate the quality of their educational plan by meeting certain minimum student performance outcomes including student graduation (program completion) rates; performance on the American Society of Clinical Pathology (ASCP) Board of Certification (BOC) Exam; and ability to obtain employment. We are proud to say that the outcomes for graduates of our MLS program consistently exceed the minimum requirements. ■

NAACLS Graduate Outcomes	2017	2018	2019
Graduation Rate (% on time)	87	94	93
ASCP BOC pass rate (Nat'l Mean = 80%)	100	98	100
Employment Rate % (6 months after grad)	100	100	100

Clinical Experience Rotations	2018	2019	2020
Number of Rotations	208	169	40*
Number in Minnesota	161	144	23**
Number in Rural Areas	47	25	0

**Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, clinical rotations were suspended at all clinical affiliates. To prevent delays in graduation, clinicals for 2020 were pivoted to an alternative format of a hybrid simulation experience (refer to articles on pages 6-7).*

Demographics of Incoming Students	2018	2019	2020
Average Age (years)	24	26	24
Gender (F/M/O)%	68/32/0	75/24/1	65/25/0
Cum GPA	3.27	3.34	3.32
MN resident %	79	87	84
Ethnicity %			
Asian	17	20	27
Black/African American	4	8	11
Native American	--	--	--
Hispanic	2	3	3
White	77	69	62

***Students were provided the opportunity to complete a 4-day shadowing experience at Allina Health System to spend one day in each major rotation area (microbiology, transfusion medicine, chemistry/urinalysis, hematology/coagulation). Not all students engaged in this opportunity, but 23 of the 40 students participated.*

<https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/medical-laboratory-sciences>

CLEC 2020



The Clinical Educators National Meeting was held February 27-29, 2020 in Orlando, FL where the weather did not disappoint!

Tami Alpaugh presented a poster co-developed with Stephen Wiesner and Charlotte Romain, titled "Improving Affective Behaviors in MLS Students through Self and Peer Evaluations." Developing and integrating soft skills and professional behaviors throughout the entire MLS curriculum provides students the opportunity to hone their professionalism.

profound effects the pandemic would have on teaching instruction for the remainder of 2020 and beyond!

The 2021 CLEC conference was virtual this year, with the expectation of many shared new best practices for educating MLS students and networking with other educators. Sessions were live-streamed and recorded with access for 30 days following the conference. ■



Tami also presented a session about the UMN MLS Program's innovative clinical experience, discussing student scheduling, preparation and assessments during their clinical experience. Little did the educators in attendance realize the



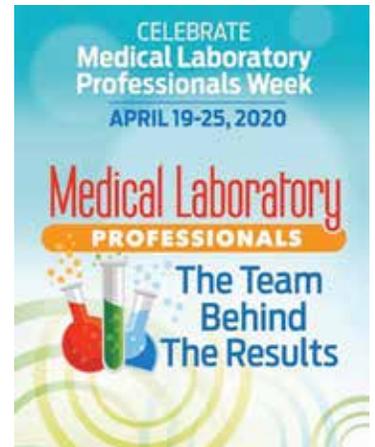
curriculum provides students the opportunity to hone their professionalism.

Medical Laboratory Professionals Week



Medical Laboratory Professionals Week is an annual celebration to recognize the laboratory personnel and their important role in health care. Each year during this week, the Medical Laboratory Sciences Program celebrates this week with the students, our future professionals. This year's Lab Week was April 19-25, 2020 and Governor Walz issued a proclamation in the state of Minnesota honoring Lab Week. Due to the stay at home orders this spring, our celebrations with the students moved online.

This year MLS students celebrated lab week through a Lab Week Course in the Learning Management System (Canvas) where new activities were posted daily. Some of the activities included lab themed puzzles, coloring pages, parody lab videos, and blood type personality quizzes. Students also had the chance to win a prize by correctly guessing the faculty's coffee cup and guessing how much toilet paper was in a picture. Other activities included flipgrid Minute to Win It challenges and discussion boards where students could share their thoughts. In addition, each student received a bingo card and numbers were drawn daily. All students were entered to win daily prizes as well. Faculty are so proud of the MLS students and this was a fun week to celebrate with them! ■



Students in Action

MLS Students and Faculty in the Medical Reserve Corp

The UMN Medical Reserve Corp helped to staff the large scale testing event that took place before the Thanksgiving break in November. The University partnered with the State of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Health, and Vault Health to offer saliva testing for two days before students left campus for the holiday break.

Several MLS students and faculty who are a part of the UMN Medical Reserve Corp helped in that endeavor. They served as observers, monitoring every sample collection to make sure that the demographic information was entered correctly and that the sample collection was correct. The collection site was set up in the Fieldhouse. It was a busy two days and a successful large scale testing event. ■



Phillips Neighborhood Clinic

In the fall of 2020, the Phillips Neighborhood Clinic (PNC) recruited 17 new laboratory volunteers, including 3 MLS students. Tami Alpaugh coordinated the training for the 17 new volunteers at the PNC location where they learned venipuncture and basic laboratory safety. Training was facilitated by volunteers from the UMMC East and West Bank Core laboratories. The PNC continues to operate 1 day per week during the COVID-19 pandemic. More information about the PNC can be found at <http://phillipsneighborhoodclinic.com/>. ■



New Opportunity for High School Outreach

Everything has gone virtual this year! This has not been all bad, as new opportunities have opened up for recruiting. MLS Instructor, Charlotte Romain, and MLS Recruitment Specialist, Tammy McNish, had the opportunity to develop a virtual booth for the Elevate Futures Career Expo. The Expo was a virtual event available to local high school students and sponsored by the Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce.

Visitors to our virtual booth were able to watch our most recent program video and download information about the program, the profession, and our MLSP 1010 course available to PSEO students. In addition, there were two opportunities for students to talk to us in person via video conferencing. Several students joined us in the afternoon session where we answered their questions about the profession and about the University MLS program.

