From the Director

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times…” begins Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*. Those words have been on my mind this past year as I have reflected on all the great things that are happening in the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science (CLS) and, at the same time, the serious budget cuts we have experienced. We have the best students and faculty in the country, our graduates are amazingly successful and talented, and our new Master’s Degree in Molecular Diagnostic Science just received initial accreditation. We are also dealing with the most serious financial situation I have seen in my years as a faculty member and program director. In this issue of the Division Newsletter, I would like to share with you the effects of the budget cuts, the response of the CLS faculty and supporters, and our plans to ensure the excellence of this program for the future.

First, let me provide some background. The BS in Clinical Laboratory Science program has been a part of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for approximately seventy years. The first CLS program (then called Medical Technology) started as a hospital based program offered jointly by the School of Medicine and the College of Arts and Sciences. The oldest graduate of the program is from the class of 1943, so it appears that this program was established in the early ’40s. We have over 900 graduates and have had continuous meritorious accreditation status with the National Accrediting Agency for Clinical Laboratory Sciences (NAACLS). With a few exceptions, we have 100% pass rates on certification exams. The Master’s in Molecular Diagnostic Science, established in 2008, was awarded initial accreditation 2011 and was highly praised by the site visitors. Our second class of MMDS students graduated in December 2011 and they are reporting success in their careers and on the Molecular Biology certification exam.

All of our success, however, does not protect us from the effects of the economy on state funding. In 2011, the Division of CLS experienced a 21% cut in state funding. These cuts were preceded by several years of smaller cuts, so the overall loss of state funds has been significant. As a result of these cuts, we have not been able to hire someone to replace Dr. Hilger and we have had limited funds for adjunct faculty members and other program needs.

Across the state and country, other CLS programs have also dealt with these difficult situations. University based CLS programs are particularly vulnerable because they are heavily depending on state funds, they have high faculty-student ratios, they require expensive equipment and reagents, and the number of available clinical sites limits the enrollment. Over the past 25 years, more than 40% of CLS programs have closed resulting in 50% fewer graduates. Several years ago, Duke University closed their CLS program and more recently the CLS program at Western Carolina University was closed. Nationally, programs at Arizona State and UNLV closed.

The CLS faculty members have responded to this serious situation with great dedication, creativity, determination, and hard work. We have made many curriculum changes that will allow us to stretch existing faculty while maintaining the excellence of the program. The CLS alumni have responded with encouragement and financial support which means so much to the faculty and the students of both the CLS and MMDS programs. We have also been so grateful for the financial support of our Corporate Partners for the MMDS program. With the continued support of our loyal alumni and friends, we will get through the “worst of times” and will continue the tradition of excellence which we have all come to expect from the Division of Clinical Laboratory Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Susan J. Beck
Director, Division of Clinical Laboratory Science
MMDS Graduation and Corporate Partner Recognition

On December 8, 2011, the Division of CLS hosted a reception to recognize the graduating Master’s Degree in Molecular Diagnostic Science students and the MDS Corporate Partners. Representatives from the Corporate Partners congratulated the graduates and spoke about their commitment to the education of future laboratory professionals and the important role of molecular diagnostics in the future of health care. Pandora Ray, the Director of the National Center for Public Health Laboratory Leadership Association of Public Health Laboratories, spoke to the graduates and inspired them to serve the needs of patients in their careers. She shared a moving testimony to the importance of the laboratory practitioner (see box).

The MMDS Class of 2011 presented the results of their Capstone research projects on December 9. Many of the clinical instructors and Corporate Partners attended the session and were impressed with the students’ work and presentations. The students and their presentations were:

