

Message from MICR Council Chair 2024-2025, Melissa B. Davis

It is with profound gratitude and a deep sense of purpose that I step into the role of Chair for the Minorities in Cancer Research (MICR) Council for the 2024-2025 term. This year is especially significant as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of MICR—a milestone that reflects our enduring commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in cancer research. As I reflect on my own journey in cancer research, one marked by perseverance, collaboration, and a relentless pursuit of equity in science, I am both humbled and inspired to lead this incredible community of scholars, advocates, and trailblazers.

The mission of the MICR Council resonates deeply with me, as a scientist committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented groups in cancer research and uplifting the professional development of our diverse workforce. ***Our work is more critical than ever.*** The challenges we face can be immense, but so are the opportunities to make a lasting impact. We are at a pivotal moment where our collective efforts can shape the future of cancer research, ensuring that it is inclusive, equitable, and transformative.

Over the next year, the MICR Council will continue to foster environments where diversity is not just encouraged but celebrated. We are committed to providing robust professional development opportunities, fostering meaningful mentorship, and creating spaces where every member can thrive. Your participation in these initiatives is vital. Whether you are an early-career researcher or an established investigator, your contributions are the heartbeat of this community. Our collective participation in these initiatives is vital.

As we honor the past 25 years of MICR, I encourage each of you to engage with MICR in the following ways:

- **Join our Leadership:** We are seeking new council members for the 2025-2028 term. If you are committed to the mission of MICR and are passionate about leading and driving change, I urge you to apply.
- **Nominate MICR members for Scientific Achievement Awards:** I strongly encourage you to nominate our MICR community members for the prestigious AACR Scientific Achievement Awards. To see representation, we must BE the representation. Let's make sure we're giving ourselves the opportunity for well-deserved recognition.
- **Apply for MICR Scholar Awards:** These awards are designed to support early-career and faculty minority investigators at all institutions, as well as faculty at Minority-Serving Institutions. Your talent and research contributions are the foundation of tomorrow's breakthroughs.
- **Volunteer Your Time and Expertise:** MICR committees are a great way to get involved and make a difference in our community. This year, as we celebrate the 25th

Anniversary of MICR – there is much to do! We need your help to make this an epic celebration.

- **Highlight Achievements:** Share your accomplishments or those of your colleagues for our MICR Member Spotlight. Let's celebrate our successes together. We are planning to create a commemorative collection of MICR-authored landmark papers representative of the contributions of our members over the past twenty-five years.
- **Encourage Others to Join:** Invite your colleagues and students to become part of the AACR and MICR. Bring them to our sponsored sessions and to network during our meet and greets at AACR meetings. Each member of our MICR community is a valued member. Together, we are stronger.

As we look ahead to the 17th AACR Conference on The Science of Cancer Health Disparities in Racial/Ethnic Minorities and the Medically Underserved in Los Angeles, I am filled with excitement about the events and opportunities we have in store. This is more than just a gathering; it is a celebration of our collective achievements and a platform to set our sights on future goals. In addition, the AACR Annual Meeting 2025 in Chicago promises to be another historic event featuring trail blazing work of our MICR members, including a special session to celebrate our 25th Anniversary and many opportunities to celebrate the occasion, so stay tuned!

In closing, I want to thank you for your dedication, passion, and unwavering commitment to advancing cancer research. Over the past 25 years, MICR has become a beacon of hope and a catalyst for change, advocating for the inclusion of minority voices and perspectives in our field. This anniversary is not just a celebration of our past achievements but a call to action for the future. MICR is all of us, and it is an honor to serve as your Chair. I look forward to working alongside each of you to continue building a more inclusive and impactful future in cancer research.

Let us use this 25th anniversary as a springboard to forge a path that not only honors our diverse backgrounds but also propels us toward a brighter, more equitable future in science.

Note: Additional information will be shared with the MICR membership as it becomes available. Email micr@aacr.org with any questions.