Charlotte also participated in a Healthcare Industry Panel. The panel included a nursing student, a nursing instructor and a healthcare administrator for long-term care facilities.



The moderator asked questions about how we found our careers, what we love about them, and how we got to where we are now. The panel was recorded and is now available to view on the Elevate Futures website.

The event organizers provided analytic information for students who visited our virtual booth. The information included contact information so we can follow up with the students and hopefully keep them engaged as they make their future decisions about school and careers. ■

COVID-19 Impacts the Clinical Experience

As you can imagine, the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on the MLS program in numerous ways. In March 2020, our clinical



sites informed us that they would not be able to provide clinical rotations for any MLS or MLT students. The MLS program made the decision to move forward with an alternative clinical format to prevent delays in graduation.

In collaboration with clinical sites, Tami Alpaugh, Director of Clinical Education, and Lorna Ruskin, Associate Professor, accelerated a project to develop a hybrid clinical experience simulation for microbiology comprised of a virtual and face-to-face component. The project quickly developed into a full clinical experience in microbiology, transfusion medicine, hematology and chemistry and launched in May 2020.

There were a number of limitations to the development of this simulated experience including laboratory space, minimum distancing between students, and accommodating for makeup sessions due to illness or exposures. To accommodate distancing protocol, four sections of simulation occurred; three in the summer and one in the fall.

Clinical Experience Simulation

To maintain consistency with previous years, the simulations used the same objectives, final evaluations, and final clinical exams. In addition, collaboration with clinical partners was critical to develop a robust hybrid clinical simulation experience of the core disciplines, which included: GoPro videos of different laboratory areas, benches, and procedures; supply donations; sharing of clinical site procedures; instrument result printouts; and cytospin and peripheral smears.



The virtual component was a two-week orientation to prepare the

students for the on-site simulation. It was composed of virtual tours of laboratories, a review of a laboratory manual, and discussions regarding expectations, policies, and protocols.

The on-site experience was two weeks long and included three days in each discipline including transfusion medicine, microbiology, and the core laboratory (chemistry, hematology, urinalysis, body fluids, and more). Students worked as simulated medical laboratory scientists for 8.5 hours each day. Students were required to perform quality control, work independently and as a team member, communicate with other healthcare providers, organize their workload, and perform and report test results.



The MLS program was able to utilize the donated Sysmex XE in the face-to-face component of the clinical experience. Utilizing results from a previous research project, several activities and experiences were incorporated into the hybrid simulation including teamwork, communication, and laboratory operations. Following the clinical experience simulation, Allina Health offered a one-week shadowing experience to all 40 MLS program students in their laboratories around the Twin Cities.

All faculty participated in the on-campus component, making the project another one of the MLS program's successful projects. The final day of the on-site experience included a final debrief, final evaluation reviews, as well as an

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COVID-19 Impacts (continued)

interactive session with guest speakers from the clinical sites. The experience concluded with a four-week study session to prepare students for their clinical exams and Board of Certification exam.

Students See Growth and Gain Experience

“It was very gratifying to have been through every step of the program with the students and watch them develop into very capable laboratory professionals,” noted Alpaugh.

Students commented that they didn't know what to expect of simulation and that they were worried the on-campus activities would not be any different from a student laboratory within our courses. They were very surprised at the intensity and challenge of the simulated experience and that it required them to think and act as if they were in a true laboratory setting.



Students appreciated the support of faculty and that they found a way for them to graduate on time. We are happy to report that due to the masking, handwashing, distancing, and other Minnesota Department of Health guidelines, no students acquired COVID-19 due to exposure in the simulated laboratory!

Simulation Experience Could be Part of the Future

We value our clinical sites and the experience they provide our students and we hope they continue to

provide this service. However, finding clinical rotations is challenging and we hope to continue the simulated experience in a compacted format that would reduce the stress on the clinical site and allow them to provide more clinical rotations. Thank you to all who participated in this project and to the clinical sites for trusting us to continue to provide quality students in this new format. ■

Health Sciences Education Center Now Open

The new Health Sciences Education Center (HSEC) opened its doors to students and staff in Fall 2020. The building offers state-of-the-art instruction facilities to provide interprofessional education in health sciences. The facility includes high-tech classroom space, the new Health Sciences Library, the Wangensteen Historical Library of Biology and Medicine, the Center for Health Interprofessional Programs (CHIP), a new M Simulation Center, an innovative maker space, data visualization lab, as well as student study spaces and a new student services area.

This new facility is critical as we prepare students and practicing health care professionals for an interprofessional, team-based approach to patient care. Learn more and take a virtual tour of this amazing active learning space here: <https://hsec.umn.edu/>. ■



Spotlight on Students

SEONMI PARK (Sunny) is from Seoul, South Korea. She lives in Minneapolis with her husband. He is also an MLS, so they spend time sharing



interests and opinions. He is currently studying cardiac mitochondria in the Integrative Biology and Physiology Ph.D. Program at the UMN.

Sunny loves traveling to discover new places and meet new people from diverse backgrounds. When Sunny first came to the United States, she spent time each month exploring different states. She is fascinated by the varied atmosphere and culture in each state and she especially

enjoys the beauty of nature in the US. She likes to spend time playing sports and leisure activities with friends. Sunny has a bachelor's degree in Psychology, which is probably why she likes to observe and interact with people.

Sunny initially developed her interest in health care from a personal experience where she received timely and appropriate treatment due to early recognition. Her parents were avid volunteers, especially for those with disabilities, and they included her in these activities as she was growing up. She found these experiences rewarding and it instilled in her the heartwarming attitude and life values of her parents. Sunny is confident that the challenging, yet rewarding MLS career path will enrich her life spiritually. After graduation, she plans to gain experience in a hospital setting and hopes to eventually choose an area of specialization. Sunny would like to share her gratitude to her professors and advisors who have provided encouragement and support for her success.

