

# CABTRAC 2017

## Speed Mentoring Session

The 2017 Cancer Biology Annual Retreat is pleased to be able to offer a mentoring session for pre- and post-doctoral fellow attendees again this year. Each trainee will be paired with up to three faculty attendees for one-on-one discussion topics of their choice. Faculty are encouraged to volunteer for this session at the time of registration, or by contacting Sheridan Wilder at [sheridan@cabtrac.org](mailto:sheridan@cabtrac.org).

**GOALS:** (1) Build relationships between faculty and trainees attending the CABTRAC retreat;  
(2) Provide opportunities for trainees to seek advice regarding professional development.

During the 60 minute session, senior scientists will each meet three early-career scientists who have pre-registered for the session. Trainees will each be given 15 minute individual time-slots to speak one-on-one with a faculty member. Time will also be allotted for a session introduction and approximately 5 minutes between time slots for transitioning in and out of the conversation room.

- Senior scientists will receive background information about each of his/her assigned participants, including a CV, prior to the session.
- Conversations will take place in a large room.
- Each conversation will be different, depending upon the goal of each trainee. Examples include: discussing scientists' contributions to cancer research, career paths, research or career advice.
- A buzzer or chime will be used to signal the start and end of the time slots. In addition, a buzzer/chime will sound two minutes before the end of the time slot. A strict time limit of 15 minutes will be enforced.
- There will be 10 minutes between time slots to allow attendees to transition to the next conversation.

### **Trainees to submit the following in PDF format:**

- Curriculum vitae
- 200 word abstract explaining the trainee's research project(s)
- Three topics/questions for discussion (see examples below)
- Trainees will choose from participating faculty to meet based on a first, second and third choice per topic/question.

### **Faculty - tips for an effective conversation:**

- Begin by introducing yourselves, your positions and areas of research.
- Trainees should state the goal at the onset and frame the conversation around that area of interest.
- Since time limits are to be strictly enforced, after the 'two minutes remaining' signal sounds, please try to draw the conversation to an end.
- Because of the time limits, conversations may come to an abrupt end. One strategy to close a conversation gracefully is to summarize the main points of the discussion, and, if possible, state action points.
- If you feel so inclined, you are welcome to exchange business cards for future follow-up.

### **Potential topics for discussion:**

- Senior scientist career path – how and why you got to where you are today
- Attendee's career path and future goals – where they are and where they want to go
- Choosing the right position
- Area of research- either your lab's work or the attendee's research project
- Recent developments in cancer research
- Challenges you have come across and how you have overcome these
- How to remain motivated during setbacks
- Best career advice you have received
- Experiencing career success: difference between objective and subjective markers of career success
- Research ethics and integrity
- Balancing life and work

- Formulating scientific collaborations
- Mentoring: who, how, why
- Marketing yourself- how to deal with media, use social media effectively, websites appropriately
- Developing career skills:
  - o Resumé / CV
  - o Networking
  - o Grant writing
  - o Negotiating
  - o Development Plans

**Example questions:**

**Career Goals:** I am currently writing my first first-author paper and looking for a postdoc. I would like to discuss how to go about finding a good lab to start my career in without having the first publication submitted/accepted yet. I would also like to pursue a career in academia and would like to discuss how to have a successful career in academia while still maintaining a balanced home-life. **Specific Questions for You:** What hurdles do you think young researchers face today in terms of finding a postdoc/assistant professor position and how can we overcome them? Any advice on selling yourself and your science when your publication list is lacking? How do you know when you've found the right lab--should you sacrifice your interests for a senior PI?

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**Career Goals:** My overarching career goal is to become an independently-funded research scientist with the ability to formulate and solve quantitative problems in colorectal cancer (CRC) by 2018. In this regard, I wish to discuss modalities for transitioning to an environment that can support my career development. This may involve considering opportunities outside academia (e.g. industry, government, non-profit organizations, etc). **Specific Questions for You:** Based on my CV, which academic positions in research-1 institutions can I compete for? Which type of grants should I pursue at this point of my career? What do I need to do now to enhance my publication record in cancer research?

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**Career Goals:** Continuing career after a PhD, career options outside academia, improving self presentation in applications. **Specific Questions for You** (if any): How does a qualified candidate without a good publication record distinguish himself/herself in applications? What is the best starting point for someone with a PhD looking to spend more time in the lab and less time teaching, chasing publications and such?

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**Career Goals:** As a student approaching my Ph.D defense, I would like to discuss career options for scientists transitioning from graduate school to employment. In particular, I am interested in finding out more about postdoctoral fellowships and careers at the NIH and other government agencies. I would also appreciate advice on how I can best present my research and myself in my applications in order to successfully compete in the job market. **Specific Questions for You:** What are the major differences between postdoctoral fellowships at the NIH and academic institutions? What do you look for most in a candidate for a postdoc position in your lab (publication record, technical skills, etc.)? What do you enjoy the most about your job? Being an independent investigator, do you miss being at the bench? What do you perceive as the biggest difficulties that the next generation of scientists will face in establishing successful independent research programs (particularly given the almost universal funding cuts) and what do you see as the best path to getting to where you are? How do you envisage the state of cancer research in 15-20 years (not just funding, but disease incidence, prevalence relative to the rest of the global disease burden, progress from a therapeutic or preventive perspective, and understanding the inherent biology)? What sort of new technologies do you think will be available to improve the standard of care for patients?

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