

E&T CoP

A Bi-Annual Insight on Repository Education and Training

E&T HIGHLIGHTS

WELCOME TO THE JUNE 2026 EDITION OF THE E&T COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP) NEWSLETTER.



Over the past six months, the ISBER Education and Training Community of Practice (E&T CoP) has made significant progress in advancing its mission to equip members with state-of-the-art knowledge and tools for effective biobanking operations aligned with Best Practices.

Key accomplishments include reviewing workshops for the 2026 Global Biobanking Congress in Shenzhen, continuing delivery of the *Biobanking 101* workshop on operational planning with key involvement from ISBER *Regional Ambassadors*. The CoP successfully oversaw the five-part ISBER Best Practices webinar series and launched an expanded Educational Webinar Series, which will include highlighting the Rising Stars initiative in 2026, offered free to all members.

Communication and engagement efforts were strengthened through the release of our bi-yearly E&T newsletter and ongoing development of the ISBER Mentoring Program, which is transitioning to the ISBER Hub with a planned Summer 2026 launch. The CoP also advanced research activities by surveying travel grant recipients and initiating analysis for a manuscript expected in Fall 2026. Additionally, the Global Biobank Awareness (GBA) Initiative was brought under the CoP umbrella to support planning for its Fall 2026 event.

Looking ahead, the E&T CoP will continue offering free educational webinars and enhance member engagement through education and mentoring. Priorities also include completing and publishing research on the travel grant program and supporting educational programming through the 2027 Program Planning Task Force while refining workshop standard operating procedures. **-Marianne Henderson, MS PMP, Chair, E&T CoP**

Issue FIVE

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MEMBER SPOTLIGHT



William "Billy" Schleif

ASK THE EXPERT



Junmei Zhou, MD, PhD

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

William “Billy” Schleif, Scientific Director, John Hopkins All Children’s Pediatric Biorepository

Interviewed by Helen Morrin, Curator, He Taonga Tapu Cancer Society Tissue Bank, University of Otago Christchurch, New Zealand

Most importantly, what is your favorite flavor of ice cream?

Anything with caramel in it!

What drew you to this field?

My first career employment began right out of graduate school in a small translational research laboratory at All Children’s Hospital. After a few years, I moved into a clinical laboratory role in the department of Pathology and Lab Medicine which really exposed me to the laboratory sciences and all the regulations that exist in hospital operations. It was quite eye-opening to see how testing for direct patient care is performed, so the opportunity to help build and lead a new type of biorepository with hospital-integration (& CAP accreditation) as its central focus was quite appealing to me. This came shortly after I had observed some genomic findings that may have helped a research participant in our translational lab, but we were limited in using this information because it was not traceable at the time.

Can you share what a typical day looks like in your bioresources activities?

Typically, I spend quite a bit of time responding to investigator queries – distribution needs, inventory lists, protocol and budget questions etc. Lately I’ve also been advising strategic planning with various hospital working groups and am working on a few manuscripts and grant applications.

What skills are vital to your role?

Multi-tasking and fast pivots throughout the day! Also, in depth planning in redundant systems, as plans c and d are often necessary, especially when dealing with hurricanes in South Florida, USA!

What organizational challenges have you faced and mitigated?

The COVID19 pandemic was the longest-running challenge but I think the most impactful was the loss of funding that shut down the laboratory I started in prior to biobanking. That influenced the diversification of our biorepository’s funding and helped drive new service development away from just core biobanking (dry ice production, etc.). It is something I think about constantly, especially for staff who join us on limited-duration grants. Loss of staff is probably one of the most disruptive issues, so career development and retention is something we should all be focused on.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT, continued

Tell us about how you have been involved with ISBER to date?

I joined ISBER in 2013 but did not really get involved until the 2016 Regional Meeting in Berlin. I started in the hospital-integrated and pediatric Special Interest Groups (SIG) and as I met more members, I also started helping with conference organizing. I've contributed to the 4th and 5th editions of the Best Practices, which is also a great way to meet other members. Prior to joining the Board of Directors, I also was on the Governance Committee and was a Regional Ambassador for the Americas region. Looking back, I think the Pediatric SIG and conference organizing have really been my favorites.

What are you looking forward to working on as the new ISBER President-Elect?

Looping back to the first question, I'm now thinking we need an ISBER liquid nitrogen-infused ice cream. In all seriousness, I'm particularly excited to work with the Board of Directors on our strategies for building membership value, promoting innovative biospecimen science, and enhancing ISBER networking strength, such as we saw in the globally diverse meeting calendar in 2025 and 2026. ISBER values go hand-in-hand with the biobanker identity, so it is very important that we ensure our society continues to collaborate across borders and oceans.