ASHLEY DAHLKE AND AMY DAHLKE are twin sisters in the MLS Program. They have two older sisters Katie and Kim. Katie is a nurse at HCMC's pain clinic and Kim is a daycare teacher with two kids, James (5) and Josey (11). Josey loves science, which makes her Aunties proud! Their mom is a hairstylist who raised the four girls on her own after their dad contracted a mysterious respiratory virus, which took his life when they were just six months old. Despite the circumstances, their house full of girls had a lot of fun growing up and they are still very close.

Amy enjoys cooking, biking around town, and watching movies. Pre-pandemic she loved to go to restaurants, see live shows and meet up with friends. She and her partner have a three year old lab mix named Bev who they enjoy taking to the dog park and to local hiking spots.

Ashley enjoys spending her free time relaxing and listening to podcasts and watching movies and TV shows. She also likes outdoor activities like biking, hiking, and camping, as well as practicing yoga. Pre-pandemic she spent time going to shows with friends and she can't wait to get back to a punk or metal show. She loves traveling and looks forward to seeing different parts of the world once travel is safe again.

Both Ashley and Amy completed their A.S. in Biology before starting in the MLS program. Amy had imagined a future in lab work since she was a teenager even though she was not aware of MLS as a field. While studying Biology at Minneapolis College and researching programs for her post-Associate's path, she discovered the MLS Program on the UMN website and knew immediately that is was what she wanted to do. She had not mentioned it to Ashley, and a few months later Ashley said to her: "Oh my God Amy, I figured out what I want to study!"

At that time, Ashley was working as a server and one of her coworkers in nursing school saw her interacting with an elderly customer and suggested that she would be a great nurse. At 22, she started at MCTC as a pre-nursing student. After taking anatomy and physiology, she realized that she was much more interested in science, so she changed



her major to biology. Ashley knew that she wanted to work in a laboratory, but was interested in many areas of study from microbiology and biochemistry, to pathophysiology and couldn't pick just one. Then while browsing majors at the UMN, she found MLS and everything about it fit perfectly with her interests.

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Spotlight on Students (continued)



After graduation, Amy is planning to start out in a hospital position. She is really enjoying Transfusion Medicine Lab right now so she is considering that direction with an eye on graduate school down the line. Post graduation, Ashley plans to find a job in the metro area for the first couple of years to gain some experience. Eventually she is interested in research

or pathology in graduate school. She would like to live outside of Minnesota for a while, so is also considering being a traveling MLS.

Ashley commented that “It’s kind of funny how Amy and I ended up in the program together. Growing up, we were always lumped together as one, so we very much value our independence and celebrate our differences. So, when we both decided that we wanted to enter the MLS program, I think each of us was hoping the other was going to change their mind. But we think too much alike, and we both wanted to go into this field, so neither of us was going to change just to be different from the other. At first, we were a little embarrassed about it, but eventually we just embraced it and decided it doesn’t matter what anyone thinks, because we’re both so happy to be going into this field.”

SABRINA TOBE is originally from Oromia, Ethiopia. She was born in Kenya, but grew up in Seattle, Washington and later Minneapolis, Minnesota. She comes from a large family and an even bigger extended family. Growing up with many siblings and cousins was so much fun. There was never a dull moment.



Sabrina has a strong interest in history. She spends a lot of time reading history books, watching videos and movies, and listening to podcasts. She finds it fascinating to learn about people’s lives thousands of years later and to draw parallels between then and now.

Sabrina learned about the MLS Program from a booth at a Major/Minor Expo. She really enjoyed her biology and chemistry lab classes. She likes the diagnostic aspect of it and that she will be able to play a vital role in patient care. She also appreciates the opportunity to work in a variety of work settings. After graduation, Sabrina plans to take a short trip to Oromia before she gets a job. She has not been there since she was a child and she is excited to see what it is like.

ALEXANDER SHAW is from Monticello, Minnesota. He currently lives at home with his mom and dad. His older sister and nephew live close by, so they spend a lot of time together as a family. His sister is completing her B.S. in Business Management with an emphasis in environmental sustainability at St. Cloud State University. Alex also has a four year-old German Short Hair Pointer who loves to run and play outside with the family.

Alex enjoys anything science related. He also loves to be active outdoors, play sports, hunt, fish, take hikes with his dog, and hang out with friends and family. Alex heard about the MLS Program from his former Chemistry professor and his academic advisor. He chose this field because he likes participating in labs and being involved in the medical field while helping patients from behind the scenes.

Alex is the ASCLS-Minnesota Student Forum Representative. One of his professors, Michelle Henry-Stanley, suggested that he consider getting involved in ASCLS. He then met with Eykka Gundlach, a past ASCLS Region V Representative, and they discussed the responsibilities and benefits of participating in ASCLS. After their conversations, Alex knew that he wanted to be involved with ASCLS. Alex has learned about the many resources that ASCLS provides for its members, especially student members. He also learned how to grow his personal and professional network, along with improving his professional skills. The most rewarding thing about being in ASCLS is representing the students of Region V. Alex finds being able to provide and expand student resources for successful academic and professional careers in the laboratory very gratifying. After graduation, Alex plans to work in a hospital laboratory in the greater Twin Cities area. He also plans to continue his involvement with ASCLS in any way that he can. ■



The Power of Giving

Alumni play a huge role in supporting our students through generous donations to our program. Each year, donations to our scholarships make it possible for students to afford textbooks needed for classroom success, meet the increasing cost of tuition, or to find temporary housing during clinical rotations in rural Minnesota. Many students would find it difficult to begin their new careers as medical laboratory scientists without such support. We want to thank everyone who generously donated in 2020 and continue to ask for your help in 2021 – no matter the size of the donation. *Below is a listing of the students you have helped through your scholarship donations in 2020.*



