

Dear Associate Members,

I am pleased to share a message with all of you on behalf of the [Associate Member Council](#) (AMC). We extend a special welcome to all new members who have recently joined the AACR, and we are thrilled to have you as part of our ever-growing community. The AACR's commitment to diversity, equity, inclusivity, and growth is evident in our expanding membership. The AACR now has more than 58,000 members residing in 142 countries and territories. Members include laboratory, translational, and clinical researchers; population scientists; other health care professionals; and patient advocates. AACR is the world's largest professional organization dedicated to cancer research.

This past April, during the 2024 AACR Annual Meeting in San Diego, we enjoyed meeting many new and established members. The power of networking during the conference was palpable, reinforcing the importance of mentorship, community, and communication in advancing our shared mission.

The AACR's mission is to prevent and cure cancer through research, education, communication, collaboration, funding, advocacy, and science policy. 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 diverse career aspirations. By waiving annual dues for Associate Members since 2018, AACR has bolstered our community's diversity and vitality.

As part of our efforts, we collaborate closely with [Women in Cancer Research](#) (WICR), [Minorities in Cancer Research](#) (MICR), and the Science and Education Committee, establishing workshops, panel discussions, and one-on-one mentoring tailored to Associate Membership. The 2024 AACR Annual Meeting included [Professional Advancement Sessions](#) (PAS) focused on How to Design a Successful Career Path in Cancer Research, Building an Effective Mentorship Team, and a Grant Writing Workshop. AACR also supports and promotes [Science Education for the Next Generation of Cancer Researchers](#), including high school students, undergraduates, and post-baccalaureate students interested in cancer research and related biomedical sciences. We are very excited to continue building upon these events and working with you as we promote the conversations necessary to progress your career in cancer research.

Throughout the year, the AMC continues to champion your professional development through initiatives such as [the AACR Early-Career Hill Day](#), [Articles and Messages from the AMC](#), and the Associate Member Alert email. These programs, websites, and emails offer invaluable opportunities for advocacy, mentorship, and career advancement. We encourage you to explore AACR's vast resources, from [funding opportunities](#) to educational content designed to bolster your research endeavors and career aspirations.

As a non-traditional scientist navigating academia, entrepreneurship, industry, and government, I am committed to amplifying the voices of non-traditional career path associates within our community. Together, we celebrate the diversity of our field and the myriad pathways to impactful research and innovation.

As the 2024-2025 Chair of the AMC, I hope to translate my experiences into productive professional development activities for the Associate Members, emphasizing aspiration, communication, resilience, and mentorship. I was a first-year PhD student when I became an Associate Member of AACR in 2017. I remember navigating my first San Antonio Breast Cancer Consortium in San Antonio, Texas, and my first Annual Meeting in Atlanta, Georgia. While the size of the meetings was immediately evident, I quickly became more overwhelmed by the opportunities and breadth of knowledge enabled by the meetings rather than just by the physical size. I could identify scientific sessions led by leaders in the field and presentations by fellow trainees that challenged me in my research, as well as disciplines for which I did not know. Working with the AMC, I can relive this experience through the [Undergraduate Scholars in Training](#), [Scholars in Training](#), [Global Scholars in Training](#), [WICR Scholars in Training](#), and [MICR Scholars in Training](#) awards programs. I am empowered by our shared goal to understand, prevent, and cure all cancers.

I think now, more than ever, our ability to communicate our research, 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 for participation in Early Career Hill Day, engaging with Congress to advocate for 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 trainees and the 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 PAS on Personalized Career Conversations at the Annual Meeting, leaders in cancer research can meet one-on-one with trainees to 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 to continue learning from all of you this year, and I extend our sincere gratitude for your membership and active participation.

We eagerly anticipate meeting you again at the Annual Meeting 2025 in Chicago, Illinois. Until then, please feel free to connect with us on social media or contact us directly at amc@aacr.org with any questions, concerns, or ideas.

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

Warm regards,

Kristin A. Altwegg, PhD

AMC Chairperson, 2024-2025