

ASHI VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



Olga Timofeeva, PhD, F(ACHI)
UCLA Immunogenetics Center, DGSOM, UCLA

What committee(s) do you serve on?

Quality Assurance & Standards (QAS), Proficiency Testing (PT), ASHI Educational Workshop (AEW), Portfolio (DTRC) and *Human Immunology* Editorial team as an Associate Editor

How did you get started as a volunteer for ASHI?

I started by serving on the Technologists' Affairs Committee. I first became interested in volunteering for ASHI when Dr. Amy Hahn conducted our lab inspection while I was a Director-in-Training. I remember being genuinely impressed by her thorough, thoughtful, audit-based approach—it opened my eyes to how quality assessments should be done.

What inspired me even more was discovering that she was ASHI President at the time and still made room in her schedule to participate in inspections. She explained that volunteering allowed her to see a variety of practices across the field, learn something new with every visit, and share her expertise with others.

From that moment on, I knew I wanted to become an ASHI inspector myself. And to this day, every inspection reminds me why I wanted to get involved in the first place: the chance to learn something new, connect with colleagues, and give back to our community. It also reinforces the bigger purpose behind this work - continuously improving our field, strengthening the quality of what we do, and ultimately providing better service to the patients who depend on us.

How has volunteering for ASHI improved your professional development?

Volunteering with ASHI has shaped my professional growth in so many ways. Over the years, I've had the chance to serve on several committees, and each experience has taught me something new. I've read the standards more times than I can count, gained a deep appreciation for the importance of PT, and learned about a wide range of laboratory practices through conversations with new directors.

I've always loved sharing knowledge, so working with the AEW Committee has been especially rewarding. It's exciting to help bring meaningful education to our members.

Just as important, volunteering has connected me with an incredible community. I've found role models who inspire me, collaborators who challenge me, and colleagues who have become life-long friends. It's been one of the most fulfilling parts of my career.

What is your most memorable volunteer moment? It's hard to choose just one - there have been so many meaningful moments. What stands out to me most is how our ASHI community comes together with a shared purpose: improving what we do so we can better serve our patients and clinical colleagues.

I love that whenever we need volunteers for a new initiative, the support is immediate. When the PT Committee wanted to explore cell-subset testing, Ketevan Gendzekhadze and Neng Yu offered their help right away. And when we needed to develop standards for virtual crossmatch, more than 20 volunteers stepped forward without hesitation. Another thing I treasure is how collaborative our field is. Whenever I run into an unusual case or puzzling result, I know I can reach out to colleagues, and together we'll work through it. Those moments of teamwork, generosity, and shared problem-solving are what make volunteering with ASHI so memorable for me.

Why do you think it is important for others to volunteer with ASHI? Working in a high-complexity laboratory can sometimes feel a bit isolating—most of our clinical colleagues don't really see what we do every day. Volunteering with ASHI is a wonderful reminder that there's a whole community facing the same challenges, asking the same questions, and striving toward the same goals.

ASHI benefits from new ideas and fresh perspectives from its members, and at the same time, volunteering offers you the chance to learn, grow, and be inspired by the experiences of others. You connect with people who truly understand your world, exchange knowledge, and realize you're part of something much bigger. It's energizing, rewarding, and honestly just fun.