<p>Alumni Fund Scholarships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Harvey • Farha Ismail • Adrianna Martinez • Anh Duy Nguyen • Kelley O'Brien • An Pham • Ghalya Qasem • Rukia Qassem • Claire Wilmesmeier <p>Constance Bakken Scholarship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renee Thomas • Claire Wilmesmeier 	<p>Grace A. Byers Scholarship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taylor Harvey • Jared Heinsch • Ellie Shuldes • Carly Taschner • Robin Thomas • Delci Thoresen (Christensen) • Mariah Witt <p>Yvonne Chenoweth Cooke Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Julie Rivera • Renee Thomas 	<p>Gonyea-Stewart Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdi Farah • Rene Nelson <p>Karen R. Karni Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isabel Brown • Evan Kane • Sarah Schultz <p>Audrey Lapeyrouse Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdi Farah • Ali Hassan <p>Betty Rae McConnell Scholarship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelley O'Brien 	<p>Abner M. Neeley Scholarship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dylan Christensen • Amy Dahlke • Kaylee Kangas • Youngeun Kim • Amanda Nguyen • Sarah Pham • Sarah Schultz • Judy Thao • Christina Vo <p>Hovde O'Brien Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Claire Wilmesmeier 	<p>William A. O'Brien Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kelley O'Brien • Julie Rivera • Delci Thoresen (Christensen) • Halima Wako <p>Clarice J. Olson Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judy Thao <p>Ruth Stavitsky Scholarship</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abdi Farah <p>Elizabeth Stone Scholarship Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delci Thoresen (Christensen)
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ASCLS-MN 2020 Scholarship Winners

Annually, the American Society of Clinical Laboratory Science of MN ((ASCLS-MN) Scholarship Committee composed of program directors from Minnesota laboratory programs reviews and selects scholarship recipients based on academic scholarship and financial need. The funds for these scholarships are generously provided by the United Hospital Foundation, the Minnesota Society of Pathologists, and the silent auction from the annual Clinical Laboratory Collaborative meeting.

The number of scholarships vary depending on the funds available and the number of well qualified MLS and MLT applicants with the amount of the award for each scholarship ranging from \$500 to \$1000. This year, four ASCLS-MN 2020 scholarships were awarded to four students from the University of Minnesota's MLS program. ■

Congratulations to:



Jared Heinsch
MMLS Class of 2021



Delci (Thoresen) Christensen
MMLS Class of 2020



Megan (Heimermann) Kellner
MMLS Class of 2020



Kelley O'Brien
MLS Class of 2020

Thank You for Your Generous Contributions to the Medical Laboratory Sciences Program in 2020

\$1,000 and up

- Ann D. Claesgens
- David R. Jacobson
- Todd C. & Mary E. Jacobson
- Todd C. and Mary E. Jacobson Charitable Fund
- Francene H. & Lonny R. Lebahn
- Karin J. Libby
- Clareyse E. Nelson
- Clareyse Nelson Fund of the Mpls Foundation
- John C. Okada
- Toni D. Okada
- Okada Family Trust
- Frederick C. & Marilyn D. Olson
- Debra C. Rodahl
- Kathleen B. Standing
- Kathleen B. Standing Giving Acct-Fidelity Char

\$500 to \$999

- Anonymous Donor
- Joanne S. Arvid
- Sarah K. Dipasquale
- Mardie G. Geiser
- Charles V. & Julie S. Grudzinskas
- Robert P. Hirte
- Karen K. & Richard L. Huff
- Billie Anne & Howard A. Juni
- David J. & Mary Jo Pennington
- Delores M. & John L. Roesler
- Laura G. Rude
- Ella M. Spanjers
- Verne E. & Phyllis J. Weiss*
- Andrew R. Yue

\$100 to \$499

- 3M Fdn Inc
- Patricia A. Ackerman
- Marcia L. Bell
- Marilyn T. Budge
- Kimberly A. & David W. Butler
- Robert A. Dahl
- Barbara M. Deisting
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- Joyce A. Gunderson
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- Julie A. Jacobs
- Phyllis M. Jacobs
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- Douglas C. & Patricia J. Kriesel
- Mary E. & George A. Kuhlmann
- Vickie L. Larson
- Connie J. Luebke
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- Brian J. Meline
- Marvin L. & Cynthia A. Menken
- Diane M. & John J. Michalik
- Russell A. & Mary Lou G. Mohn
- Donald M. & Kathleen W. Nadreau
- Scott A. & Elaine M. Nesbit
- Beverly R. & Eric M. Ness
- Dorothy L. Ness-Everett
- Elizabeth K. Neuvar & Mark E. Zimmerman
- Patricia L. Norgren
- Jeanne C. Olsen
- James R. & Sheryl F. Olson
- Neil and Mariellen Palm Family
- Sheila L. Palm
- Rick L. Panning
- Kathleen K. Reimers
- Barbara J. Reinhardt
- Todd A. & Anne M. Ringgenberg
- Karen L. Ringsrud
- Ruth M. Rosendahl
- Dale W. & Cheryl M. Rozeboom
- Joy E. & Gerald F. Sacre
- Nancy A. Stanaway
- Aija K. Vikmanis
- Kent D. & Marcia K. Wall
- Marilee M. & William H. Welliver
- Kristi L. Werdin & Ronald T. Marchese
- Donna J. Wieb
- Stephen M. Wiesner
- Nancy A. Witstine
- Xcel Energy Fdn
- Nicole E. Zahnle

Up to \$100

- Melissa L. Aitken
- Pamela K. & Steven R. Bjoraker
- Priscilla M. & Gerald J. Bormann
- Linda J. Bowers
- Wanda E. Clark
- Joanne G. Deden
- Timothy E. & Carolyn E. Donovan
- Donna E. Dzubay
- Lorilee B. Echternach
- Arthur T. & Kay E. Emmons
- Leanna L. Erickson
- John W. & Carol I. Evans
- Harriet D. & Wes Fritts
- Linda A. Gallick
- Jessica A. & Jeremy Goettl
- Stephen L. & Nancy L. Gordon
- Naomi M. & James M. Hanson
- Ruth M. Hartman
- Lucy L. Hoelzel
- Mark C. Hove & Leslie A. MacKichan
- Diane G. & Jeffrey C. Hutchinson
- Cheryl A. Kaup
- Arla K. Keckeisen
- Karen M. & Thomas H. Koen
- Phillip M. Korkowski
- Carol A. Ladwig
- Michaela M. Leary
- Linda A. Lewis
- John A. & Cheryl J. Luckow
- Judith A. Nelson
- Jack W. & Sandra V. Pearson
- Susan A. Piasecki
- Marilyn J. Plummer
- Ronald A. & Jennifer L. Prasek
- Diane K. & Thomas Rappe
- Todd W. & Pamela J. Robinett
- Sandra L. Sauer
- Lois J. & Peter M. Smith
- Patricia L. & Allan B. Solum
- Donna J. Spannaus-Martin & Bruce L. Martin
- Pamela D. Swanson
- Michael A. & Rita J. Tischler
- Hannes M. Wiesner
- Martha M. Yiglletu
- Mary R. & Richard J. Zweber

