

AALAS Opportunities for Technicians

*Our Mission...
to advance responsible laboratory animal
care and use to benefit people and animals.*

Laboratory animal technicians are an essential part of the research team and provide compassionate attention to the animals in their care. AALAS is committed to technicians and offers them a variety of products and services to help them excel in their jobs.

Committee on Technician Affairs

The Committee on Technician Affairs (CTA) was designed to provide technicians with an active voice in AALAS. The CTA's goals are to:

- Establish initiatives at AALAS specifically geared to enhance technicians' roles.
- Recognize technicians as one of the most important assets of the national organization.
- Develop technician programs and encourage participation at the AALAS National Meeting.
- Encourage technicians to take an active role in all AALAS activities, meetings, and publications at the national, district, and branch levels.
- Provide information and support to laboratory animal technicians through the Technician Branch Representative (TBR) Network.

Serving as a vital support network, the CTA is a professional and personal resource for laboratory animal technicians.

The TBR Network

As an essential part of the CTA, the Technician Branch Representative (TBR) network fosters an indispensable connection between national AALAS and laboratory animal technicians who work in the field. Responsible for delivering information about AALAS national programs and activities, TBRs remain in close contact with district committee members. Included in TBRs' responsibilities are:

- Sharing technicians' activities, ideas, and suggestions.
- Assisting technicians in promoting biomedical research on a local basis.
- Providing technicians with professional opportunities and strategies.
- Encouraging technician participation in AALAS at a local and national level.
- Requesting technicians' articles for AALAS publications.

Technician Branch Representatives must be AALAS national members and dedicated branch members who are able to attend meetings and conduct CTA business. TBRs are appointed to three-year, renewable terms.

Through the hard work and effort of the CTA and its TBR network, AALAS offers laboratory animal technicians a variety of opportunities.

Opportunities to Network

TechLink

TechLink is an electronic mailing list (listserve) created especially for animal care technicians in the field of laboratory animal science. Open to any AALAS national member, TechLink serves as a method for laboratory animal technicians to exchange information and conduct discussions of common interest via e-mail messages with technicians in the U.S. and other countries around the world.

To subscribe to this free AALAS member benefit, send an e-mail message to

listserv@listserv.aalas.org, including

in the body of the e-mail: SUBSCRIBE TECHLINK

Yourfirstname Yourlastname. Example: SUBSCRIBE TECHLINK
John Doe.



The Compendium

Several times a year, TBRs offer questionnaires to their respective AALAS branch members on behalf of the CTA. These online questions seek information and opinions from AALAS branch members on their branch activities, needs of their members, and how current issues in laboratory animal science affect their members.

Responses to the questionnaires from all 48 AALAS branches are compiled into a digest form known as the Compendium. In planning for the future, AALAS leadership, committees, and facility management use the Compendium as a valuable tool for addressing AALAS national and branch member needs. Available on the AALAS web site (www.aalas.org), the Compendium serves as an effective communication channel between AALAS branch members and the national office.

Opportunities to Learn

Tech Talk

Tech Talk is a quarterly publication focusing on current information and technology of interest to technicians and other members of the research team, including those responsible for animal husbandry, facility support and management, veterinary care, scientific research, education, and products — everyone in the laboratory animal science field. The guiding philosophy of *Tech Talk* is to enable and assist those who wish to share their ideas and information with others in the field of laboratory animal science. Technicians are encouraged to submit

articles on topics that pertain to their daily responsibilities. To aid in this dissemination of knowledge, *Tech Talk* is also available in both English and Spanish on the AALAS web site.



Technician Fun Fair

The Technician Fun Fair is an educational, yet fun event for technicians held each year during the AALAS National Meeting. This timed event focuses on a set of questions about AALAS, the AALAS National Meeting, and technical questions from numerous exhibiting companies located in the Exhibit Hall. The Fun Fair is an exciting way for technicians to expand their animal care knowledge and meet techs from other facilities across the country.