CELEBRATING COLLABORATION AT THE WORLD BIOBANKING CONGRESS 2026

As the global biobanking community continues to grow and evolve, ISBER recognizes the importance of adapting its flagship meetings to better serve the needs of international partners. The goal is to foster enhanced global networking opportunities, ensuring that the international biobanking community can connect, share knowledge, and collaborate more effectively. Through these program changes, ISBER aims to strengthen ties among biobanking professionals worldwide and support the advancement of the field on a global scale.

This year, we celebrated the collaboration between Beijing Genome Institute (BGI), Biobank Branch, China Medicinal Biotech Association (BBCMBA) and ISBER to host the first World Biobanking Congress held in Shenzhen on 21-25 April 2026. This unity reflects our shared commitment to advancing the field of biobanking and underscores the importance of working collectively to achieve common goals. By fostering partnerships and encouraging the exchange of ideas, we strengthen our ability to innovate and address challenges within the global biobanking community.

The **World Biobanking Congress 2026** hosted two prominent international events. The **2026 ISBER Global Biobanking Congress: Global Collaboration for Advanced Technology and Innovation** held at the BGI Center, followed by the **BBCMBA 18th China Holistic Integrate Biobankology Conference** and the **13th Hospital Dean's Summit on Biobank** held at the InterContinental Shenzhen Dameisha Resort. The Congress brought together global leaders and experts in biobanking to focus on international partnerships, technological advancement, and innovative practices within the field.

A key highlight of the Congress was the collaborative day on April 23rd. The joint session with BBCMBA served as a central platform for fostering international partnership, promoting shared learning, and driving innovation within the global biobanking community. This partnership provided additional opportunities for networking, knowledge sharing, and collaboration, emphasizing the integration of biobankology and the strategic role of biobanks in healthcare and research.

BIOBANKING 101/201

Still time to watch the Biobanking 101 Workshop!

This year's Biobanking 101 virtual workshop held on February 3rd and 5th entitled: "Planning and Operational Setup: Planning and Managing Storage Environments" was presented in 2 parts. The main topic presented by Caroline Larson, Preston Lehman and Dr. Stella Somiari of the Chan Soon-Shiong Institute of Molecular Medicine at Windber, USA highlighted how the ISBER Best Practices for Repositories can be operationalized to plan for storage (cryo and Room Temperature) and storage environments at your biobank.

Key points included considerations for space requirements, monitoring storage equipment, optimizing storage space and backup systems. There was also an added special focus on Low- and Middle-Income Country (LMIC) Considerations provided by Dr. Jajah Fachiroh, ISBER IndoPacific Rim Regional Ambassador to Indonesia, specifically on storage planning and back up plans for storage, electricity and security.

The opening session showcased the ISBER Regional Ambassador (RA) program. Introduced by 3 of the ISBER Regional Directors-At-Large (DAL), this session defined the roles of our RAs underscoring their efforts in disseminating biobanking information through local networking and educational opportunities within their regions. If you've ever wondered how to get more involved with ISBER, this session provided information on reaching your local Regional Ambassadors. (See QR Code below).

To be able to view the video of this presentation, and other **past 101/201 workshops please visit:**

<https://www.isber.org/page/Biobanking101201>

<https://www.isber.org/page/MeetTheAmbassadors>



If there is a topic that you would like to have presented by the Biobanking101 Task Force, please email us at info@isber.org



THE E&T IS SEEKING YOUR FEEDBACK

Would you be interested in participating in free, online roundtables? What topic(s) would you be interested in?

How do you connect locally with biobankers between ISBER meetings to stay engaged in learning?

Send your responses by 8-July to the E&T here:



ASK THE EXPERT

Junmei Zhou, MD, PhD, Professor and Director of the Central Laboratory at Shanghai Children's Hospital, Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine, ISBER Regional Ambassador for China and Asian Editor of Biopreservation and Biobanking

Interviewed by Debra Garcia, Biobanking Consultant

Please tell us about your education, the organization you work for and your title.

My name is Junmei Zhou (周君梅, in Chinese). I received my MD and PhD in Pediatrics and Developmental Biology respectively. Now I am working in Shanghai Children's Hospital of Shanghai Jiaotong University School of Medicine as the Director of central lab and biobank located in Shanghai China.

A couple of fun questions.

