From the Program Director...

On behalf of the faculty members, staff members and students on and off campus, I extend a hardy “Welcome” and “Thank you for taking the time to read this newsletter.”

The Biomedical Laboratory Diagnostics (BLD) Program is doing well. It continues to provide a solid, scientifically based, clinical laboratory education that serves our students and—through them and our alumni—society as a whole.

Things have been busy. We are coming off of a great celebratory year, having marked our 85th year as a program at Michigan State University (MSU). This past spring, we had a large number of enthusiastic alumni and friends join us for a daylong visit on campus and a gala event at the MSU Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center that evening. Former directors Esther Smith-Brown, Robert Brooks and Kathryn Doig were also on hand and joined me in meeting and greeting BLD alumni who spanned the decades. It was a very memorable and wonderful event (see more about the event on page 6). If you missed it, plan to join us in 2016-17 for our 90th anniversary. We have a lot to celebrate and to be proud of (cue the “MSU Shadows” here . . .).

So what’s new? We’re continuing the Alumni Seminar Series that was launched in 2012. These are informative, engaging online seminars delivered by BLD alumni and faculty members and are PACE-approved for continuing education credits (CEUs). More information about this seminar series and how to earn CEUs is on page 5.

We also hired a number of BLD faculty and staff members in 2012—Frances Pouch-Downes, professor; Andrea Rafferty, department secretary; Leslie Thompson, CLS clinical coordinator; and Mariane Wolfe, graduate program coordinator and academic adviser. They are all very hard-working individuals dedicated to providing the best education, collegiate experience and outcomes possible, and we are fortunate to have them join the BLD team. We are currently interviewing for a new faculty member and, by the next newsletter, there will be at least one more new face to introduce. How exciting is that?

On a less exciting note, Lindsy Hengeshbach, clinical coordinator for the Diagnostic Molecular Science (DMS) Program, recently left our BLD family for a position in a place south and east of here that shall remain unnamed . . . You know, that other university in Michigan. However, I would be remiss in not mentioning that what she brings to them will only enhance them. In the same breath, I need to share with you that the DMS program has subsequently been put on moratorium and will most likely not continue after this class of stellar students finishes its clinical rotations. It was a hard decision, but it was based on resource availability and program demand.

Since our last newsletter, we have added an online BLD master of arts degree to provide the opportunity for practicing laboratorians to be able to refresh and enhance their education and to expand into other areas of laboratory science and practice. This is a course-based degree that does not require a thesis project but, rest assured, there is rigor to warrant the degree. Student enrollment in our other undergraduate (BLS and CLS) and graduate (MS-CLS and MS-BMLO) degree programs is still significant, and there are many impressive degree candidates.

We have also purchased a high-definition video system as part of the development of an audio-visual studio to allow for professional-grade seminars, lectures and laboratory demonstrations. Mark Bitman, BLD curriculum assistant, has grown to the challenge and is assisting faculty members in the production of very useful products for both classroom and laboratory settings. Technology and discretionary funds from alumni donations were instrumental in purchasing the needed equipment and facility remodeling to accomplish this. We view this as a key investment in the future and are most grateful to the generous alumni who made it possible.

Another noteworthy event on campus—we now have an actual street address. To ensure emergency and GPS access, every campus building now has an assigned street address. The BLD address is 354 Farm Lane, East Lansing, Mich., 48824. It takes some getting used to. Remember the freshmen wandering around campus with unfolded maps? Now we see them using their phones to access directions.

I hope that you find this year’s newsletter informative and enjoyable. And thank you, as always, for your continued support of our programs and students. It plays a tremendous role in the success of our alumni.

John Gerlach (’76, ’84, ’89)
Director,
Biomedical Laboratory Diagnostics Program
Greetings, fellow alumni! How exciting it has been to have our alumni association back in full swing, giving us an opportunity to reminisce about old times and look ahead to even better ones with friends and colleagues.

The BLD program has been an integral factor in achieving our goal of regaining our constituent association status in the Michigan State University Alumni Association (MSUAA) and returning to the vibrant, active group that we all know and love. MSUAA has been at the heart of every one of our 85th anniversary events and continues to deliver our webinar series of alumni presentations. Although the board of directors is scattered across the country, John Gerlach and Ellen Rzepka have worked to bring us together as a cohesive group and to bring our ideas for events such as the “Game Watches” to fruition. Thank you, John and Ellen, and all of the unlimited energy and a wealth of ideas, including more opportunities to network — especially through social media sites. Now is the time to consider nominating yourself or a fellow alumna/us for the board; please check out Melissa’s article below.