- Hannah M. Bowman - Validation of a Real-time Quantitative RT-PCR Assay for Detecting PML-RAR Transcripts: Reproducibility, Intra-precision, and Inter-precision
- Kay C. Cha - Verification of Cytochrome p450 2D6 Genotyping by xTAG® CYP2D6 Kits with Luminex 100 Detection System
- Avian Elliott - Optimization of a New Detection and Quantification Method for Amplified Mitochondrial DNA
- Benjamin Feldmann - Development of a Real-Time Polymerase Chain Reaction Assay for Quantification of Human Herpesvirus 6
- Amanda Fitzgerald - EpTect® Plus Bisulfite Conversion Kit for FFPE Samples Representative of Glioma
- Ross Gagnon - JAK2 DNA Sequencing of Exons 12, 13, and 14
- Alex Lee - Dual Mutations in the Epidermal Growth Factor Receptor Kinase Pathway
- Eleanor Penley - Cross-Sectional Study of Samples Submitted for High-Risk HPV
- Donald Stephen Serafin - Clinical Importance of Adenovirus DNA in the Plasma of Transplant Recipients: Review of Current Knowledge and Development of a Quantitative Real-time PCR Assay

MDS Graduation Comments by Pandora Ray

Who are you? You, or someone like you, have touched me hundreds of times, but you will rarely see me, never feel me. You will give me hope, provide joy, and unfortunately, deliver bad news. You will never be there to share in my excitement or comfort me in my times of sorrow. However, you will still feel these emotions from a distance. Your tasks will be limitless, but always behind the scenes. I know that because of you, the world will be a better place.

You are a Laboratory Scientist. You are the one who will discover a pregnancy in the couple who had a slim hope of ever bearing a child, or will not there to “high-five” them. You will give closure to thousands of families in some yet to occur disaster by identifying the remains of their loved ones, but you will not be there to share their tears. You will personally discover a terrorist’s weapon of choice, Anthrax, but will not bask in the limelight. You will discover that the lump in your sister’s, wife’s or mother’s breast was not cancer after all (or was). You found my disease early enough for a successful recovery or at least in time for me to wrap up loose ends. You recognized when I needed more iron, less medication and a better diet. You identified a perfect match for the donor heart I so desperately needed. You supplied most of the evidence my physician used to diagnose my condition. But you never got to tell me so.

The laboratory community is a large, critical component of the health care industry. I can equate this community to a giant iceberg; only the tip shows. The primary exposure a person has to the laboratory is when the phlebotomist is there to collect samples. The remainder of the laboratory personnel is rarely seen. The members of the collective laboratory science organizations have been tasked with providing the “Face of the Lab” by educating the public on what you do and who you are. You have little opportunity to “blow your own horn” due to the fact there is usually no audience to hear your call. Imagine a world where the role of a laboratorian is readily understood and acknowledged by the general public... where and what you do is widely known. You have little opportunity to “blow your own horn” due to the fact there is usually no audience to hear your call.

Imagine a world where the role of a laboratorian is readily understood and acknowledged by the general public... where and what you do is widely known. You have little opportunity to “blow your own horn” due to the fact there is usually no audience to hear your call. Congratulations and welcome to the cadre of unsung heroes. On behalf of CCCLW and all of our partners in promoting the value and integrity of the laboratory workforce.

We Remember Jayne Baker Higgens (’78)
Jayne Baker Higgens died on January 1, 2012. She graduated from UNC Chapel Hill with a BS degree in biology in 1978 and from the UNC Medical Technology program in 1979. With these degrees she worked in the hospital laboratory and public health sectors, moving on to excel in various large diagnostic companies, receiving numerous awards as she pursued her passion for troubleshooting and teaching. Jayne is survived by her loving and devoted husband of 15 years, Rick Higgens; her sister Linda Wall and husband Stan; beloved nephews Justin Baker (Amanda), Jeff Wall (Ellen), Jason Wall (Gwen) and niece Melissa Miller.