*Deceased

If you wish to make a contribution, please visit: <https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/medical-laboratory-sciences> or call: **UMN Foundation at 800-775-2187**

Dr. Ruskin Receives ASCP Foundation Grant



Dr. Lorna Ruskin, Associate Professor in the Medical Laboratory Sciences Program, recently received a grant from the American Society for Clinical Pathology Foundation to support her clinical experience simulation model for MLS students.

Because of COVID-19, MLS students were unable to attend their clinical rotations in hospital and clinic facilities. Dr. Ruskin and Clinical Education Director, Tami Alpaugh, developed an on-campus

clinical laboratory simulation to allow students to complete their final competencies and graduate on time. In the on-campus clinical experience simulation, students gained hands on experience as a practicing medical laboratory scientist under the supervision of faculty-supervisors.

Funding from this grant will help support the purchase of supplies and reagents, the development of virtual preparatory and orientation materials, and the development of simulation procedure manuals and laboratory guides. ■

Donna Spannaus-Martin Continues Advocacy for UMN and MLS

In her roles as University of Minnesota Faculty Legislative Liaison and ASCLS Region V Government Affairs Chair, MLS faculty Donna Spannaus-Martin follows legislation in Minnesota and on a federal level. In the first year of the Minnesota legislative biennium, the focus is usually on the university's budget request. If you would like to learn more about how you can advocate for the University of Minnesota with your legislators, sign up at advocates.umn.edu.



introduce legislation in Congress to establish a grant program for clinical laboratory education programs to support recruitment and retention of students, curriculum development, and establishment of clinical education sites. This is in addition to encouraging funding for legislation currently in the US House of Representatives, the Allied Health Professional Shortage Act (H.R. 6302) that would establish scholarships and loan repayment

Nationally, ASCLS is active in promoting legislation to address the medical laboratory workforce shortage. ASCLS is seeking to

programs for students pursuing a degree in an allied health field. You can sign up to receive action alerts on national laboratory legislative issues at the ASCLS Labvocate Action Center (www.ascls.org/advocacy-issues/labvocate). ■

Center for Allied Health Programs Launches Redesigned Website



The Center for Allied Health Programs recently launched a new, redesigned website. The new design brings more attention to the MLS and OT programs as well as streamlining the content in each to make it easier for prospective students to learn more about what each program has to offer.

Check it out at <https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu>. ■

Focus on Faculty & Staff

Staff Changes at the Center for Allied Health Programs



AMY FISCHER joined CAHP in July 2020 as the new Operations Manager. Amy comes to us from the Department of Anesthesiology in the Medical School where she worked for 5 years. However, she started her career at the University of Minnesota in 2005 at Boynton Health Services Eye Clinic as an Ophthalmic Technician and Certified Optician. In

her spare time, she enjoys being with her family and friends and taking as many road trips, as her goal is to visit as many National Parks as possible.



MEGAN HOLDER joined CAHP in October 2020 as an Administrative Associate. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Luther College in Decorah, IA, and her Master's Degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Saint Mary's University of Minnesota. Having appreciated the administrative responsibilities that came

with her nearly 10 years in the mental health field, she is excited to shift into an administrative role with CAHP. She is energized by finding ways to support others, tackling unique challenges, and providing assistance wherever needed. In her spare time, she enjoys traveling, baking, and spending time with friends and family.

TAMMY MCNISH is the new Admissions & Recruitment Specialist for CAHP. In this role, she will work to increase the awareness of the OT Program as well as help prospective students navigate their way through the admissions process.



While new to both the University and the State of Minnesota, Tammy has familiarity in recruiting, with more than 10 years of experience in higher education, admissions, and enrollment management. She spent eight years as the Assistant Director of Admissions at Northeastern University's graduate satellite campus in Charlotte, NC, where she recruited prospective master's and doctoral degree students. Prior to joining the Northeastern team, Tammy advised adult undergraduate students at Queen's University of Charlotte, assisting with course selection and program mapping toward degree completion. Most recently, Tammy served as the Recruitment Specialist for Year Up, a nationwide nonprofit organization whose mission is to close the opportunity divide for marginalized and underserved young adults looking to complete their education and enter the workforce. Outside of work, Tammy likes staying active, reading, and watching sports and cooking shows. She's excited to explore Minnesota with her husband, Ken, and their dog, Meadow.

SWAN NGUYEN joined the CAHP in October 2020 to serve as a Student Services Administrative Specialist. Her priority is to support the Admission teams as well as the Academic Advisors in the Medical Laboratory Sciences and Occupational Therapy programs. Prior to joining CAHP, she had worked with the Office of Classroom Management at the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities for four years. During this time, she also had earned a BA in Speech-Language Hearing Sciences and Neuroscience and a minor in Korean Language Studies. Outside of work, Swan enjoys learning foreign languages, learning to play the guitar and the violin, and making ceramics. ■



Charlotte Romain inducted in the ASCLS Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity

Congratulations to Charlotte Romain on being inducted into the Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity. The Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity's purpose is the advancement of professionals in the clinical laboratory sciences. Individuals are selected based on their significant contributions to the medical laboratory science field at the local, state, regional, and national levels. To be nominated is an honor in itself and to be selected is acknowledgement of Charlotte's influence and commitment to excellence in the practice of laboratory medicine.