We are already thinking about the department’s 90th anniversary celebration, so join the board now to help with the planning. We are having way too much fun to keep it to ourselves!

If you like what we have been up to, please let us know. If you have ideas about other activities that you would be interested in, drop us a note and we’ll see what we can do to make them happen.

Show off your green and white!

Donna Duberg, medical technology, ’71; M.A., education, ’85; CLS M.S., ’86, is an assistant professor in clinical laboratory science at St. Louis University in Missouri.

Calling all BLD alumni: Your alma mater needs you!

The next several years promise to be exciting ones for the Biomedical Laboratory Diagnostics Alumni Association (BLDAA). After reorganizing, restructuring and reenergizing our relationship with MSUAA, we are back!

Last year was a great year with many events, awards and celebrations. The organization hopes to continue to have a positive impact on the alumni it serves, and the BLDAA board of directors will play a central role in this important effort. We are in need of new volunteers to donate their ideas and talents to keep us moving forward for years to come.

In April, three new board members will be elected to the MSU BLDAA executive board. Members of the BLDAA E-Board must be MSUAA members. The BLDAA E-Board meets monthly via teleconference, and members are elected to a three-year commitment of service.

Elections will take place via an electronic ballot, which is located on the BLD website at http://bld.msu.edu/Alumni. Only active MSUAA members are eligible to vote. If you are not currently a member of the MSUAA but would like to join, or if you would like to renew your membership, please visit http://alumni.msu.edu/membership/. The electronic ballot will be available beginning the first week of May and will remain active for one week. Although you will be asked for your name so that we can confirm one vote per person, your name will not be “connected” to your voting choices; your vote will be anonymous. New BLDAA board members will start their terms at the July board meeting.

If you are interested in nominating yourself or a fellow alumnus for a position on the ballot, please e-mail the nominee’s information by April 15 to Melissa Czostkowski, president-elect, MSU BLDAA, at melissaczostkowski@gmail.com. Please include contact information, maiden name (if applicable) and a brief biography or resume of the nominee.

If you are interested in being involved with the BLDAA but not as an active E-board member, please consider becoming part of one of our committees. We are always looking for volunteers with new ideas to help work on new event planning and projects. E-mail your information to melissaczostkowski@gmail.com any time. Any further questions may be directed to Ellen Rzepka at (517) 432-2525 or rzepka@msu.edu. Don’t forget to log onto the BLD website beginning May 1 so that your vote will count.

GO GREEN!
Student Highlights

BLD Student Association connects students
By Evan Ballard, BLD Student Association President

I needed to spend only a small amount of time on the third floor of North Kedzie to see what made the BLD program so different from anything I had experienced in college. For some, it may be hard to see the ways that this program can help them succeed; that’s where, I believe, the BLD Student Association (BLDSA) comes in.

We try to help our members by providing social, educational, professional and public service events that all highlight different aspects of what we think makes for a fulfilling experience. We also take time out each year to sponsor a blood drive and compete in the Gift of Life Michigan Campus Challenge (signing up students as organ donors). These opportunities help to create a close-knit group of students, some of whom will become lifelong friends.

These connections don’t stop with our classmates; they also include relationships with faculty members that many can’t find at such a large university. This year, we are trying to extend this idea beyond the university by giving the BLDSA president the opportunity to be a liaison to the BLDAA. After working with the BLDAA at the 85th anniversary celebration last year, it was clear how important staying connected is for our flourishing field. I look forward to calling myself an alumnus after this spring and to giving back to this program as I know many others have.

Students who participated in the most recent MSU-PSU blood drive (left to right): Cassandra Matti, Jenna Carter, Evan Ballard, Jaya Gupta, Morgan Margreaves and Sam Topp-Weinberg.

Update on BLD graduate programs
By Mariane Wolfe

The graduate program in BLD has 46 students in its three master’s degree programs. The three degrees offered are a master of science in Clinical Laboratory Sciences (CLS), a master of science in Biomedical Laboratory Operations (BMLO) and a master of arts in Biomedical Laboratory Sciences (BLS). All of the degree programs are available online and on campus. The majority of our graduate students (all except for 2) are enrolled in the online programs. We currently have 10 master’s candidates in BMLO, 3 candidates in the master of arts in BLS and 33 students earning master of science degrees in CLS.

