Celebrating the Life of Professor Robert J. Durrant

1982~2020

It is with heavy hearts that the MLS division conveys the news of the passing of Professor Robert J. Durrant, a highly dedicated and respected member of our faculty. Robert passed away on May 29, 2020, after a valiant battle against brain cancer.

Robert earned his Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Science, and a Master of Science in Laboratory Medicine and Biomedical Science, from the University of Utah. After beginning his professional career in clinical microbiology at ARUP laboratories, Robert quickly became the supervisor of multiple laboratory sections. While at ARUP, he also served as a teaching specialist for MLS, MD, and Ph.D. students training in the microbiology laboratory, which no doubt seeded his continuing passion and excellence in medical laboratory science education. Robert received the Teaching Tech of the Year Award from the MLS program in recognition of his outstanding performance as a preceptor for students rotating through microbiology.

Robert joined the faculty in the Department of Pathology in 2015 as an Assistant Professor in the Medical Laboratory Sciences division. Robert directly taught and helped form a foundation of knowledge for students in medical laboratory science, nursing, dentistry, and medicine; his passion was evident in every lecture and laboratory lesson he instructed. The best advice he gave to his students in laboratory courses was, "If it's wet and not yours, don't touch it!" Robert always held his students to a high standard, so that his knowledge and passion for microbiology could be transferred to the next generation of outstanding medical professionals.

In addition to his dedication to teaching in the classroom and laboratory environments, Robert was highly engaged in professional activities at the university and national levels. He was very active in numerous committees, including the MLS Admissions Committee, the ASM's Microbiology in Nursing and Allied Health Curriculum Guidelines Committee, ASCP's Choosing Wisely Advisory Board, the ASCP Board of Certification Appeals Committee and the Microbiology Examination Committee, among others. Robert constantly aimed to improve and update the educational experience for all students within MLS and beyond.

In 2018, Robert became the Program Director for the MLS division's NAACLS-accredited Medical Laboratory Science undergraduate programs. In this role, he actively supported the professional growth and development of all students, staff, and faculty. As one faculty member fondly recalls, "I always felt he respected my experience and he never acted like he knew it all, but quite the opposite – he could learn from others...he also was progressive and forward-thinking, especially in regards to technology."

Robert's friendship, passionate dedication to the students, and the division, unique wit, and collaborative spirit will be truly missed. It has been a true pleasure to work with Robert, and his legacy is permanently etched into the minds of the faculty, staff, and students. We are fortunate to have had the opportunity to work and study with such an amazing colleague, teacher, and friend.
Au Revoir Dr. Nematollahi

The MLS division faculty, staff, and students would like to extend sincere appreciation and best wishes to Professor Wales Nematollahi, PhD, MT(ASCP). Dr. Nematollahi joined the Department of Pathology in September 2015. During this time with the division, he shared his knowledge and love of science as a course director for several MLS courses including Parasitology/Mycology, Diagnostic Microbiology, and Principles of Education and Research Design. As an academic advisor, he guided many students in their pursuit of an undergraduate degree in Medical Laboratory Science. His knowledge of bioterrorism and laboratory safety has been an asset to the safety of our students laboratory and helpful revisions to the MLS safety manual. Dr. Nematollahi, thank you for the time spent with us and for your contributions to the profession. We wish you success in your future endeavors.

MLS Virtual Hike

The date is set! Let’s meet for our first virtual hike on Monday, June 29th from 9 to 11 AM.
Pick a location that fits for you, download the GroupMe app and join the hike chat. We will be able to share our experience (videos/photos) live! Don’t have enough time to go on a hike? No problem! You choose what is best for you. The idea is to get outside, stretch your legs, and enjoy the nice weather!
It is important that we are mindful of our own mental, emotional, and physical health so we can show up for when they need us.
We invite all students to participate and stay alogether.
If you have any questions email Adriana.callahan@path.utah.edu

MLWebinar

The Medical Laboratory Science Division is adding more virtual activities for students during the Summer Semester and we are proud to continue with the MLS Webinars! Our second Webinar will present: The importance of Laboratory Professionals in Health Care: Microbiology and Molecular Diagnostics

If you are interested in learning more about the profession or know of someone who would be interested, confirm your attendance here. A Zoom invitation will be sent on the day of the event. MLS Webinar will be held Thursday, June 25th at 1 PM.