

Beyond the Bench: Career Paths in Clinical Microbiology

MLS Program Director Key Points – Debra St. George, MS, MT (ASCP) Adjunct Professor, Program Director Clinical Laboratory Science Program, Bristol Community College debra.stgeorge@bristolcc.edu

- Develop, oversee, and manage the Medical Laboratory Science Program
- Prepare and manage the Department budget
- Monitor the alignment of course objectives with evaluation tools to certify students' laboratory competency
- Recruit qualified faculty and developed orientation procedures
- Collaborate with faculty to confirm that course content and objectives correlated with certification and accreditation requirements
- Prepare and conduct course lectures and laboratory classes in accordance with curriculum guidelines
- Create and oversee the admission process
- Evaluated applicant pool to compile a diverse class of enthusiastic and competent students.
- Manage the Student laboratory and library for faculty and students. Procure texts, literature, supplies and equipment as needed
- Oversee the entire NAACLS accreditation process. Lead the Programs' accreditation and submission process by analyzing existing curriculum and ensuring that academic and professional standards and requirements are met
- Ensure that the Program receives an optimal accreditation rating by developing and overseeing the accreditation Self-study and On-site survey
- Maintain strong community partnerships with local hospitals and external agencies to foster student placements and support for the program
- Chair Medical Laboratory Science Advisory Board
- Orchestrate the MLS Pinning Ceremony within the programs' budget
- Play intricate role in institution-wide committees and projects

Opportunities in Training and Biosafety – Shoolah Escott, MS (MLS), MT(ASCP)

Biosafety, Biosecurity, and Bioterrorism Preparedness Training for Public Health and Clinical Laboratorians

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- Getting started in training
 - Get a degree in education or a certificate/training in Instructional Design
 - In-person training
 - Online course development
 - On the job training but that is a harder path
 - Get involved in an association like NACMID
 - Learn the logistics of putting on courses
 - Looks good on your resume
 - Can make awesome connections
 - May open doors to amazing opportunities
 - Get involved in national organizations such as ASCP and ASM
- Getting started in biosafety
 - Get specialized education in safety such as a degree in Environmental Health and Safety (EHS), Biosafety (maybe a specialty within a Life Safety Program) or Industrial Hygiene (IH). May need to be a Master's degree.
 - Get credentialed through ABSA International (Registered Biosafety Professional and/or Certified Biological Safety Professional).
 - Get involved in a national organization such as ABSA and APHL.
 - Get OTJ at a university.
 - Get on a Institutional Biosafety Committee (IBC).
- Where it can lead
 - Learning new skills such as biosafety and biosecurity which can be applied in the lab.

- Becoming a subject matter expert (SME) in a particular area which can lead to doing training nationally and to other job opportunities such as working at CDC in the training branch or Sandia Labs which do training nationally and internationally.
- Working at a university, clinical or public health laboratory as the biosafety manager.

Opportunities within the Diagnostics Industry – Barry Gaddes, MBA, MT(ASCP), Head of Microbiology, MetaSystems Group, Inc. Cell: 770.778.0027 Email: bgaddes@metasystems.org

The Diagnostics Industry is composed of many companies and roles broken into a few broad categories:

- **Distribution** (Fisher Healthcare, Cardinal)
 - Sales (Consumables or Capital Equipment)
 - Customer Support
- **Manufacturer** (MetaSystems, Copan, bioMerieux)
 - Sales
 - Reagents
 - Instrument
 - Support
 - Technical Support (Inhouse)
 - Field Service (Travel)

How to become an Infection Preventionist – Andrea T. Harper, MS, CIC, Former Infection Prevention Officer
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1. First step getting foot in the door. Easiest if you transition from micro to IP in your current hospital or get MPH and work in department of health. Get to know your IP at your current employer.
2. Make sure to get CIC certification within 2 years.
3. Lots of free education available, e.g., CDC, vendors. Use this to enhance your knowledge and decide if IP is for you or not.
4. Advantages:
 - a. M-F schedule, disadvantage.
 - b. Pay increased from micro/lab.
 - c. Job outlook is very good.
5. Disadvantages:
 - a. Often “on call”.
 - b. Job burn-out high depending on employer/support.
6. Job transition to education, vendor rep, traveling IP, manager/director, public health other.

Other Career Options not covered in the session:

- Lab Workflow Consultant
- Marketing
- MD or PhD (e.g., Dr. Nielsen from BMC was a bench tech who went on to get her PhD)
- LIS/ IT
- Podcaster (for real)
- Cannabis Industry
- Research
- Pharmaceutical Industry