What is your favorite flavor of ice cream and favorite food?

My favorite flavor of ice cream is coffee flavor. My favorite foods are fish from the sea and green vegetables because both of them are helpful in keeping me slim and healthy.

Tell us about your pet if you have one?

I don't have a pet because I am very busy with my life (taking care of family) and work (mentoring several graduate students and managing a lab over 3000 square meters).

In your role within your organization, can you tell us what drew you to biobanking and your current position?

ISBER provides me with internationally recognized biobanking standards and best practices that guide my daily work. It also connects me with global professionals, greatly broadening my vision and promoting my career development in biobanking and translational research.

Participating in ISBER allows me to design and deliver biobank training in my daily work. It helps me improve my communication and teaching skills and strengthens my role in promoting standardized biobanking education.

Being a regional editor of *Biopreservation and Biobanking* offers me the latest research trends and high-quality academic resources from my editorial work. It supports my peer review and manuscript selection, enhances my academic judgment, and raises my professional influence in biobank publishing.

You mention centering your efforts in promoting the importance of "Better Quality Control (QC), Better Research". Can you tell us what goals and/or projects would you like to see ISBER take on especially in regard to this including education and training?

I fully endorse "Better QC, Better Research." As the journal *Nature* has consistently highlighted, the global reproducibility crisis in biomedical research stems largely from inconsistent biospecimen quality and insufficient QC.

ASK THE EXPERT, continued

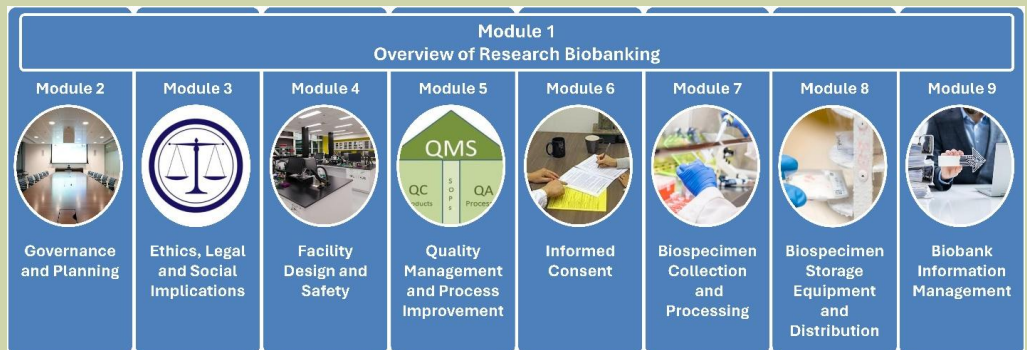
For ISBER, my priorities through education and training are to develop standardized QC training modules covering pre-analytical workflows, launch hands-on workshops for biobank practitioners, and help publish updated QC best practices. These initiatives will unify global biobanking QC practices, reduce experimental variability, and directly tackle the reproducibility challenge by ensuring high-quality biospecimens as the foundation of credible research.

In addition, we should incorporate New Approach Methodologies (NAMS) into biobank QC systems and continuously update biospecimen science to keep pace with technological advances. This forward-looking strategy will modernize biospecimen research, align global practices with cutting-edge tools, and further enhance research reproducibility together with strict QC standards.

ISBER TOOL HIGHLIGHT

Essentials of Biobanking

Course update

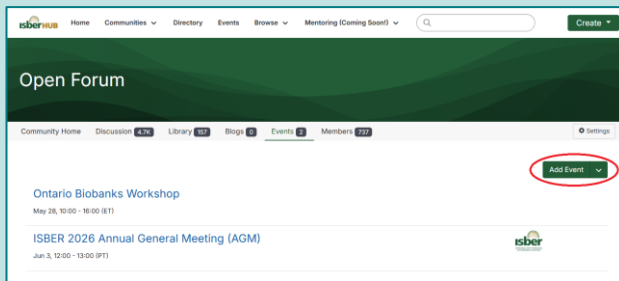
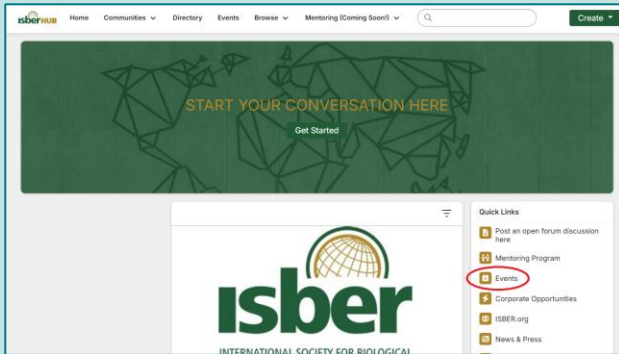


In the fall of 2025, the Essentials of Biobanking course launched an updated course to reflect the newest version of the ISBER Best Practices, version 5, and is available for access through the ISBER website. The update included a review of course content and the ISBER Best Practices followed by the updating and restructuring of content, updating of links, graphics, references, and glossary, and the addition of an abbreviations list.

