

Dear Associate Membership,

I am pleased to share a message with all of you on behalf of my colleagues of the Associate Member Council (AMC). We extend a special welcome to the new members who have recently joined the AACR, and we are thrilled to have you as part of our ever-growing community. We had the immense pleasure of meeting many new and established members during the AACR Annual Meeting this past April, in Orlando. The power of networking over the course of the conference was palpable, reinforcing the importance of community in advancing our shared mission.

The primary goal of the AMC is to advocate for the needs and interests of early-career researchers, including medical and graduate students, residents, and post-doctoral fellows. We are committed to supporting trainees throughout their professional development journey and empowering them to pursue their diverse career aspirations. As part of our efforts, we collaborate closely with the Women in Cancer Research (WICR) and Minorities in Cancer Research (MICR), establishing workshops, panel discussions, and one-on-one mentoring tailored to Associate Membership. At the AACR 2023 Annual Meeting, these included sessions focused on How to Design a Successful Career Path in Cancer Research, Building an Effective Mentorship Team, and a Grant Writing Workshop. We are very excited to continue building upon these events and working with you, as we promote the conversations that are necessary to progress your career in cancer research.

As the 2023-2024 Chair of the AMC, I hope to translate my own experiences into productive professional development activities for the Associate Members, with great emphasis on aspiration, communication, and mentorship. I was a third-year PhD student when I became an Associate Member of AACR in 2017, and I remember navigating my first Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. While the size of the meeting was immediately evident, I quickly became more overwhelmed by the opportunities and breadth of knowledge enabled by the meeting, rather than just by the physical size. I was able to identify scientific sessions led by leaders in the field and presentations by fellow trainees that challenged me in my own research, as well as disciplines for which I had no knowledge. Working with the AMC, I can relive this experience through the Undergraduate Student Caucus, Scholars in Training, and Global Scholars in Training awardees, and I am empowered by this shared goal to understand, prevent, and cure all cancers.

I think now, more than ever, our ability to communicate not only our research, but our passion and purpose, is essential. Scientific communication is enabled with each professional development or networking event, where each introduction is an opportunity to state who you are and what your research is accomplishing. I encourage all Associate Members to apply to participate in the Early Career Hill Day, to challenge this at the national level, engaging with congress to advocate for the continued funding for the National Cancer Institute and cancer research. As the field continues to evolve, careers diversify, and efforts expand, I think it is essential for us, as the trainees and future of the field of cancer research, to ensure that our understanding of the science is shared by other scientists, clinicians, healthcare professionals, and patient survivors and advocates.

The mentorship provided by the AACR community is paramount to the success of the Associate Membership. Through the Personalized Career Conversations at the Annual Meeting, leaders in cancer research can meet one-on-one with trainees to specifically establish these types of interactions. In collaboration with WICR and MICR, the AMC is dedicated to creating more of these opportunities for the talented and committed researchers that comprise the Associate Membership. I am very honored and excited for this year, to continue learning from all of you, and extend our sincere gratitude for your membership and active participation.

Looking ahead, we eagerly anticipate meeting you again at the Annual Meeting 2024 in sunny San Diego, California. Until then, please feel free to connect with us on social media or reach out to us directly at amc@aacr.org with any questions, concerns, or ideas.

Thank you for being an essential part of our vibrant AACR community.

Katie Campbell, PhD

AMC Chairperson, 2023-2024