Dear Associate members,

I hope that you are continuing to stay safe and well during these unprecedented times. This past year has been one of the most challenging years to date for early career researchers and while we all have been forced to face situations and circumstances that we never would have imagined, both personally and professionally, the Associate member community of the AACR continues to inspire us all by embracing resilience and adapting to these unique challenges.

As we move forward into 2021, the Associate membership of the AACR continues to be an ever-growing group of international early career researchers that includes graduate students, medical students and residents, and clinical and post-doctoral fellows, whose research spans across the cancer continuum from prevention to therapeutics and survivorship research.

The Associate Member Council (AMC) is the AACR constituency group that represents the needs and interests of Associate members. The AMC was set up in 1996 and since then we have worked to support the mission of the AACR to prevent and cure cancer by developing and promoting the professional development of early-career scientists throughout the world. The AMC works to develop initiatives and services to address the needs of early-career investigators in cancer research, provides a venue for collegial discussion about the challenges of a career in cancer research, helps provide recommendations on how to sustain this important workforce, and works with the AACR to recruit, retain and engage early-career researchers in the membership.

I have been extremely fortunate to serve on the AMC and to have had the opportunity to learn from and work with an inspiring international Council. This year I have the honor to serve as Chairperson of the Council and during this term, it is now more important than ever that we as a council fulfill the AMC goal of fostering excellence in cancer research through initiatives related to communications, education and training, and collaboration. Further, we will continue working together to strengthen and expand opportunities for Associate members through strong collaborative engagement with AACR’s constituency groups including Women in Cancer Research (WICR) and Minorities in Cancer Research (MICR).

As we look towards the virtual 2021 AACR Annual Meeting, I encourage you to participate in the many sessions we have available to Associate members for specialized professional development, networking and mentoring; opportunities where we can come together, talk with our peers, meet potential mentors, and build collaborations. In addition to the education and training sessions at the Annual Meeting, I encourage you all as Associate members to take advantage of the multitude of grant funding and fellowship opportunities available from the AACR. Further, we hope that you will participate in many of our unique Associate Member professional development opportunities. For example, we recently held our annual Early-career Hill Day, where twenty-two of our Associate members were selected following an application process to meet with congressional leaders and advocate for robust and sustained funding for cancer research.

I encourage you to keep a look out for information on these activities and opportunities in our quarterly eNews and through AACR email communications. We also encourage you to consider joining the AMC and please watch out for the announcement for our annual AMC elections, which will be coming out later this year. The AMC always welcomes your feedback and please get in touch with us at any stage amc@aacr.org.
On behalf of the entire AMC, we thank you for your membership, engagement and involvement in Associate member activities. I hope you continue to stay safe and look forward to future opportunities to come together both through virtual settings and in person at future AACR Annual Meetings.

Maeve Mullooly, PhD, MPH
AMC Chairperson 2020-2021