Fun Fair participants may register individually or as a team of up to four members. In addition to the placement prizes awarded in both the team and individual categories, all those completing their exam receive special commemorative gifts.

Charles Hunter Lecture

This special topic lecture held each year at the AALAS National Meeting has laboratory animal technicians as its focus. Dr. Charles Hunter, a past president of AALAS, was a strong supporter of technician education and training. A fund was developed for technician-oriented educational opportunities, and this lecture was created. The topics and speakers vary each year and may be linked to another round table discussion or seminar. Technicians of all levels are encouraged to attend.

Technician Lunch & Learn

The newest event for technicians at the AALAS National Meeting, the Technician Lunch & Learn provides a relaxed and casual environment for technicians to learn a variety of new things while enjoying lunch with technicians from other facilities. The “learn” portion of the two-hour session will vary from year to year, but technicians can always be assured of useful and worthwhile topics relating directly to the needs of technicians. This event is another product of the Charles Hunter Fund.

AALAS Campus

AALAS' newest learning initiative, the AALAS Campus, is an online learning forum offering over 600 courses in personal and career development, as well as laboratory animal science course selections featuring top-quality course content developed by leading educators, industry experts and clinicians. The AALAS Campus stands out among online training programs because for a single, fixed fee, the student has 24/7 access to all courses offered.

The course offerings for the AALAS Campus are varied, covering a wide range of educational needs. Many of the courses are excellent resources to help prepare a technician for taking an AALAS technician certification exam. For a full course listing, go to www.aalascampus.org.

Opportunities to Grow

AALAS Technician Certification Program

The AALAS Technician Certification Program was developed to recognize professional achievement and provide an authoritative endorsement of a technician's level of compe-

tence in laboratory animal technology.

Laboratory animal technicians are certified at three levels:

- Assistant Laboratory Animal Technician (ALAT)
- Laboratory Animal Technician (LAT)
- Laboratory Animal Technologist (LATG)

Certification at each level requires meeting prerequisite education and experience and passing a corresponding certification examination.

The demand for fully trained, competent animal care technicians in the field of laboratory animal science will greatly increase as the need for more medical and scientific advances arises. AALAS certification is the highest recognition for



technicians in the laboratory animal science profession.

The AALAS Technician Certification program is described in detail in the *Technician Certification Handbook* available on the AALAS web site and from the AALAS office.

AALAS Technician Certification Registry

A visible distinction of personal achievement and professional dedication, the AALAS Certification Registry recognizes technicians who maintain high educational standards and choose to maintain a current, credible level of knowledge. Only AALAS national members who are certified at the Assistant Laboratory Animal Technician (ALAT), Laboratory Animal Technician (LAT), and Laboratory Animal Technologist (LATG) levels are eligible to become part of the elite AALAS Technician Certification Registry. Registry members are distinguished by an “R” preceding their certification level acronym.

AALAS members are entered into the Registry upon becoming certified. To maintain Registry status, participants must earn a minimum number of Continuing Education Units (CEUs) every two years, depending on the certification level. Participation in the Registry demonstrates caring, initiative, and responsibility—all characteristics of a great laboratory animal technician.

Opportunities to Shine

International Laboratory Animal Technician Week

During the 1999 AALAS National Meeting in Indianapolis, the CTA created a National Laboratory Animal Technician Week in honor of AALAS' 50th year of existence. Approved by the AALAS Board of Trustees, this annual celebration recognizes laboratory animal technicians for their essential contributions as members of the research team. Because of its success, it was expanded in 2002 and renamed the International Laboratory Animal Technician Week, allowing technicians from around the world to participate in the event. AALAS and the International Council for Laboratory Animal Science (ICLAS) work together to acknowledge technicians for their roles in the biomedical/biological research field. Special items of recognition for technicians are available at the AALAS National Meeting each year and from the AALAS office.



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