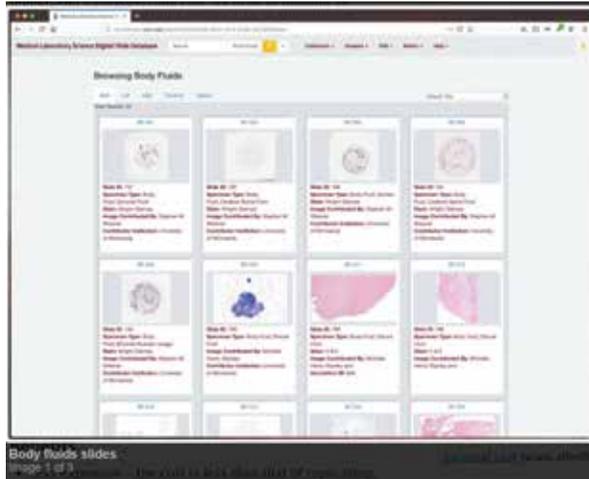
The Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity was incorporated as a non-profit corporation in 1948. One of its most important activities

is granting scholarships for medical laboratory science students to ensure that our profession continues to be served by well-trained and qualified individuals. Charlotte Romain was inducted into Alpha Mu Tau Fraternity during the annual AMTF business meeting, which due to the COVID-19 pandemic was held virtually this year. Please join us in congratulating Charlotte on her entrance into our fraternity! ■



MLS Program Offers Free Access to Digital Microscope Slide Database

As COVID-19 shut down in person classrooms across the nation, the MLS program at the UofM was positioned to transition to online learning because of years of developing digital instructional materials for our students. Back in 2009, former faculty member Cheryl Swinehart and current faculty Steven Wiesner, with a lot of help from former faculty member Mary Jane Yue, developed our Digital Slide Database of hematology slides by scanning whole slide images of our teaching slide sets. In fact, since 2011, hematology morphology has been taught entirely online.



Since its creation, the database of digital slides has been available for any laboratory science program by license through the Office of Technology Commercialization. When COVID hit, Wiesner began getting inquiries about the database.

Early in March, before the UMN closed its campuses, Wiesner responded to an inquiry from a local educational program about his Digital Pathology Virtual Microscope Slides with Online Database. The slides provide students and allied health professionals online access to a database of hematology, body fluids, bacteriology, and

parasitology microscope slides. This program hoped to use the database to aid in online instruction during the pandemic. To support the program, he offered to provide the license to use the database for free.

Professor Wiesner did not stop there. He made the same offer on a listserv of laboratory educators as well as a community page of a national professional society. The response was overwhelming. Over 500 institutions

worldwide have subscribed to the database, keeping students on track for completing their courses and moving on to their clinical experiences.

The database is now being offered for a reduced license fee that covers the overhead for maintaining software and web hosting costs. In addition, we have expanded the database to include slides of bacteria, parasites, body fluids, and urine sediments and continue to develop this valuable instructional resource. Read more here: <https://research.umn.edu/inquiry/post/classes-go-digital-slides-database-keeps-students-learning>. ■

MLS Receives \$3.2 million HRSA Grant for Scholarships

Drs. Janice Conway-Klaassen and Donna Spannaus-Martin recently received a \$3.2 million HRSA grant providing Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students (SDS) of \$650,000/year for five years.

The SDS program promotes diversity among the health professions by providing tuition, fees, and reasonable living expenses to full-time MLS students from disadvantaged backgrounds or those who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups. The SDS Program aims to increase:

- the number of graduates practicing in primary care
- retention of full-time students from disadvantaged backgrounds, including students who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups
- the number of graduates working in medically underserved communities

This is a significant award for students in the MLS program. For the past 10 years, approximately 40% of the students enrolled in the MLS Program are students of color or foreign-born permanent Minnesota residents or Naturalized citizens, compared to an average of 25% diversity for other undergraduate majors at UMN. About 65% of our students are first-



generation college students who must often work long hours to support themselves while in school. Many of our students live within the federal definition of economic poverty, making it difficult for them to attend and/or complete their degree. This funding program will allow us to provide full scholarships for 25-30 students, about 10-15 students per cohort year of the program.

For the 2020-2021 school year, we were able to give scholarships to 23 students (juniors, seniors, and students in clinicals). Our plan is to award the scholarships as they enter the program. If they stay in good standing, they will have tuition funded through the end of the program. Having the scholarship will allow these students to focus their time on study instead of working 20-40 hours per week to support themselves. ■

Congratulations 2020 MLS Graduates!

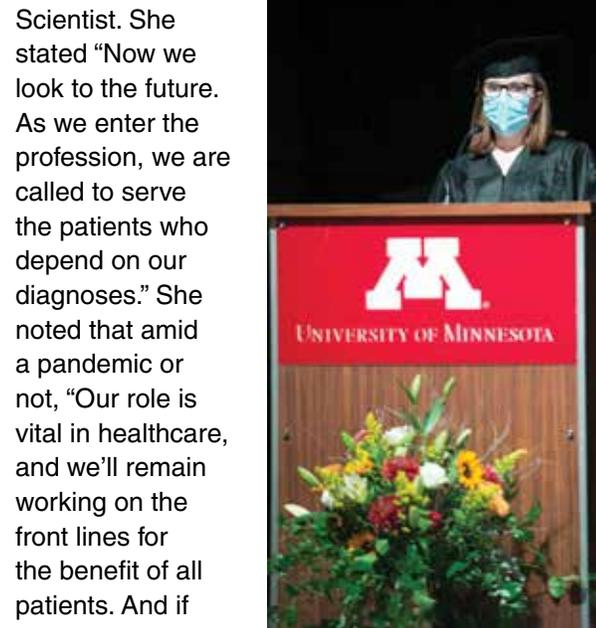
The Medical Laboratory Sciences (MLS) program held a commencement ceremony for graduates of the class of 2020 on Friday, September 11 in the Great Hall in Coffman Memorial Union. MLS Professor, Dr. Michelle Henry-Stanley, led the procession carrying the ceremonial mace of the University of Minnesota.