Alumni Updates
Margaret Batte Moore (’73) has retired from hospital work and now helps her husband, Walter Graham Moore, with his business and runs their horse farm in Chatham County, NC, south of Chapel Hill. Margaret is active in their rural community as a REINS Volunteer and assists the state and county equine programs. Margaret and Walter have two grown children and became grandparents in 2010.
Michael L. Bishop, MS, MLS(ASCP) CM (’74) has been promoted to a Senior Learning Consultant in Organizational Learning at Duke Clinical Research Institute. Mike is also the senior editor for the textbook, Clinical Chemistry: Techniques, Principles, Correlations. The 7th edition of this book is scheduled for publication in 2013. A number of chapter contributors currently hold (or previously held) positions at UNC and/or NC Memorial Hospital.
Martha McGee (’93) was promoted to Assistant Administrative Director of the Microbiology and Molecular Pathology laboratories at UNC Hospitals effective November 1, 2011.
We are grateful to our MDS Corporate Partners for their support of the Master’s Degree in Molecular Diagnostic Science (MMDS). Thanks to our Corporate Partners we were able to offer scholarships to students, fund MDS course development, and provide instructional support.

Chad Porter (’99) has obtained his PhD in epidemiology from the George Washington University and is currently working in enteric disease vaccine development.

Verena Lang Tetley (’00) has worked at DaVita Labs in Florida for eight years and is currently the Hematology Manager. “We are always looking for good MTs, so please feel free to contact me at verena.tetley@davita.com if you are interested,” writes Verena. She and her husband are expecting their first child in July 2012.

Jared W. Miller, DO (’03) has been named Chief Resident at the Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) Riverside Family Medicine Residency. He and his wife, Ashley, currently live in Newport News, Va., with their beautiful daughter Bailey.

Thomas Covington (’05) is earning his DDS from UNC School of Dentistry and will graduate in May 2012. He will continue on as an orthodontic resident at UNC after graduating. A true Tar Heel for life!

Alicia Curtis (’05) is now the AP Chemistry teacher at Walter Williams High School in Burlington, NC. She is also working to complete a Master of Science in Chemistry and a Master of Science in Education.

Stella Echandia (MDS ’06) has been selected by the University of Miami to establish the first Cytology and Molecular Laboratory for the University of Miami Hospital.

Yvonne (Brooks) Daniels (’07) graduated with a Master of Health Science degree from the Duke University Pathologists’ Assistant program in 2009. During graduate school, she worked a weekend shift covering Hematology and Blood Gas in the Duke University Medical Center Pediatric Lab. She now specializes in Surgical and Autopsy Pathology as a PA with Carolinas Pathology Group. Yvonne married Carlos Daniels on June 11, 2011, and they are enjoying life in Charlotte. Continued on page 7
The fifth annual awards ceremony for scholarship recipients in the Department of Allied Health Sciences (AHS) was held on November 12, 2011, at the Rizzo Center in Chapel Hill. At this event, each Division in the Department of AHS recognized the accomplishments of scholarship winners and thanked the generous scholarship donors. The Division of CLS was proud to recognize the 14 scholarships winners and the donors who made the scholarships possible:

**Allene W. Alphin and Jesse C. Alphin Clinical Laboratory Annual Scholarships**

Two scholarships were established by Kay Alphin Johnson ('68) and her husband Marvin in honor of Kay’s mother and father. Students were selected based on their academic and professional performance. The 2012 recipients of these two scholarship are:

**Erin Elizabeth Hester**,
Class of 2012, Hurdle Mills, NC

**Mary Elizabeth McLawhorn**,
Class of 2013, New Bern, NC

**Lanning-Taylor Loyalty Fund Annual Scholarship**

A gift from Susan ('85) and Steve Taylor provides funds to assist and reward a second-year CLS student. The Lanning-Taylor scholar was chosen by the CLS faculty based on potential for contributing to the CLS profession, academic excellence, personal characteristics, and financial need. The Lanning–Taylor scholarship was awarded to

**Kevin Michael Smith**, Class of 2012, Greensboro, NC

**RPLA / WakeMed Scholarships**

The Raleigh Pathology Laboratory Associates/WakeMed Scholarships were established to support the education of future laboratory professionals. By helping current CLS students with the financial burden of higher education, the RPLA/WakeMed Scholarships seek to increase the number of highly qualified laboratory practitioners in the future. The scholarships were awarded to:

**Emily Rae Glass**, Class of 2012, Matthews, NC

**Shelby Lynn Pavan**, Class of 2013, Pen Argyl, Penn.

Each of these students is profoundly grateful to the scholarship donors for supporting their education and each one prepared a personal statement that was shared with the donors at the reception. Statements from the following students illustrate the importance of this scholarship support for our students:

“...second week of my freshman year I began working in a colorectal cancer research lab because I really enjoyed biology and wanted to get more experience. After working in the lab for two years, I understood the process of research well, but wanted something that was more tangentially helpful to those who were sick, so I decided to apply my skills in the lab with a clinical approach. I want to use my CLS degree as a foundation for a Doctorate in Epidemiology and a Masters in Infectious Disease, eventually working for the World Health Organization. Working at the WHO, I’d like to study either the epidemiology of parasitic infection in Sub-Saharan Africa or the spread of sexually transmitted infections associated with human sex trafficking. While the financial support certainly is appreciated and important, the faith that Mrs. And Mr. Taylor have shown in me to succeed and make a difference is incalculable.”

- **Kevin Michael Smith**
Louise M. Ward Scholarships

With a generous bequest from the estate of Louise M. Ward, a former director of the UNC Chapel Hill Division of Clinical Laboratory Science (then medical technology), the Division of CLS was able to award scholarships to two students. These students are chosen based on their potential for contributing to the CLS profession, academic excellence, and personal characteristics. The Louise Ward scholars for 2011-12 are:

Astrid Aponte,
Class of 2012, Cary, NC

Amanda Lynn Gilbert,
Class of 2012, Mooresville, NC

Molecular Diagnostic Science Corporate Partner Program Scholarships

Three Molecular Diagnostic Science (MDS) Corporate Partner Program Scholarships were awarded in the 2011-12 academic year thanks to the generosity of our Gold partners in the MDS Corporate Partners Program: Abbott Molecular, Association of Public Health Laboratories, BD Molecular Diagnostics, Gen-Probe, Laboratory Corporation of America, Quest Diagnostics, Roche Diagnostics Corporation, and ZeptoMetrix Corporation. Scholarships were awarded to:

Amanda Fitzgerald, MDS Class of 2011, Clemmons, NC

Donald Stephen Serafin, MDS Class of 2011, Chapel Hill, NC

Lisa Kay Cremeans, MDS Class of 2012, Chapel Hill, NC

McLendon Labs Scholarships

In 2006, the McLendon Laboratories of UNC Hospitals began offering full-tuition scholarships (plus assistance with books) for UNC CLS students who would agree to work in the McLendon Labs for two years post-graduation. All incoming CLS students are eligible to apply for these scholarships and the winners are chosen by the Director and Administrative Director of the McLendon Laboratories. The current McLendon scholars are:

Diana Huei Chen Kuo,
Class of 2012, Cherry Hill, NJ

Julia Pollard Rice,
Class of 2012, Snow Camp, NC

Teresa Lauren Britt,
Class of 2013, Concord, NC

Jerrica Rae Snow,
Class of 2013, McLeansville, NC

To read statements from other scholarship recipients, visit www.med.unc.edu/ahs/supporting-ahs/cls-scholarships.
Curriculum Changes in the CLS and MMDS Programs

Last summer, the CLS faculty undertook a major review of the CLS and MDS curricula looking for greater efficiency so that we could cover all the courses with fewer faculty members. We made several changes to “stretch” the existing faculty:

1. We have typically assigned two faculty members to the laboratory courses in the first year of the CLS program in order to give students more individual attention and answer questions. We identified three courses in which only one faculty member could teach the course with periodic assistance: Microbiology I Laboratory (Laine Stewart), Immunology Laboratory (Tara Moon), and Clinical Chemistry Laboratory (Vicky LeGrys).

2. CLS faculty members are now teaching courses that were previously covered by adjunct faculty members. CLSC 650 (MDS Laboratory Administration) will be taught by Susan Beck and Tara Moon. CLSC 720 (Applications of MDS) and CLSC 760 (MDS in the Corporate Setting) will be taught by Susie Orton. Dr. Orton will also teach CLSC 720L (Applications of MDS Lab) with student teaching assistants.

