

2026 MRA Scientific Retreat Agenda

Wednesday, February 25

4:00–8:00pm	Retreat Registration opens
5:30–6:00pm	Sponsor Toast/Reception
6:00–7:30pm	Opening Reception

Thursday, February 26

6:30am–6:00pm	Registration
7:00–8:45am	General Breakfast
9:00–9:20am	Opening Remarks Day 1 Marc Hurlbert, MRA CEO Patient Advocate Joan Levy, MRA CSO
9:20–9:50am	Keynote Lecture 1: Catherine Wu , Dana-Farber Cancer Institute <i>Title TBD</i>
9:55–11:45am	Scientific Session 1: Melanoma-Immune Metabolism Chair: Taha Merghoub, Weill Cornell Medical College
9:55–10:15	Tim Bullock , University of Virginia <i>Armoring CD8+ T cells against energetic deficiency in melanoma</i>
10:15–10:30	Aparna Kesarwala , Emory University <i>Targeting interactions between melanoma metabolism and radiation therapy</i>
10:30–10:50	Break
10:50–11:10	Ping-Chih Ho , University of Lausanne <i>Tailoring T cell anti-tumor response with mitochondria-mediated regulations</i>
11:10–11:25	Rachel Perry , Yale University <i>Mitochondrial uncoupling: a new therapeutic approach for melanoma</i>
11:25–11:45	Bin Zhang , Northwestern University <i>Sustaining metabolic fitness of antitumor CD8+ T cells</i>

11:45–11:55

Amie Bunker, CDMRP Melanoma Research Program
Updates on the CDRMP Melanoma Research Program

12:00–1:30pm

Networking Lunch and General Roundtables

RARE Melanoma Patient Registry	Genomics - Role of genetics, genomics & epigenetics; single cell technologies
Biomarkers - 'liquid biopsy' ctDNA, and tumor biomarkers	irAE - understanding immune-related adverse events
Brain metastasis, leptomeningeal disease, in-transit disease, and tumor dormancy	Neoadjuvant and adjuvant therapy
Cell based therapy (CAR-T, NK cells, TILs)	Targets & drug discovery for new treatments
Clinical trials - patient recruitment and decentralized trials	Tumor microenvironment and microbiome
Diversity - Women & Underrepresented groups in melanoma research & care	Uveal melanoma
Early Detection & Diagnosis (AI, imaging, machine learning)	Vaccines and intralesional therapies
MRA Young Investigator Awardees	

1:40–3:00

Scientific Session 2: Immunotherapy Efficacy and Toxicity
Chair: Toni Ribas, University of California, Los Angeles

1:40–2:05

Christian Ulrich Blank, The Netherlands Cancer Institute
Overcoming upfront resistance to neoadjuvant CTLA-4 plus PD-1 blockade

2:05–2:20

Jun Wang, New York University
Investigating the role of FGL1/LAG-3 axis in melanoma immunity

2:20–2:45

Aaron Newman, Stanford University
Noninvasive prediction of severe toxicity from immune checkpoint blockade

2:45–3:10

Niroshana Anandasabapathy, Weill Cornell Medical College
Title TBD

3:10–3:30

Break

3:30–4:30pm

Scientific Session 3: Early-Stage Investigators
Chair: Ana Anderson, Harvard Medical School

3:30–3:45	Amaya Viros , University of Manchester <i>Adipocyte remodelling in melanoma progression and immunotherapy response</i>
3:45–4:00	Mitchell Fane , Fox Chase Cancer Center <i>The role of aging in immune-regulated reactivation from metastatic melanoma</i>
4:00–4:15	Berta Lopez Sanchez-Laorden , Miguez Hernandez University <i>Microenvironment regulators of melanoma brain metastases</i>
4:15–4:30	Diego Chowell , Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai <i>Dissecting the dynamic immune ecosystem during melanoma evolution</i>
4:30–5:15pm	Scientific Session 4: Panel Discussion on Rare Melanomas
5:15–5:20pm	Concluding Remarks
5:20–6:20pm	Poster Session and Reception

Friday, February 27

6:30–10:00am	Registration
7:00–8:50am	General Breakfast
7:00–8:50am	Industry Roundtable Breakfast (by invitation only)
9:00–9:05am	Opening Remarks Day 2 Sara DiNapoli, MRA Director, Scientific Programs
9:05–9:35am	Keynote Lecture 2: Richard White , University of Oxford <i>Title TBD</i>
9:40–11:30	Scientific Session 5: Genetics and Genomics Chair: C. Daniela Robles-Espinoza, National Autonomous University of Mexico
9:40–10:05	Samra Turajlic , The Francis Crick Institute <i>Investigating melanoma metastases</i>
10:05–10:25	Hensin Tsao , Massachusetts General Hospital <i>Targeting acral/mucosal melanomas using a novel KIT-driven murine avatar</i>
10:25–10:45	Break

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| 10:45–11:05 | Nora Engel , Coriell Institute for Medical Research
<i>Identifying genetic sex biasing factors in melanoma progression</i> |
| 11:05–11:30 | Tomas Kirchhoff , NYU
<i>Germline biomarkers of melanoma immunotherapy: an international consortium</i> |
| 11:35am–12:15pm | Closing Panel: Personalized Treatment Approaches for Melanoma |
| 12:15–12:20pm | Concluding Remarks
Stephanie Kauffman, MRA COO and President |
| 12:20–1:20pm | Lunch and departures |