

THE CONNECTION

SUMMER ISSUE

August 20, 2025

President's Message



By: Samantha Peterson

Hello my fellow laboratorians! What an honor it is to serve as your 2025/2026 ASCLS-ND president.

My name is Sam, and I've been an ASCLS-ND member since 2014. I'm originally from LaMoure, ND where I grew up outside of town on my family farm. For college, I headed to the 'big city' of Bismarck, ND to attend the University of Mary where I majored in MLS though the University of North Dakota's (UND) certificate program. I've since earned my MS in MLS and my PhD in Teaching and Learning from UND.

I currently work as an Associate Professor in the UND MLS department. In my spare time I like to travel, cook, read, walk on the greenway, and snuggle with my two cats (Franklin and Penny).

I've previously served on the ASCLS-ND board as New Professional Delegate (2017) and Nominations Committee Chair (2018). I took a step back from leadership while I worked on my PhD but promised myself that when I finished my degree, I'd return...so here I am!

ASCLS has given me so much in the time that I've been a member, including education, professional networking, and most importantly a group of like-minded, life-long friends. Now, I'd like to be able to give back to the society. And, I have a **PLAN** to do so. The goals I've set for my presidency year focus on:

- Participation
- Legacy
- Assets
- Networking

See what I did there? What type-A laboratorian doesn't love a good acronym? These goals focus on increasing membership, succession planning, reassessing funds, and creating more social opportunities for members. For a full description of the strategic plan, feel free to take a look [HERE](#).

I hope you'll join me in creating momentum and a renewed sense of community amongst our North Dakota laboratory family. And I hope to see many of you at ASCLS events throughout this coming year. Thank you for the opportunity to lead.

Meet the 2025-2026 ASCLS-ND Board of Directors



PRESIDENT

Samantha Peterson, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Associate Professor
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



PRESIDENT-ELECT

Shannon Jongeward, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Assistant Professor
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



SECRETARY/TREASURER/ WEBMASTER

Jessica Fry, MLS(ASCP)^{SH}
Bismarck, ND



NOMINATIONS CHAIR

Allison Waswick, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Assistant Professor
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND

Meet the 2025-2026 ASCLS-ND Board of Directors



ASCENDING PROFESSIONAL

Maisy Lindseth, MLS(ASCP)
Grand Forks, ND



DEVELOPING PROFESSIONAL

Maya Orvis (MLS student)
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

Becca Bakke, PhD, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Assistant Professor
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



BOARD MEMBER AT LARGE

Heather Mayers, MS, MLS(ASCP)^{CM}
Educational Laboratory Manager
University of North Dakota
Grand Forks, ND



2025 ASLCS-ND Annual Meeting Recap

Highlights from the past year's annual meeting

The 2025 ASCLS-ND Annual Meeting took place in Grand Forks, ND on Thursday, May 8th and Friday May 9th. The theme of the meeting was “Thrive in '25.” On Thursday, the event was held at the Hilton Garden Inn. The keynote speaker, Miles Tompkins, started off the conference with a great talk about Human Resources and MLS. He was followed up with several other wonderful speakers and a vendor fair with food, games, prizes, and fun!





2025 ASLCS-ND Annual Meeting Recap

Highlights from the past year's annual meeting

Friday's events took place at the University of North Dakota's School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The day began with breakfast followed by several educational and engaging sessions, and wrapped up with tours of the school's Simulation Center.





2025 ASLCS-ND Annual Meeting Recap

Highlights from the past year's annual meeting

On Friday, several awards, recognitions, and scholarships were given out during the annual business meeting. Those awards and recipients include the following:

Omicron Sigma (President's Honor Roll)

- Allison Waswick
- Shannon Jongeward
- Mary Coleman
- Katie Kucera
- Michelle Steiner
- Jessica Fry
- Alissa Feickert
- Tammy Windish
- Heather Mayers
- Alice Hawley
- Samantha Peterson
- Brooke Solberg

Membership Milestones:

- 5 years: Katie Kucera
- 10 years: Rochelle Heilman
- 15 years: Tammy Windish, Sharon Reistad
- 20 years: Karen Peterson
- 25 years: Tracie Siebel
- 50 years: Mary Coleman





2025 ASCLS-ND Annual Meeting Recap

Highlights from the past year's annual meeting

Member of the Year:

- Mary Coleman



Key to the Future:

- Raelyn Brang

Student Scholarship recipient:

- Abigail Meier





2025 Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) Recap

The 2025 ASCLS Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) took place in Sacramento, CA from June 8-12. Based on membership numbers, ASCLS-ND was allotted 5 voting delegates. Board member representatives who attended the meeting included Sharon Reistad, Maisy Lindseth, Maya Orvis, Samantha Peterson (virtual), and Shannon Jongeward (virtual). Both Maya and Maisy wrote about their experiences at JAM. Read about them on the following pages!