3. We have also received help from our alumni and students. Stacy Cox Pope taught the Microbiology Lecture course this fall, Astrid Aponte (CLS senior) has helped with recruiting, Amanda Gilbert (CLS senior) prepared and tested the assays for the Clinical Chemistry laboratory, and Amanda Fitzgerald and Stephen Serafin (MDS second-year students) served as teaching assistants for CLSC 720L (Applications of Molecular Diagnostic Science laboratory).

In addition to those efforts to “do more with less,” we looked for courses that we could delete without affecting the accreditation status of the program or the entry-level competency of our students. We also looked for increased efficiency in the organization of our courses. We will be making these changes:

1. No accelerated program (fast track). This was a great option for students with a BS degree and we appreciate all the clinical instructors who have worked with these students in the past. We needed to eliminate this option so that we could have all the second-year students here in the fall and spring semesters. Because we will need to get all students through their clinical rotations in the fall and spring semesters, we also needed to shorten some clinical rotations.

2. Course deletions. We hated to delete any courses, but we recognized that we did not have enough CLS faculty members to manage all the current courses at this time. We also had to acknowledge that over time, our baccalaureate program has increased in difficulty and it is much more demanding than other BS degrees at UNC Chapel Hill. Overall, the changes leave the CLS program with 29 courses totaling 61 credits, which is consistent with other BS programs. We will delete:
   • Community Laboratory Experience (2 credits).
   • Hematology Case Study (1 credit).
   • Quality Assurance (1 credit).
   • Advanced Laboratory Techniques (DNA) (1 credit).
   • Special Micro Rotation (1 credit).

3. Other changes. The management, education and research courses in the CLS program were reorganized in order to align these content areas in the CLS and MDS curricula. This allows a CLS faculty members to teach similar content to CLS and MDS students in the same semester. We also moved Microbiology I (Parasitology / Mycology) from the first semester of the first year of the CLS program to first semester of the second year.

4. MDS Curriculum changes. The changes made to the MDS program were much less dramatic. We needed to align the CLS and MDS courses for greater efficiency and so we will start the MDS program in the fall rather than the first summer session. The clinical rotation will now be in the fall semester of the second year. Graduation will be in May rather than December. The length of the program increases from 18 months to 21 months, but the number of credits remains the same.

Overall Effect of Changes:
• The first semester of the CLS program will be reduced by one course. This is a difficult semester and we hope that having one less course will help students get off to a better start.
• The overall number of credits in the CLS curriculum is now 61, which is consistent with other BS degrees.
• Some clinical rotations will be shorter.
• There are no changes in content required for accreditation.
• We expect to continue to see 100% pass rate on certification exams.

Future Directions
We are considering adding an entry level Master’s Degree in Clinical Laboratory Science. This would be an option for students who already have a BS degree. It would include the CLS courses with additional expectations for graduate level work. The program would culminate in a professional Master’s degree and students would qualify for certification as MLS(ASCP).

This degree option is currently offered at 10 universities and in 2011, Dr. Rebecca Laudicina did phone interviews with those programs to learn more about the pros and cons of the entry level Master’s Degree. All the programs were very positive and they encouraged us to pursue this degree option. While graduates with an entry-level master’s degree do not receive higher starting salaries, there is anecdotal evidence that they move up the career ladder faster.

We are considering this because it is a better option for students who already have a BS degree and because it would help the program financially. Graduate students pay a “school based tuition” which provides some funds directly to the CLS program.

Our program’s vision is to be the premier CLS program in the country. The changes that we are making are needed to keep the program viable, but we have never been more committed to maintaining the excellence of the UNC CLS program and we have never been more grateful for the support of our alumni and friends.

Read a more detailed explanation of course deletions and program plans at www.med.unc.edu/ahs/clinical/curriculum-changes.
**Alumni Updates continued**

**Rima Patel, MLS(ASCP)cm (’08)** recently left UNC Healthcare as a Medical Technologist for a Specimen Management Supervisor position at LabCorp in RTP.

