

Dear Associate Members,

I hope this message finds you and your loved ones well. The past 17 months have presented extraordinary challenges internationally. Early career researchers have shown incredible resilience navigating unprecedented professional obstacles such as closed labs, lost animal colonies, paused clinical trials, cancelled conferences, revoked grant funding, work visa obstacles, “zoom fatigue”, and hiring freezes. We are grateful for the incredible work of our colleagues, especially those who cared for patients, paused their own work to conserve resources for COVID-19 research, or worked at a grueling pace to develop effective vaccines. Thanks to these efforts, we are cautiously and optimistically entering a pandemic recovery phase.

For the past three years I have had the pleasure of serving on the Associate Member Council (AMC), the AACR constituency group that represents the needs and interests of Associate members. In this time, I have learned from an inspiring group of rising stars in the field of cancer research. This year, I am humbled and honored to be stepping into the role of Chairperson of the Council. As we emerge from the restrictions enacted during the pandemic, the AMC aims to develop resources targeted at supporting Associate Member career development. We recognize that many Associate Members may find themselves in unique and unfamiliar positions on this side of the pandemic. Our goal is to create both timely and enduring materials that will be housed in the AMC Corner of the Associate Member eNews and on the [AACR website](#), so they can be accessed when they are most relevant for each individual member. We have strived to create resources for Associate Members at all stages of training.

The AACR rapidly adjusted this past year by holding virtual events in lieu of traditional in-person activities, including several AACR Special Conferences and Virtual Journal Clubs. In addition, in February, twenty-two Early Career Researchers participated in a virtual [AACR Early-Career Hill Day](#) and advocated for increased, robust, and sustainable funding for cancer research. The virtual format allowed more Associate Members to participate, and we are exploring how these opportunities can be maintained or converted to a hybrid format to continue providing accessible programs for the Associate membership.

In April, for the second year, the AACR held a completely virtual Annual Meeting. The AACR grants program and Scholar-In-Training Awards continued, and a new Channel Chat feature was introduced for Early Career Researchers to interact. In collaboration with the Women in Cancer Research (WICR) Council, Minorities in Cancer Research (MICR) Council, and the AACR Science Education and Career Advancement Committee, the AMC hosted six sessions in a [Professional Advancement Series](#), which included the popular [Personalized Career Conversations](#) session that allows Associate Members one-on-one mentoring time with prominent researchers. We were also able to host [Career Discussion](#) sessions which are targeted, informal networking and discussion opportunities during which early-career researchers meet with recently transitioned physician-scientist and junior faculty/equivalent to obtain advice for career transition and professional success. These events serve to accelerate the career development of participants.

We are hopeful that we can reconvene for the 2022 Annual Meeting to engage in these events, as well as our Meet the Research Icon: A Dialogue with Associate Members series, in person.

On behalf of the AMC, we thank you for your continued membership and engagement with AACR. Please continue to stay safe, and do not hesitate to reach out to any council members or email amc@aacr.org with questions or suggestions for future engagement opportunities!

Kristin G. Anderson, PhD
AMC Chairperson, 2021-2022