Of note, ASCLS-ND received a Political Action Committee (PAC) Fundraising award at JAM! ASCLS-ND was named the honorable mention for 'Most Contributed per Member' at \$10.10/member.



A big thank you goes out to our PAC chair - Mary Coleman - for all the work she does to help raise funds to support lab causes and to all of those who donated to our PAC this past year.



**“I was so
impressed by the
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knowledge of the
lab professionals
I met!”**

My First JAM

By: Maya Orvis -
ASCLS-ND Developing
Professional

My first time attending the Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) was such a wonderful and enriching experience. Going in, I did not know anyone who would be there, even the others from North Dakota. This was a bit intimidating, but mostly exciting-a perfect opportunity to network and meet new people! This proved to be more than true. Everyone I met at JAM was so welcoming and open to conversation. I enjoyed learning about the different strengths and challenges each state had, and even more so how many common threads that we as laboratorians have despite these differences.

JAM could not have come at a more opportune time for me as the Developing Professional. Just entering the professional program coursework, the classes I am currently in aligned with many of the presentations given, allowing me to apply the new content I was learning and dig deeper into niche topics like Alpha Gal syndrome and stem cell therapies. I was so impressed by the expertise and knowledge of the lab professionals I met!



Of course, it was also a fun experience to travel to a new place. Exploring Sacramento with other Developing Professionals was incredible. We saw the rose gardens, Old Town, and the river-and most importantly had some delicious food and ice cream. I even got to run a 5K around the city with the South Dakota Developing Professional!



Overall, JAM was a great experience and I can't recommend this position enough. I learned so much from the inner workings of the lab profession to cutting edge research or how to network in a professional setting. I am so grateful I had this opportunity to attend and strengthen my skills as a scientist and represent us North Dakotans!



My 2025 JAM Experience

By: Maisy Lindseth -
ASCLS-ND Ascending
Professional

Attending the Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) provided me with a whole array of new experiences. I took my first airplane ride ever! I was proud of myself that I was able to navigate the airport system and make it to Sacramento fairly easy. From the moment I arrived in Sacramento I wanted to be open to all the experiences the conference and the city would offer to me while I was there.

While at JAM I wanted to attend as many sessions as I could. I wanted to visit ones that I felt would be beneficial to me or would introduce me to new topics.

I enhanced my knowledge on some topics and other topics I learned for the first time. Some sessions included interactive *Kahoots* that allowed me to practice the content areas necessary for the board exam. I also attended a session on a condition that I had never heard of called Alpha-gal Syndrome

**“I felt connected
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I also enjoyed the connections I made with other laboratorians I met at the conference. I hope to keep in touch. I felt I connected with other students and recent graduates from the other Region V states. It was nice to meet other students who have similar interests and who are new to the profession as well.

When I wasn't attending sessions at JAM, I wanted to be outside and enjoy the California weather as much as I could. I loved the perfect temperatures and constant sunshine. I spent plenty of time walking around Capital Park, which was across the street from the hotel. I also took some time to enjoy other parts of the city. I walked through Old Sacramento and visited the local zoo. I enjoyed seeing the area's history

while I visited Old Sacramento, Sutter's Fort, and the California Indian Museum.

The House of Delegates to conclude the meeting was very much a learning experience. I was attentive while all the discussions and voting occurred. It was informative to be a voting member and listen to the concerns of other in the society. I thought people brought up their concerns in a civil and articulate manner for agenda items they had disagreements with. I felt very professional when I got to cast my vote for ND on the delegate voting items.

Attending JAM provided me with a very positive experience. I got to learn new things and meet new people. I would love the opportunity to attend another conference in the future as I gain more laboratory knowledge and skills. I'm so glad I was able to attend the JAM 2025 meeting.