**Preeyam Patel (’11)** received the Falcon Award from NY Presbyterian Hospital (affiliated with Columbia and Cornell University) for her correct and immediate isolation of gram negative rods in aortic wall tissue that ended up being Salmonella. Her immediate attention to the detail of the case reduced the turnaround time by 24 hours and her effective communication allowed the doctors to take action and change treatment for the patient immediately. In the fall of 2012, she will begin pursuing a PhD in Microbiology at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

**Jeff Liner (’12)** has accepted a position as Medical Technologist at WakeMed Cary Hospital. Jeff embarked on his new career in January as a generalist in the clinical laboratory. He will be responsible for all areas of laboratory testing performed at the hospital including clinical chemistry, hematology, body fluids, serology, microbiology, and transfusion services.

**CLS graduates, Jennifer Dietz, Greta Mullinex, Lien Ng, Franklin Farmer, and Christen Mayer came back to campus in October 2011 to share their career paths and advice with senior students.**

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**An Early Beginning to a Satisfying Career**

“In 1949-50 the seven girls in my junior high Girl Scout troop in Tampa got a new leader whose husband was a psychologist stationed at MacDill Air Force Base. She must have been one of the first trained/certified medical technologists because at that time everyone thought nurses did all lab work (some things never change). As a result of sharing her knowledge and love of the lab with us girls and by encouraging us to choose science careers, of the seven of us, two became technologist/microbiologists who both worked at CDC in Atlanta, two became nurses, and I became an ASCP certified medical technologist (the other two were a teacher and a commercial designer). After, I graduated from UNC I went on to work in various types of labs—POL, reference, hospital, independent out-patient labs, and as chief technologist in the civilian hospital in Key West. I must have had a similar effect on my children as my son is married to a CLS and my daughter became a physical therapy aide and phlebotomist. I retired in 1999 and after 10 years of teaching Girl Scout adults camping skills, I am back at work part-time and on-call at our small local hospital laboratory where, most of the time, I enjoy getting to ‘play in the lab’ again.”

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Thank You, Donors

We would like to thank the following individuals and corporations for pledges and contributions to the CLS Program from March 10, 2010 to April 27, 2011. The generosity of our donors helps us provide the educational resources we need to maintain the excellence of our program.

Lucas Allen Adamski
Alice Stafford Adelson
Jane Martin Allaman
James Amerson
Joni Amerson
Belinda Kilpatrick Bailey
Jenna Kathryn Bailey
Susan Jean Beck
Pamela Morgan Bimbo
Alison Brewbaker
Yvonne Denise Brooks
Richard Hills Brown Jr.
Brenda Sue Chandler
Kathryn Kilpatrick Cheek
David Earl Clapp
Genevieve Lowry Cole
Jeanette Chambers Collopy
Holly Van Wegen Cowell
Shelby Lynn Currier
Richard Allen Davis
Margaret Erwin Dietz
Curtis Shelton Dunn
Caroline W Easley
Margie Beazley Eason
Paul R. Eason
Louisa Kersh Feeley
Lawrence Mark Fleishman
Patricia Fleishman-Goolder
Ann Floyd
Allison Essex Foil
Jesse Erin Frank
Madeline Hechenbleikner
Freeman
Elizabeth Williams Gore
Mark Allan Hamby
Lenita Jobina Hammonds
William Stowers Harrill
Margaret V. Harrington
Marcia Winn Herbert
Annadele Elizabeth Herman
James Fu-Chang Ho
Melissa Taylor Hobgood
Allison Hoffman Hoffman
Ed Hollowell Jr.
Phyllis Hale Hollowell
Caroline Caudill Immel
Edward Kenneth Isbey III
Jane Lysko Isbey
Julie Rose Ivey
Carrol Grady Johnson
Kay Alphin Johnson
Sherry Leatherman Johnson
Scott Edward Justus
Todd Kilb
Elise Hege Kinney
Madeline Gray Knier
Dale Jarvines Kraige
Heather Lester Lawson
Emilyanne Wilson Leonard
Jeri Lasitter McConkey
Torie Leigh McHone
Christopher Dale
McKinney
Sheila Rice McMahon
Lucy Davis Milks
Dylan Kieran Miller
Jennifer Marie Miller
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