Dear Participants of the Region III ASCLS Triennial,

On behalf of the Florida delegation, I would like to express my heartfelt thanks to each of you who participated in the Region III Triennial Conference in Pensacola on September 25th - 27th. Over 200 participants traveled from all over the Region to experience the Triennial meeting in Florida! You made this conference a success and it was a great pleasure to see so many of you there!

Hopefully you enjoyed both the scientific part and the social program and that you used the opportunity to extend your existing networks. I am sure that we will be in contact with most of you in the near future.

I would like to give special thanks to the vendors, speakers, and to the MLS faculty at the University of West Florida for hosting us during the event, and furthermore to Kristen Coffey, who did outstanding work in organizing the event.

Yours in service,
Jenny Paige Ford MS-CLS, MLS(ASCP)
President - Florida Society of Clinical Laboratory Science
ASCLS has three major live conferences each year, the Annual Meeting, CLEC, and the Legislative Symposium. The Clinical Laboratory Educators Conference (CLEC) is held in February each year. This conference is an important annual event for faculty, administrators, directors, advisors, and others in clinical laboratory science education. This year the meeting was held at the Hilton Orlando Lake Buena Vista in Orlando, Florida. As the host state, the ASCLS Florida Chapter (FSCLS) was tasked with forming a host committee. Under the leadership of Dr. Tripat Kaur, the host committee was assembled, which included leaders in education and laboratory medicine throughout the state of Florida. The host committee consisted of: Dr. Tripat Kaur (Chair), Jenny Page Ford, Kim Novatko, Emilia Marrero, Dr. Kyle Riding, Aaron Odegard, Mike Bishop, Mark De Luna, Dr. Hallie St. Hill, and Carleen Van Siclen. The host committee was involved with planning social activities, creating guide book of Orlando, providing meeting support, Friday Night Dinner Reservations, promoting CLEC to local sponsors, and much more.

This meeting not only gave educators the opportunity to gain valuable, innovative teaching strategies but also a chance to make new connections. During one of the social networking receptions, Dr. Kyle Riding organized a meet up for Florida medical laboratory educators and program directors. They were able meet, collaborate, and discuss their program needs and issues. This meeting will lead to more future meetings and a stronger medical laboratory science educator community in the state of Florida. This spirit of networking was further cultivated by our member Carleen Van Siclen. She designed a networking challenge that encouraged CLEC participants to engage with each other and build professional relationships. Winners of the challenge won fancy prizes donated by the ASCP Council of Laboratory Professionals. This lead to a great collaboration between ASCLS and ASCP, showing how united we are as a profession to support our medical laboratory science educators.

As a laboratory professionals and educators, we like to get down and have some fun! Host committee member, Emilia Marrero, created a social media scavenger hunt #CLEC2020. This Disney Springs Scavenger Hunt lead CLEC participants on a “magic carpet ride” through thrilling locations such as, Cirque de Soleil, the NBA experience, mini-amphitheaters with live music and dance parties, and ultimate shopping experiences for Disney fans of all ages. This Disney magic was carried throughout the CLEC meeting with the host committee wearing our Disney inspired mickey and Minnie mouse ears. Some participants joined in on the fun and wore their ears during the meeting as well. Being an educator requires you to wear many hats even mickey ears some times. CLEC was great meeting and definitely one of the magical meetings around.

Aaron Odegard, MS, MLS (ASCP) SM, MT (AMT)

DID SOMEONE SAY MARGARITAVILLE BEACH?
REGION III TRIENNIAL 2019

The ASCLS Region III Triennial meeting was held at the University of West Florida in Pensacola in September 2019. We hope everyone enjoyed their time at beautiful Pensacola Beach. It was wonderful to see so many students from the region come to the educational sessions, the review sessions and of course, the Student Bowl. Congratulations to all the teams, especially to the first place team from the University of Southern Mississippi. A big thanks to Lee Byrd and David Thrash who ran the Student Bowl, and also presented talks. We were blessed to have ASCLS leaders Elissa Passiment, Janelle Chiasera, Brandy Gunsolus DCLS, Rodney Rohde and Kyle Riding as presenters and cheerleaders. A big thank you to the planning committee, especially to Kristen Coffey and FSCLS President Jenny Paige Ford. A shout out to the UWF Medical Laboratory Student Association and Alumni who helped with logistics, parking-lot detail, and registration. It was an experience they will never forget. We hope they will stay active ASCLS members and continue to promote the profession.

Kris Behan, PhD, MLS (ASCP). Planning committee.

Medical Laboratory Sciences Department, University of West Florida.
Seemingly everyone is aware of the current pandemic coronavirus disease 2019 or, “COVID-19”. This illness is caused by the novel coronavirus, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2, also known as SARS-CoV-2. There are a lot of questions about COVID-19 and the virus that causes it. Coronaviruses are a family of zoonotic viruses. There are four subgroups: alpha, beta, delta, and gamma. Only seven strains of coronavirus can infect humans, and these clinically present in patients as a common cold, severe respiratory illness, bronchitis, and pneumonia. Common human coronavirus infections involve the 229E (alpha), NL63 (alpha), OC43 (beta), and HKU1 (beta) viruses. Delta and gamma coronaviruses do not infect humans and only present in animals.

SARS-CoV-2 is classified as a betacoronavirus. Betacoronaviruses are known to cause a severe respiratory response and life-threatening infection within their host. Additional examples of pandemic betacoronaviruses and diseases are sudden acute respiratory syndrome due to SARS-CoV, and MERS-CoV, inducing Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome. Initially reported in Wuhan, China on December 31, 2019, COVID-19 has quickly made an impression across the globe. COVID-19 has presented in at least 187 countries, with the leading number of confirmed cases being in China, Italy, and the United States respectively. Presently, all of the states of the United States have reported positive COVID-19 cases to the CDC. Currently, the highest number of reported cases in the United States is in New York and Washington. In an attempt to avoid spreading COVID-19, many cities have implemented curfews, temporarily closed nonessential businesses, and if able, transitioned employees to work from home.

The best practices to prevent transfer of the virus are social distancing, frequent hand and phone washing, and avoiding touching faces with unwashed hands. The CDC’s website has very valuable information on what to do if you are having symptoms. They also provide a Coronavirus Self-Checker tool that allows patients an at home screening opportunity with a questionnaire to see if they qualify for COVID-19 testing. As medical professionals, it is our job to inform others of the known characteristics of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the prevalence of COVID-19. It is also imperative that we set a good example for the rest of the population, following the best practices to avoid spreading this disease. As a community, we should continue to educate and support each other during this stressful time.

Sara Hays, MLT(ASCP)
Medical Laboratory Professionals are on the front-line of the COVID-19 pandemic. FSCLS President Jenny Paige Ford has been actively working to collect specimens to diagnose COVID-19. This Ascension Sacred Heart drive-through testing site not only helps to diagnose patients but also prevents further crowding and spread of the SARS-Cov-2 virus in hospital ERs. She is an amazing leader in our medical laboratory profession!

A special thank you to our FlorOcular Team and everyone whose contributions made this issue possible!