Region V Leadership Academy

The mission of the ASCLS Region V Leadership Academy is to provide guidance, education, and resources at the regional level to prepare ASCLS members for leadership roles in ASCLS, within the profession, and within the workplace.

- Are you looking for an opportunity to help you **move into leadership roles** in both ASCLS and in your career?
- How about a way to **network with other committed professionals** who are as passionate as you?
- Would you like the opportunity to **learn from experienced professionals** who are leaders in our field?

If any of this sounds appealing, then the **Region V Leadership Academy is for YOU!**



To apply, visit regionvascls.online/leadership-academy. Admission to the Region V Leadership Academy will occur through a competitive application process. The application deadline is **September 1st, 2025**.



Upcoming ASCLS Events

Save the dates!

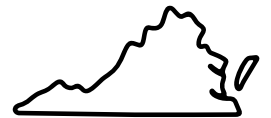
- **ASCLS Region V Meeting**

- October 9 & 10, 2025
- Sioux Falls, SD
- more info & registration at regionvascls.org



- **Labvocate Symposium**

- October 20 & 21, 2025
- Alexandria, VA
- more info & registration on the ascls.org/labvocate-symposium



- **Emerging Laboratory Managers Collaborative Conference (ELMC²)**

- November 14 & 15, 2025
- Virtual event
- more info & registration at elmc2.org



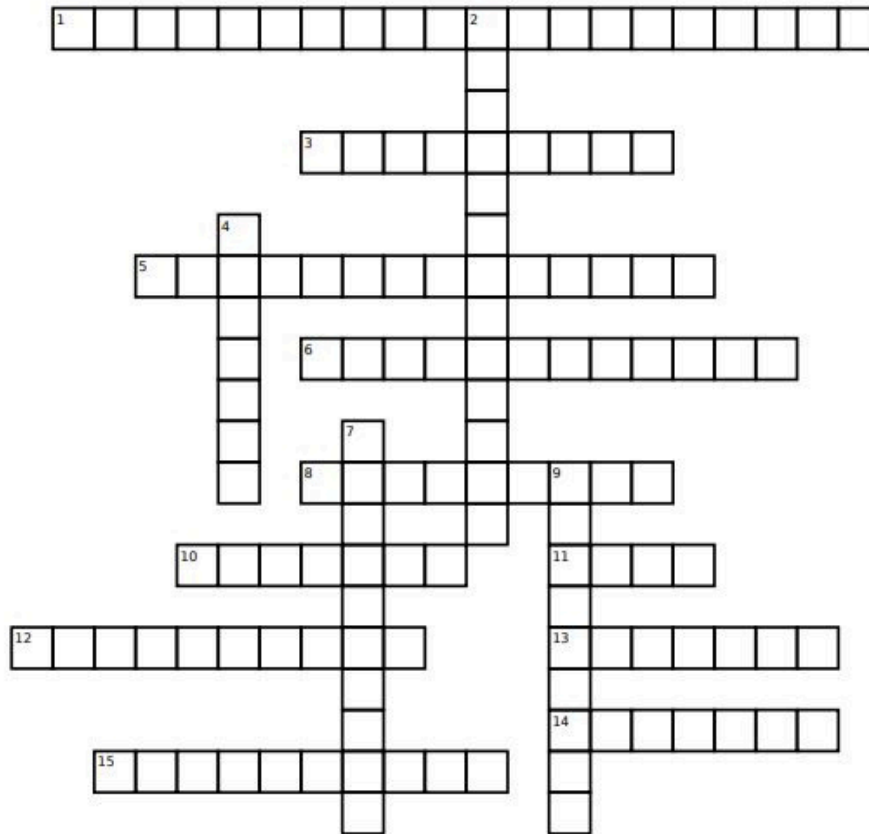


The Waiting Game

A quick game to play while your samples incubate!

