

2026 MRA Scientific Retreat Agenda

WIFI: HYATT-MEETING
PASSWORD: MRA2026

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
Kelly Ashton, MRA Board, Chair MRA Uveal Melanoma Task Force
Taryn Brady, The Wayne Stinchcomb Big Orange Melanoma Foundation
Joan Levy, MRA CSO

9:20–9:50am **Keynote Lecture 1: Catherine Wu**, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Personalized Cancer Vaccines: Encouraging results and new frontiers in cancer antigen discovery

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
Fuel for function: Elucidating the metabolic constraints on CD8+ tumor-infiltrating lymphocyte function in melanoma

10:15–10:30 **Aparna Kesarwala**, Emory University
Targeting interactions between melanoma metabolism and radiation therapy

10:30–10:50 Break

- 10:50–11:10 **Ping-Chih Ho**, University of Lausanne
Mitochondrial guidance for T cell exhaustion
- 11:10–11:25 **Rachel Perry**, Yale University
Targeting fatty acid and glucose metabolism in melanoma
- 11:25–11:45 **Bin Zhang**, Northwestern University
Sustaining antitumor response of CD8+ T cells by distinct metabolic orchestration
- 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**

Biomarkers - 'liquid biopsy' ctDNA, and tumor biomarkers	Microbiome
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
Diversity - Women & Underrepresented groups in melanoma research & care	Tumor microenvironment
Early Detection & Diagnosis (AI, imaging, machine learning)	Uveal melanoma
Genomics - Role of genetics, genomics & epigenetics; single cell technologies	Vaccines and intralesional therapies
In-transit melanoma	MRA Young Investigator Awardees
irAE - understanding immune-related adverse events	

- 1:40–3:10 **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
LAG-3 receptor-ligand biology and targeted next-generation immunotherapies
- 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
PD-1 positions CD8+ memory T cells in skin irAE sites via TGFb dependent engraftment
- 3:10–3:30 Break
- 3:30–4:15pm **Scientific Session 3: Early-Stage Investigators**
Chair: Ana Anderson, Harvard Medical School
- 3:30–3:45 **Amaya Virós**, University of Manchester
Stromal lipids and melanoma metastasis
- 3:45–4:00 **Mitchell Fane**, Fox Chase Cancer Center
The role of aging in immune-mediated reactivation from metastatic melanoma dormancy
- 4:00–4:15 **Berta Lopez Sánchez-Laorden**, Miguez Hernandez University
Microglial reprogramming enhances antitumor immunity and immunotherapy response in melanoma brain metastases
- 4:15–5:10pm **Scientific Session 4: Panel Discussion on Rare Melanomas**
Moderator: Charlotte Ariyan, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Panelists: Elizabeth Buchbinder, Massachusetts General Hospital
Richard Carvajal, Northwell Health
J. William Harbour, UT Southwestern Medical Center
Keiran Smalley, Moffitt Cancer Center
- 5:10–5:15pm Concluding Remarks
- 5:20–6:20pm **Poster Session and Reception**
- 7:00–10:00pm **Dinner**
Carmine's Italian Restaurant
425 7th Street NW, Washington, DC 20004
- Friday, February 27**
- 6:30–10:00am Registration
- 7:00–8:50am General Breakfast
- 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
The next wave of melanoma models
- 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
Investigating melanoma metastases
- 10:05–10:25 **Hensin Tsao**, Massachusetts General Hospital
A novel genetically engineered allograft model (GEAM) of Kit-activated melanomas
- 10:25–10:45 Break
- 10:45–11:05 **Nora Engel**, Coriell Institute for Medical Research
The X and Y of sex disparities in cancer: the role of sex chromosomes and gonadal hormones in melanoma progression.
- 11:05–11:30 **Tomas Kirchhoff**, NYU
Novel genetic predictor in personalized treatment selection of anti-PD1 therapies in metastatic melanoma: results from IO-GEM consortium
- 11:35am–12:30pm **Closing Panel: Personalized Treatment Approaches for Melanoma**
Moderator: Michael Davies, MD Anderson Cancer Center
Panelists: Charlotte Ariyan, Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center
Christian Blank, The Netherlands Cancer Institute
Harriet Kluger, Yale University
Craig Slingsluff, University of Virginia
Hussein Tawbi, MD Anderson Cancer Center
- 12:30–12:35pm Concluding Remarks
Stephanie Kauffman, MRA COO and President
- 12:35–1:30 Lunch and departures