The Essentials of Biobanking Course is offered in partnership with the Canadian Tissue Repository Network (CTRNet) and consists of 9 modules that focus on the key elements involved in planning, establishing, maintaining, and accessing a biobank. CTRNET developed the course with input from international biobanking experts. Learning is self-directed and flexible. The course is applicable to all types of biobanking, and it is recommended reading for the ISBER Qualification in Biorepository Science (QBRs) certificate.

The course can be accessed at: www.isber.org/page/EssentialsBiobanking

SHARE YOUR EVENTS ON THE ISBER HUB



Did you know you can post your own events directly on the ISBER Hub?

Help us build a dynamic, global calendar of biobanking activities by sharing events from your institution or network—webinars, workshops, summits, roundtables, and more. It's a simple way to promote your initiatives, increase visibility, and connect with peers across the community.

How to post your event:

- Log in to the ISBER Hub
- Navigate to “Events”
- Click “Add Event”
- Enter your event details
- Once submitted, your event will be visible to the entire ISBER community.

Join us in strengthening connections and showcasing the great work happening across our field!

As testament to its commitment to global outreach and promoting equity, ISBER has supported numerous onsite and virtual grants. These grants have afforded Low- and Middle-Income Country (LMIC) biobankers with diverse backgrounds to attend its annual meetings – ensuring the organisation fosters a global community. These grants aim to promote professional growth, expand networks, and promote knowledge sharing within the global biobanking community. The volume of applications received each year speaks to the relevance and importance of continuing this initiative.

While it is known that these grant opportunities are highly regarded and hotly contested, the long-term impact of being awarded an ISBER travel grant is yet to be documented. This ongoing study explores how these opportunities have influenced recipients' careers and contributions to biobanking through a short survey and optional follow-up interviews. Preliminary quantitative data has been collected and an analysis is underway, while qualitative interviews to collect richer, nuanced data is in progress. We are excited to see the outcomes of this evaluation to guide future investments in training our global biobanking community.

TRAVEL GRANT IMPACT STUDY

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UPDATES FROM BIOPRESERVATION AND BIOBANKING (BIO) JOURNAL: SPECIAL ISSUES AND CALLS FOR PAPERS

Marianna Bledsoe, Editor-in-Chief

Biopreservation and Biobanking (BIO), the Official Journal of ISBER, has gotten off to a great start in 2026.

Upcoming special issues – BIO will be publishing several special issues in the near future on exciting and timely topics. **“Biobanking in the Age of Advanced Technologies: Operations, Governance, Ethics, and Community Engagement”**, organized by Marianne Henderson and Greg Grossman, is slated for the June 2026 issue. It will include manuscripts on the latest technologies in biobanking, including the applications and challenges of artificial intelligence to biobanking.

Another special issue, **“Modern Approaches to Cancer Biobanking”** with Guest Editors Karine Sargsyan, Anna Milkalska-Falkowska and Denis Marino, planned for the October 2026 issue.

Many of the papers that will be published in these special issues are already available online at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/home/bpba>

Botanical Biobanking Call For Papers: BIO continues to stimulate submissions across a broad range of biorepository types. In recognition of the importance of botanical biobanking for safeguarding global diversity, a Call for Papers entitled, “Botanical Biobanking for Research and Conservation” has been issued with a submission deadline of October 31, 2026. This special issue is being organized by Anurag Dhyani, Morgan R. Gostel, and Simon Kallow. Additional information is available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/page/bpb/botanicalbiobankingforresearchandconservation>

Advantages of publishing in BIO - Publishing in *Biopreservation and Biobanking* offers numerous advantages. The journal reaches a global audience including 170 countries, making it an ideal way to showcase your work to your ISBER colleagues, fellow biobankers, scientists, and other key stakeholders — all with no submission fees. Your manuscript will be rigorously reviewed by leading experts in the field. The journal's Zero-embargo Green Open Access policy gives you the freedom to deposit your accepted manuscript into publicly available databases immediately, and upon online publication, your work is automatically indexed in PubMed and other major databases. In addition, the publisher's dedicated marketing team actively promotes published manuscripts to maximize their reach and impact.