IN THE MICROBIOLOGY LAB

(Answer key can be found on the next page)



Down:

2. Acid-fast bacillus causing tuberculosis (13)
4. Fungal pathogen causing thrush (7)
7. Hospital-acquired infection (10)
9. Sterilization by pressurized steam (9)

Across:

1. Toxin-producing bacterium causing pseudomembranous colitis (2 words; 11, 9)
3. Spiral-shaped bacterium that causes syphilis (9)
5. Gram-positive cocci in grape-like clusters (15)
6. Preferred medium for *Neisseria gonorrhoeae* (hyphenated, 12)
8. *S. aureus* enzyme that clots plasma (9)
10. Stain used for acid-fast organisms (7)
11. vector for Lyme disease (4)
12. The zone around an antibiotic disc with no growth (10)
13. Main virulence factor of *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (7)
14. Bacteria that require oxygen to grow (7)

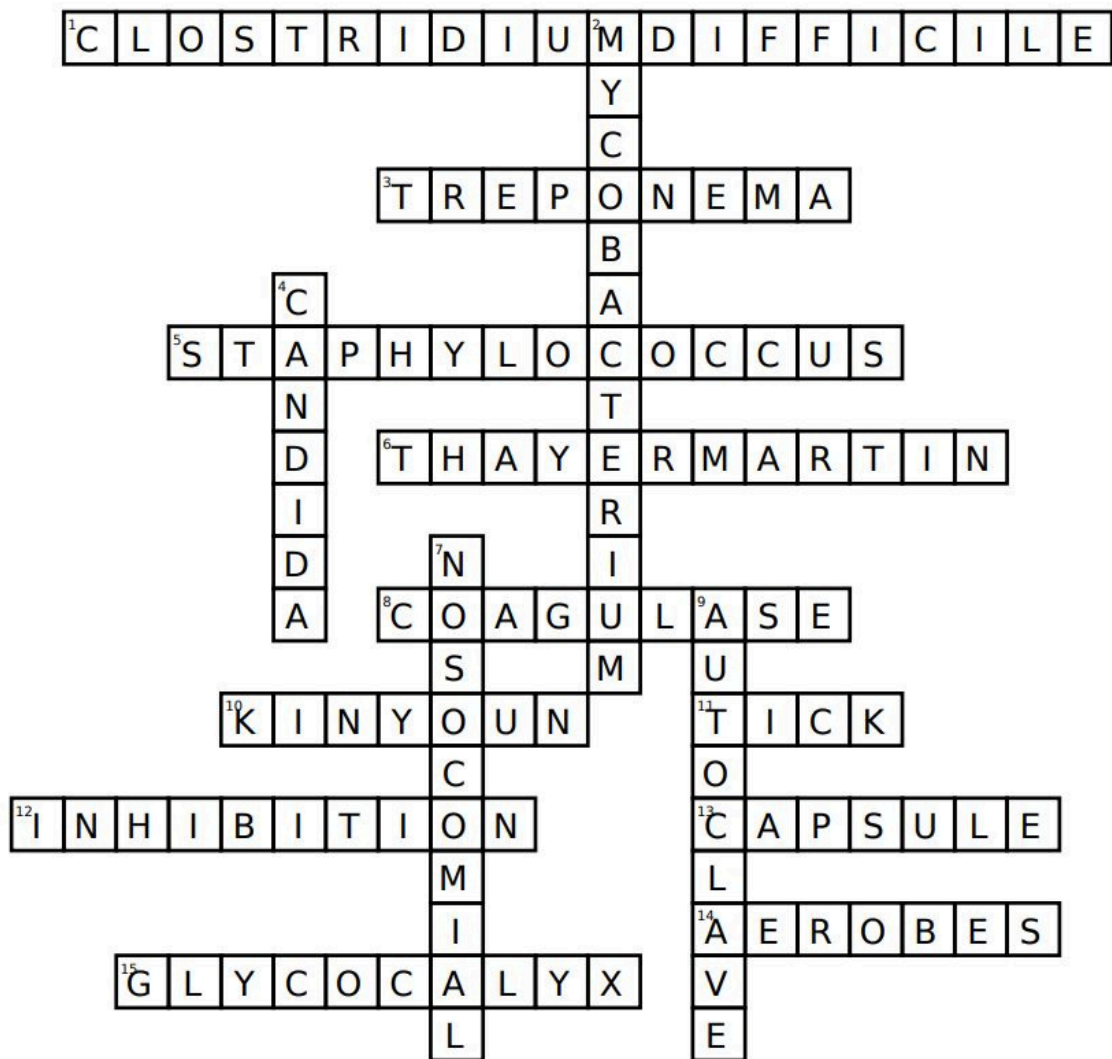
15. Protective layer outside bacterial cell wall (10)



The Waiting Game

ANSWER KEY!

In the Microbiology Lab



More From ASCLS-ND

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ASCLS

The American Society for
Clinical Laboratory Science