Due to COVID-19 concerns, the commencement ceremony included only students, faculty, and staff. The event was live-streamed and recorded so that family and friends could watch remotely. The ceremony can be viewed at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfWilxCIN6M>.



Claire Wilmesmeier, president of the MLS student organization, was the MLS student speaker. Claire grew up in Alexandria, Minnesota where her AP Biology class sparked her interest in laboratory work, and her pursuit to become a Medical Laboratory Scientist. She stated "Now we look to the future. As we enter the profession, we are called to serve the patients who depend on our diagnoses." She noted that amid a pandemic or not, "Our role is vital in healthcare, and we'll remain working on the front lines for the benefit of all patients. And if another hardship comes into our lives, we must keep that same focus and resilience; it's how we have grown and developed into the scientists we are today."



MLS program director, Dr. Janice Conway-Klaassen, delivered the commencement address. In talking about potential career paths, she stated "It's okay to wander off-script. It's okay to change directions." She added "If the events of these past months have taught us anything, it's that plans will and often must change. Grab each opportunity that comes along and don't be afraid; embrace it." She encouraged graduates to not just define themselves by their job, but instead by opportunities and dreams. She closed by saying "The journey is yours to write. Make it a great story."



**Congratulations to the
MLS class of 2020!
We are so proud of you!**

CERTIFICATE IN MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES RECEIPT

Lindsey M. Petersen

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE IN MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES GRADUATES

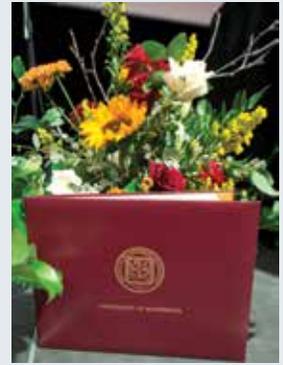
Andrew K. Ashmore
Ashley M. Bird
Isabel J. Brown
Huyen T. Bui
Megan J. Cushing
Abdi A. Farah
Eric G. Goldman*
Danielle E. Green
Hunter H. Harris

Ali Hassan*
Mubarak Kadir
Evan S. Kane
Kaylee J. Kangas
Samantha Keopraseut
Chloe C. Kinsel
Rene A. Nelson
Amanda D. Nguyen
Hanna N. Norlinger

Rose E. Notermann*
Kelley A. O'Brien
Nicole E. Organ
Dang H. Pham
Sarah M. Schultz
Trang T. Son
Renee D. Thomas
Madeline N. Urick

Christina Vo
Angela Q. Vu
Halima A. Wako
Claire M. Wilmesmeier
Leng Yang
Mingyi Zhang*
Hui Lin Zheng

** Graduated with Distinction*



PROFESSIONAL MASTER'S OF SCIENCE IN MEDICAL LABORATORY SCIENCES GRADUATES

Delci J. Christensen
Megan I. Kellner
Kristen R. Oldenburg

Julie L. Rivera
Judy Thao
Robin MK Thomas



2020 MLS Alumni Banquet Goes Virtual!

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to host the traditional MLS Alumni Banquet in April. Instead, we jumped on the virtual event bandwagon and hosted the first-ever Virtual MLS Alumni Banquet on December 2nd! We had over 90 alumni, faculty, and friends of the program attend, including alumni from each of the decades from the 1950's all the way through the class of 2020. We want to thank everyone who participated and hope you enjoyed the chance to reconnect with faculty, classmates, and friends and hear about the many initiatives, advances, and important work happening in the program today.



The event began with a signature mocktail/cocktail with laboratory style instructions and a demonstration from Christine Maleck. Janice Conway-Klaassen and Tami Alpaugh provided program updates and Jireh Mabamba acknowledged and recognized the anniversary classes of 1945, 1970, and 1995, and provided an update on planning for the upcoming 100-year anniversary in 2022. There was ample time for alumni classes go catch up in smaller Zoom breakout rooms.

Participants commented that they enjoyed seeing so many familiar faces, including those that live out of town and who aren't normally able to travel to the banquet. Others said they liked hearing from current students and recent graduates, hearing how the program has adapted during the pandemic, and the opportunity to connect with class members at the end of the formal presentations in small breakout groups.



Jennifer (Powell) Prasek, a member of the 50th anniversary group of 1970, noted "It was nice to see fellow graduates that I hadn't been in touch with for years! I enjoyed the presentations about the program, particularly the activities associated

with keeping students on track during the COVID pandemic. The sharing of resources with other institutions made me proud of the program and its capabilities. The break out session for our class was great, as we each gave a brief accounting of our lives since 1970! I was skeptical of what the evening would look like, but was very happy with the outcome. Thank you all for your work in putting the evening together." ■

"I enjoyed hearing how the MLS Program adapted and responded to the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. It showed the talent and dedication of the MLS faculty and staff. It made me proud."

*~ Donna (Fadden) Wieb
Class of 1962*

Congratulations to the special reunion classes of 1946, 1971 and 1996!