The graduate program continues to grow, admitting approximately 7 graduate students annually. Three students graduated from the program this past year. As students finish their course work, they complete their degree by presenting an oral defense of their thesis or project. These presentations are available online at the time they are given. If you are interested in being a part of these presentations, or have any questions about graduate studies, contact Mariane Wolfe at setyabul@cnis.msu.edu or by phone at (317) 432-3805.

What do our students do once they have attained their master’s degrees? Some of our graduates are currently working in the clinical laboratory/research industry and some work in the public health field. All of our most recent graduates are either working in clinical laboratories or in the pharmaceutical industry in California, Connecticut and Indiana. Most of our graduates use this degree to advance in their careers, moving into supervisory positions in clinical laboratories or assuming the role of project manager within a pharmaceutical or laboratory operations setting.
New faces at BLD

The BLD Program has welcomed some new faces to our faculty and staff since its last alumni newsletter. These individuals have a variety of roles—working with students, managing class and curricula, and providing instruction to our students. We hope you will join us in welcoming them.

Frances Pouch Downes joined the faculty in August 2012, after 22 years in the public health laboratories. From 1999 to 2012, she was director of the State of Michigan Public Health Laboratory. She has served as president of the Association of Public Health Laboratories and is active in other professional organizations. She is active in global health activities in China, Mozambique, Bangladesh and other countries, where she provides technical, management and leadership consultation. She is a graduate of Indiana University (B.S., medical technology) and the University of North Carolina School of Public Health.

Andrea Rafferty joined the BLD staff in 2011 as departmental secretary. She has worked in education since 2000. She was previously the secretary for MSU Family Medicine and secretary for the Institute for Cyber-Enabled Research in Biomedical and Physical Sciences at MSU. Andrea is originally from Florida, but lived in Maryland before coming to Michigan 4½ years ago. Andrea, who is married and has four sons, is studying for her B.S. in alternative medicine and will graduate in 2014. She enjoys studying, walking and singing in her praise team at church.

Leslie Thompson took the position of CLS clinical coordinator in 2011. She is a recent graduate of the BLD master of science program. She brings many talents and experiences that qualify her to be a great advocate for both graduate and undergraduate students. Leslie enjoys teaching, working with students and learning new technologies. She advises potential and current CLS students and helps prepare them for their clinical rotations. She manages the applications and student files, making sure that all is in order to get students through the program.

Mariane Wolfe is the new BLD graduate program coordinator and academic adviser. She graduated with her bachelor’s degree in 2004 and gained clinical experience at Sparrow Hospital in Lansing, Mich. Shortly after her internship, Mariane moved to North Chicago, Ill., to work for Abbott Diagnostics Division, performing in-vitro diagnostics testing. In 2005, she returned to the MSU BLD program for her master’s degree in CLS. After completing her master’s degree, she joined the MSU BLD program as a temporary faculty member in 2008. In 2009, she took a position as an instructor for the CLS program at Ferris State University in Big Rapids, where she taught clinical chemistry, immunology, phlebotomy and blood bank. She was also the program coordinator for the molecular diagnostics program. Currently, Mariane works with senior specialist David Thorne, overseeing the entire application process for graduate school and providing advising for newly admitted graduate students.

New BLD faculty and staff members are (left to right): Andrea Rafferty, Leslie Thompson, Frances Downes and Mariane Wolfe.

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Returning “aces” at BLD

The BLD program has the good fortune of welcoming back the expertise and experience of many of its alumni. When the need arises for additional assistance for our regular faculty members in teaching more than 400 majors, we have been fortunate to find individuals willing to help on an on-call or part-time basis. Each returning alumni brings their work experience back to the students currently enrolled in BLD, helping us to educate the very best laboratorians. Highlighted here are some of our adjunct and on-call faculty members:

Rhonda Hensley (medical technology, ’83; M.S., clinical laboratory science, ’07) works full-time at Henry Ford Health Systems in Detroit, Mich., as the microbiology manager. She makes time to share her expertise with our students by teaching BLD 442 (Education and Management in the Clinical Laboratory).

Dennis Keagle (medical technology, ’84) now spends some of his retirement teaching for his alma mater after working for many years at Sparrow Hospital Laboratory. He assists with BLD 213 (Application of Clinical Laboratory Principles), BLD 433 (Clinical Immunology and Immunohematology Laboratory) and MMG 464L (Diagnostic Microbiology Laboratory), and also grades assignments for BLD 414/417 (Clinical Chemistry).