For questions about the scope of the journal, the manuscript submission processor, or to propose ideas for special issues please contact the Editor-in-Chief, Marianna Bledsoe at biopreservbiobankeic@gmail.com.

Submission guidelines are available at: <https://journals.sagepub.com/author-instructions/BPB>



REGIONAL REPORTS

AMERICAS

Join ISBER and UHN for the **International Biospecimen Leadership Summit**, taking place October 28-30, 2026 in Toronto, Canada. Hosted at the Hockey Hall of Fame and the University of Toronto Convention Center, this new Biospecimen leadership-focused meeting will bring together professionals from across North America and beyond to explore the future of biobanking, biospecimen science, and translational research.

The summit's preliminary program will feature discussions and case studies focused on:

- **Sustainability & Operational Resilience** - Explore scalable approaches to sustainable biobanking, operational efficiency, and resilient infrastructure models that reduce environmental impact while strengthening long-term research capacity.
- **Digital Transformation & FAIR Data Ecosystems** - Discover how FAIR-aligned data ecosystems, interoperability, and integrated digital infrastructure are transforming modern biobanking and accelerating translational discovery.
- **AI-Enabled Translational Innovation** - Learn how artificial intelligence is being applied across biospecimen operations, data interpretation, and translational research workflows to support smarter decision-making and next-generation precision medicine initiatives.

Registration details coming soon.

For sponsorship inquiries,
please contact sponsorship@isber.org.



Additionally, **the ISBER 2027 Global Biobanking Congress** is heading to San Diego, California, USA in May 2027. More information coming soon.

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AND AFRICA (EMEA)

Regional biobanking activities continue to expand across Europe and Africa, with alignment to ISBER's education and training priorities.

In Europe, organisations such as BBMRI-ERIC, EATRIS, ECRIN, and ESBB delivered Q1 2026 programmes covering ISO 20387 implementation, Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable (FAIR) data, translational research, and quality management.

In Africa, Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) growing network of 13 biobanks is advancing capacity through training and accreditation support, alongside regional workshops on auditing and quality standards.

REGIONAL REPORTS, continued

EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST, AND AFRICA (EMEA), continued

Regional Ambassadors are actively promoting ISBER Best Practices, Qualification in Biorepository Science (QBRs) certification, and training opportunities, while supporting collaborations (e.g., International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC)/World Health Organization (WHO) engagement in Nigeria) and outreach via webinars and LinkedIn. The Europe Biobank Week 2026, held 19-22 May, further strengthened regional collaboration and biobanking knowledge exchange.

INDO-PACIFIC (IPR)

The Australasian Biospecimen Network Association (ABNA) supports excellence through educational conferences and seminars. Now in its 23rd year, ABNA's annual conference brings together biobankers and biospecimen scientists from around the world to shape the future of biobanking.

Join us at ABNA's Annual Conference "From Collection to Discovery: Enabling Research, Accelerating Impact" in stunning Hobart, 16-18 September 2026.

The program combines expert talks, workshops, and networking to build skills, spark collaboration, and showcase cutting-edge biobanking innovation.

Don't miss out - [REGISTER HERE](#)



ABNA is also proud to present our FREE 2026 seminar series “Next-Gen Biobanking: Innovative Technologies”. This four-part series focuses on innovative technologies in the areas of specimen collection and cryopreservation (April 28), digital and virtual biobanking (June 16), engagement and consent innovations (August 4), culminating in an in-person debate at the annual conference.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

ISBER TRAVEL AWARD GRANTEE

Dr. Kossi KABO
Institut Pasteur de
Dakar (BIPD),
Senegal

“As an ISBER Travel Award Grantee, I was able to attend the 2026 ISBER Global Biobanking Congress, where I gained valuable exposure to emerging technologies such as AI, multi-omics integration, and digital transformation in biobanking. Through scientific sessions, workshops, and my own presentation, I strengthened my technical expertise and deepened my understanding of biospecimen quality systems, data harmonization, and international best practices.

This experience has had a significant educational impact on my career. It enhanced my ability to modernize biobank operations at the Institut Pasteur de Dakar, expanded my international network, and opened new collaboration opportunities. I am now better equipped to translate this knowledge into training programs, capacity-building initiatives, and improved alignment with global standards — contributing to both my professional development and the advancement of biobanking in Africa.”