75th Anniversary Class of 1946

Virginia M. Aluni*	Rosaline M. Butorac (Mantel)*	Avis Haga	Vilaty A. Patnode (Scriver)*	Lois M. Schwarz*
Marion J. Anderson*	Ruth H. Cadwell (Hodgson)*	Ruth Hartman (Muir)	Virginia L. Patterson (Bray)*	Betty A. Schwie (Larson)*
Jane Bailey (Ames)*	Ruth A. Cardinal*	Marjorie A. Haugdahl (Kent)*	Peggy J. Pongratz (Pearce)*	Barbara R. Smith
Constance L. Bakken (Olson)	Virginia Carlson (Scholljegerges)	Vivian J. Hawkinson (Foss)	Verneil L. Priebe*	Kathryn L. Smith*
Winifred Bankston (Anderson)	Ruth E. Cotton	M. Jean Hegland	Betty Ramsey (Hawkins)*	Joan V. Smith (Vallentyne)
Mary E. Bartle (Halvorson)	Mary J. Cunnien*	Mary L. Janda (Souther)*	Alice Riddell (Lund)*	Annette M. Sorensen*
Anne E. Bas (Dimunation)*	Aletha Eilers	Barbara G. Jarl (Gleason)*	Etta L. Rikess (Lazar)*	Grace Spees*
Majorie A. Baughan	Phyllis O. Fall (Ogburn)*	Martha Jolin*	Margaret C. Roberts (Wilkins)*	M. V. Theurer (Brimhall)
Olga L. Beck (Leschisin)*	Edna Finch (Hoverson)*	L. B. Liebert*	Ethel V. Rodriguez (Koster)*	Toby L. Titman (Gitis)*
Mary Berg*	Esther F. Freier*	Beihel Lindeman	Margaret S. Saetre (Strunk)*	Helen M. Ude (Michaelson)*
Dorothy Bianchi (Misjuk)*	Muriel O. French (Johnson)*	Joyce Elizabeth Lounberg*	M. Maxine Sanberg*	Theresa C. Weaver (Kruse)
Kathleen Bieri (Walsh)*	Lois M. Gallinger (Belanger)*	Mary E. Maedke Bielefeldt*	Clara H. Savitt (Hurwitz)*	Joyce M. Wian (Clark)*
Sonia Braun*	Margaret M. Gay (Meriwether)*	Arlene M. Marcotte Edwall*	Melicent E. Schmidt (Hane)*	Dorothy B. Williams (Jorgenson)*
Marilyn T. Budge (Tucker)	Harriet Gull (Drasin)*	Jean Mulvahill (Hugos)*	Elaine A. Schuman (Topka)	
LeNora Burnell	Audrey S. Gutttersen (Swensen)	Betty L. Ordahl*		

50th Anniversary Class of 1971

Patricia A. Ackerman (Yaeger)	Joan E. Damhof (Esbjornsson)	Katherine M. Gornick	Kathleen A. Miller	Karen J. Schreiner (Bissett)*
Nancy T. Anderson (Blake)	Terence E. Duffy	Jill M. Grockett (Schwarze)	Nancy E. Moore (Rockafellar)	Cynthia J. Schumacher (Nielsen)
Pamela D. Atwell (Dibble)	Rachel L. Eklund (Posthuma)	Marleen M. Hartjes (Tauer)	Kay N. Olson (Nelson)	Susan K. Shafer (Menge)
Marcia B. Beese (Stubbs)	Judy O. Enroth (Sivertsen)	Carol A. Hoffman (Bergmann)	Carole Pesek (Otte)	Kathleen M. Shields (Lang)
Joyce A. Behrens*	Linda A. Feeney (Olson)*	Sandra S. Jenkins (Stubstad)	Stephani L. Price (Busian)	Kathryn A. Thorngren (Loosbrock)
Mary E. Berry (Wise)	Jean I. Firl (Ernster)	Zaiga Johnson (Taube)	Kathleen K. Reimers (Strickler)	Linda J. Tostrud (Guenther)
Martha A. Breard (Doms)	Mary J. Foster	Christine J. Langer (Erickson)	Adrienne M. Riley (Levy)	Sharon A. Tweit (Grier)*
Joan M. Bromander (Cundy)	Catherine Foster (Leienecker)	Deborah M. Lawrence (George)	Eileen Rogers (Leipus)	Nettie M. Warwood (Conser)
Mary E. Buchar (Kinzel)	Jan Fouks (Rohs)	Marilyn J. Lueck (Neubauer)	James S. Rosen	
Leigh A. Cherry	Linda L. Fredrickson	Victoria Martel-Chen	Marjie L. Scahill (Hajder)	
David L. Christian	Reggie L. Gausman			

25th Anniversary Class of 1996

Reeman I. Ansari	Dale M. Cooper	Anna M. Huseby (Hahm)	Lucia E. More	Lydia A. Oduro (Asubonten)
Jennifer A. Backstrom-Loh	Nathan P. Hauber	Danille D. Jin	Debra J. Mullins-Hirte	Tara Seltz (Quaas)
Renee L. Bellrichard	Tao He	Aparna V. Kondagunta	Viet H. Nguyen	Lori K. Thorson (Hauer)
Rebecca A. Biege	Brian P. Howell	Shane A. McCoy	Tanya T. Nguyen	Stacy A. Tiedt (Read)
Janete T. Cha (Dela)	Cheung K. Hui	Muhadditha Y. Mehdi	Anita L. Oakman	Ngoc-Hien T. Tran
				Anthony J. Wells

*Deceased

MLS Launches Alumni in Action

MLS has added a new section to our website called "Alumni in Action." Here we share stories about alumni and highlight their current or past career experiences and how their education prepared them for their professions. Also captured is their impact in their field, as well as how they have engaged with the program by staying connected with fellow alumni, supporting fieldwork/clinical placements, and student scholarships. Read about the latest featured alumni here: <https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/mls/alumni/alumni-in-action>. If you would like to be featured in one of our Alumni Stories, click on the link at the bottom of the website page or send an email to mlsalumni@umn.edu. ■

Virtual MLS Alumni Happy Hour

Save the Date:

Thursday, May 13th, 2021

6:30 PM Central Time

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and our concern for the safety of our alumni, we are once again holding our annual MLS Alumni event in a virtual (Zoom) format. With the popularity of the virtual alumni event that took place last December, we felt an encore would be a safe and fun alternative to waiting for an in-person event!

For more information and to register, visit our events page: <https://www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/mls/events/2021-virtual-mls-alumni-event>. You don't want to miss this opportunity to reconnect and socialize with your fellow alumni! ■

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Web: www.alliedhealth.umn.edu/medical-laboratory-sciences

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Center for Allied Health Programs

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