Betty Schoepke (medical technology, ’63; M.S., clinical laboratory science, ’75) retired from the Michigan Department of Community Health, where she served as a training coordinator for the Laboratory and Epidemiological Services Bureau. Betty assists with BLD 213 (Application of Clinical Laboratory Principles).

Gladys Thomas (M.S., microbiology, ’63; Ph.D., higher education and administration, ’74) retired after working many years in various positions in the Department of Public Health, Sparrow Hospital Laboratory and teaching medical technology students in the MSU Department of Microbiology. Gladys assists with BLD 213 (Application of Clinical Laboratory Principles) and BLD 220 (Health Careers and Preparation).

Raquel Rocha Vilela (BLD postdoctoral student, ’06 – ’08) has a master’s degree in pharmacy and biochemistry, and a Ph.D. in biological sciences-microbiology from the Federal University of Minas Gerais (Brasil). She recently received her doctorate in general medicine. Raquel co-teaches (with Leonel Mendoza) “Medical Mycology for Spanish Speaking Professionals,” which is a two-week laboratory workshop held in the summer on the MSU campus.

Kathy Doig steps down as associate dean

After five years as associate dean for undergraduate education in the College of Natural Science, Kathy Doig is stepping down from the position. She will continue to work full-time in BLD as a professor and director of the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS) accredited clinical laboratory science major.

When asked how she felt about stepping down, Doig said:

“When my husband decided to retire, it was my cue to simplify my work life too. But I am not ready to retire, so I chose to step back from administration and devote more time to teaching and advancing initiatives related to my first love — medical laboratory science. I appreciate the dean giving me the opportunity to serve the college as associate dean for undergraduate education; I learned so much. I will miss working daily with all the terrific colleagues in the dean’s office and across the college, but I am happy to be back in BLD full-time and am looking forward to helping move the program in exciting new directions before I decide it is time for me to retire.”

Kathy Doig

Do you need PACE CEUs?

In September 2011, we began monthly online seminars given by BLD alumni and faculty members. These free seminars can be used to earn PACE CEUs. If you missed previous seminars, some are archived and you can watch them any time. To start earning your free PACE CEUs, go to: http://goo.gl/6gUBq.

Below is a list of BLD seminars available online:

- “Strengthening Laboratories Globally,” by Frances Downes
- “Clinical Microbiology: A Public Relations Tool for Career Recruitment and Professional Visibility,” by Donna M. Duberg
- “Pharmacogenetics in the Clinical Laboratory,” by Mark Borgman, Ph.D.
During the 2011-2012 academic year, BLD faculty members, staff members and alumni celebrated 85 years of laboratory education on campus at Michigan State University. As many will testify, it was a fun, yearlong celebration with many memories made and relationships renewed. Here’s a recap and pictorial review of our 85th celebration year!

- The BLD Program initiated its 85th anniversary celebration with a football tailgate party. More than 100 alumni came to cheer the Spartans on to victory that sunny September afternoon.
- Monthly online seminars for free PACE CEUs began in fall 2011. The seminars are ongoing and are presented by BLD alumni and faculty members.
- During the 2012 men’s basketball season, alumni and friends gathered at the Spartan Hall of Fame Café for a “Game Watch.”
- At the 2012 Clinical Laboratory Educator’s Conference, BLD alumni from around the country got together for a luncheon and to reconnect with fellow Spartans. They had so much fun that they decided to make the luncheon an annual event.
- On April 21, 2012, alumni and students came to the MSU Kellogg Hotel and Conference Center for a day of celebrating 85 years of the BLD Program. Three of the program’s past directors and the current director, John Gerlach, were present. Activities included:
  - A bus tour of MSU’s campus included a visit to the cyclotron, MSU’s new recycling center, Giltner Hall, and North Kedzie Hall.
  - A welcome address was delivered by the dean of the College of Natural Science, R. James Kirkpatrick. Following the dean’s address, John Gerlach presented a history of the BLD program—how it has evolved through the years, what the program is now and what the plans are for the future.
  - A panel of graduates from the 1960s - 2000s compared and contrasted the laboratory technology of each generation. Audience members also shared their own stories about the lab.
  - Guests were later greeted by Sparty at the pre-dinner reception generously provided by Covance, Inc. A silent auction was held in order to benefit the student scholarship funds. As they ate, guests were serenaded by a string quartet. Kathy Doig led a student discussion panel later in the evening. Current students in the program shared their university experience and answered questions from the audience. It was a wonderful and fitting close to our celebratory year.

