

## Welcome Message from the 2022-2023 AMC Chair, Francesco Caiazza PhD

Dear Associate Members,

I'm honored for the opportunity to write to you on behalf of my colleagues in the Associate Member Council (AMC). We hope that this message finds all of you well and safe and extend a warm welcome to all the new associate members who have recently joined the AACR! As we slowly begin to move forward and adjust to the *new normal*, this is an opportunity to reflect on the last two years and the challenges that have disproportionately affected early-career investigators, as we juggled our already complex career paths with the additional difficulties presented by a world that's constantly shifting before our eyes. If there is one important lesson to be learned from the recent past is that there is strength in community, and there are many opportunities for support within your extended peer network. The AMC strives to continue to represent this idea of community, as the constituency group that advocates for the needs and interests of young laboratory scientists and physicians-in-training (medical students and residents, graduate students, and clinical and post-doctoral fellows).

We were extremely glad and excited to meet and interact with many associate members during the AACR Annual Meeting 2022, which was recently held in person again after two years of virtual meetings: with almost 20,000 participants representing more than 70 countries gathering in New Orleans, it was an engaging scientific meeting and a testament to the importance of networking and the need for social interactions. AACR programs and initiatives, including those organized during the Annual Meeting, help to build and foster these important relationships between scientists, clinicians, health care professionals and patient advocates, towards the shared mission to prevent and cure all cancers. Importantly, more than 20% of delegates continued to attend the Annual Meeting virtually this year, and our hope is to maintain such hybrid formats as an opportunity for increased access and participation, particularly for those associate members who may still experience difficulties or restrictions with international travel.

The AACR membership has been growing at an unprecedented pace, recently surpassing the 50,000 mark, with associate members now representing 50% of the total, thanks also to the AACR's bold decision to waive annual dues for the associate category in 2018. The AMC will work to continue to find more ways to engage with and support this growing group of early-career members. We are particularly proud of the strong collaborative engagement with Science Education and Career Advancement Committee and other AACR's constituency groups, including Women in Cancer Research (WICR) and Minorities in Cancer Research (MICR); we aim to increase these collaborations in the future, and leverage shared goals and interests to create more opportunities for career development. An example of these collaborative efforts are the [Professional Advancement Series](#) sessions co-organized during the Annual Meeting, which include workshops, roundtables, panel discussions, and one-on-one mentoring tailored to members at various career stages.

Beyond the Annual Meeting, the AMC is involved in creating additional opportunities for professional advancement throughout the year, for example through our continued support for

the AACR [Early-Career Hill Day](#), an annual event that provides an opportunity for associate members to engage in the policy process and advocate for sustained and predictable funding for cancer research and through the many articles written by AMC members, which are available in the AMC Corner of the Associate Member Alert and on the [AACR website](#). The AMC also encourages associate members to explore and take advantage of the many opportunities for [funding and fellowships](#) available to AACR members to support research, training, and career development.

Finally, as an immigrant scientist with a career path at the intersection of academia, entrepreneurship and industry, my personal goal is to increase engagement, participation and representation for international associate members, as well as for those early-career scientists who don't necessarily follow a traditional academic career path but still qualify for associate membership. My hope is that the many opportunities available to associate members could be shared more broadly within the cancer research community at large, recognizing the diversity of our workforce and the spectrum of different paths available in the training and career development journey.

I have been fortunate for the opportunity to contribute to the AMC, and to learn from an inspiring group of extremely talented and committed early-career researchers. I'm humbled, honoured, and excited to take the role of Council Chair for 2022-2023, and I look forward to continuing to work with the Council to support the professional development of associate members. I strongly encourage all of you to consider applying to serve on the AMC (applications open in the fall, and details are posted on [the AMC page](#)), and I also encourage you to reach out throughout the year with questions, concerns, ideas and suggestions: our role as AMC members is to represent your voice with the AACR.

We thank you for your membership and your continued participation and engagement with AMC-sponsored activities and programs, and we look forward to meeting you again at the Annual Meeting 2023 in Orlando, Florida. Feel free to contact Council members on social media, or write directly to [amc@aacr.org](mailto:amc@aacr.org).

Francesco Caiazza, PhD  
AMC Chairperson, 2022-2023