Former BLD directors Robert Brooks and Esther (Smith) Brown with Sparty at the BLD 85th anniversary celebration on April 21, 2012.

Former classmates Mariane Wolf (left) and Kristina Martin reconnect during BLD 85th anniversary festivities.

BLD alumni and friends gathered at the Spartan Hall of Fame Café for a “Game Watch” during the 2012 men’s basketball season.
BLD acquires a Tricaster
By Mark Bitman, BLD Curriculum Assistant

ESPN has one, WKAR-TV has one and, now, BLD has a NewTek Tricaster high-definition video system.

The system is used to capture lectures for both online and on-campus courses. For example, when a faculty member cannot attend a lecture due to illness, attending professional meetings, etc., the Tricaster can be used to pre-record course lectures. In addition, BLD staff members have also started using the Tricaster to produce instructional videos on using lab equipment, and BLD professor Kathy Doig has used the Tricaster to record student interactions during faculty office hours for use as a learning tool.

Susan McQuiston, BLD instructor, has used the Tricaster multiple times for some of her courses and has assigned honors students the task of creating a short video to demonstrate how some of the lab equipment works. These demonstration videos can be viewed by any student at any time where there is an Internet connection—even on a smartphone.

Kevin McGlinchey, medical technology, ’07, has been named director of sales and product management for Greiner Bio-One, a global medical device and laboratory supply company with a special focus on preanalytical blood collection and needle stick safety products. He is based in the Greater Detroit area.

Troy Devlin, medical technology, ’01, is a healthcare business development manager at VWR International in Chicago, Ill.

Gillian (Sumner) Mvula, medical technology, ’07, has been a medical technologist in the central clinical lab of the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., for almost five years, and has served as the lead technologist for the third shift since May 2011. She is planning to further her education as a Spartan by pursuing the online master’s in public health degree through the College of Human Medicine in fall 2013, while continuing to work at the Mayo Clinic.

Allyson Chirio, medical technology, ’08, received her master’s degree in public health education and was accepted to the Arizona School of Health Sciences, where she is pursuing a doctorate.

Michael Delitala, M.S., biomedical lab operations, ’12, is a senior-level quality assurance professional for the clinical small molecule active ingredient department at Amgen, Thousand Oaks, Calif. He will be providing oversight to multiple clinical product campaigns in Amgen’s Thousand Oaks and Cambridge, Mass., locations.

It is hoped that the Tricaster can also be used to broadcast over the Internet and film in 3D. It is a photo of Sparty; on the front of the desk is the BLD logo; and on the desktop, you will see Susan’s reflection—all of which are computer generated. There is no photo of Sparty hanging on the mock studio wall, there is no desk in front of Susan to create a reflection, and there is no BLD logo attached to the front of the digital desk. These items are all digitally produced. Susan was actually sitting in front of a full-length green fabric cloth that was attached to a wall.

This adds a professional design and feel to BLD course lectures. There are several virtual studio options with the Tricaster, including seeing instructors in a laboratory setting. This system also provides the ability to broadcast over the Internet and film in 3D.

Michigan State University (MSU) clinical laboratory science (CLS) senior Molly Griffin is one of five students nationwide to earn a $2,000 scholarship from the American Proficiency Institute (API). The company, based in Traverse City, Mich., is one of the largest proficiency testing providers in the world.

“Medical technology has led me to become a phlebotomist for the student health center at MSU, which has enlightened me on how the medical laboratory works outside of the classroom,” explained Griffin, whose degree is housed in the College of Natural Science BLD program. “I find it exciting to be able to understand why a doctor orders a specific test and what the test will be detecting. Understanding many areas of medicine allows us to strengthen the probability of proper diagnosis and treatment.”

“Ms. Griffin has the curious nature and internal drive that will take her far in this field,” said John Gerlach, BLD program director. “She is one of those students who I hope will stay connected to the program as her career develops. I believe a continued connection will serve both sides well. It is not a surprise that she is receiving this award and, on behalf of the program, I congratulate her.”

Griffin will graduate in December 2013 after completing a six-month internship for her CLS major at Bronson Methodist Hospital in Kalamazoo, Mich. After that, she plans either to work in a clinical laboratory or go to graduate school to study and do research in immunology or another program that corresponds with her experience in BLS.

Molly Griffin is the second BLD program student to win the award since its inception. Kristie Ryder, formerly of Traverse City, Mich., was one of the first API scholarship recipients when the award was established in 2008.

Born and raised in Jackson, Mich., Griffin is the daughter of John and Barbara Griffin.