

2025 Winship Cancer Immunology (CI) Research Program Retreat

“Immune Breakthroughs: Shaping the Future of Cancer Therapy”

December 16, 2025
John H. Kauffman Auditorium
Room C5012, 5th Floor
1701 Uppergate Drive, Atlanta, GA 30322

8:00am – 8:30am	BREAKFAST & NETWORKING
8:30am - 8:40am	WELCOME REMARKS FROM WINSHIP LEADERSHIP Adam Marcus, PhD Deputy Director, Winship Cancer Institute Jill S. Barnholtz-Sloan, PhD Chief Administrative Officer, Winship Cancer Institute
8:40am - 8:50am	OPENING REMARKS Chrystal Paulos, PhD Co-Leader, Cancer Immunology Research Program
8:50am – 8:55am	INTRODUCTION OF KEYNOTE Maggie Phillips
8:55am – 9:40am	KEYNOTE <i>“Building effective cancer immunotherapies: Enduring foundations or castles made of sand?”</i> Greg Lesinski, PhD, MPH John Kauffman Family Professorship for Pancreatic Cancer Research Professor, Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology Vice Chair for Basic Research, Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology Emory University School of Medicine Associate Director for Basic Research and Shared Resources Co-Director Translational GI Malignancy Program Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University
9:40am – 9:50am	BREAK
9:50am – 10:10am	COE SPOTLIGHT: CATCHMENT ALIGNMENT Theresa Gillespie, PhD, MA, BSN, FAAN Associate Director Cancer Health Equity and Community Engagement Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University Lisa Sudmeier, MD, PhD Assistant Professor, Department of Radiation Oncology Emory University School of Medicine
10:10am – 10:50am	SESSION 1: DISCOVERY (CMB – CI FACULTY SHOWCASE) <i>(15mins/talk + 5 min Q&A at the end of each presentation)</i>
10:10am – 10:30am	<i>“Shaping the battlefield: harnessing FGF19-FGFR4 signaling to remodel the tumor microenvironment”</i> Yong Teng, PhD Professor, Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology Emory University School of Medicine

10:30am – 10:50am	<i>"Novel peptide decoy to overcome redox-driven chemoimmunotherapy resistance"</i> Sumin Kang, PhD Professor, Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology Division Director of Basic and Translational Science, Department of Hematology and Medical Oncology Emory University School of Medicine
10:50am – 11:00am	BREAK
11:00am - 12:00pm	<i>SESSION 2: TRAINEE SHOWCASE – INNOVATORS OF TOMORROW</i> Moderators: Delaney Geitgey (Lesinski lab) Megan Wittling (Paulos lab)
11:00am - 11:15am	<i>"Assessing the function and prognostic value of highly differentiated TEMRA cells in oral cancer"</i> Brianna Brammer (Nikki Schmitt lab)
11:15am - 11:30am	<i>"Localized radiation primes the tumor microenvironment to enhance CAR T cell efficacy in combination with immune checkpoint inhibition"</i> Dejah Blake (Sarwish Rafiq lab)
11:30am - 11:45am	<i>"Understanding the Role of SAMHD1 in Response to Immune Checkpoint Inhibition in Triple Negative Breast Cancer"</i> Meili Aiello (Zach Buchwald lab)
11:45am - 12:00pm	<i>"Tuning CD8+ T cell Sensitivity: The Role of GM2A in Antitumor Immunity"</i> Julia Bazzano (Mandy Ford lab)
12:00pm – 1:00pm	LUNCH & NETWORKING
1:00pm-1:40pm	<i>SESSION 3: TRANSLATIONAL HORIZONS</i> <i>(15mins/talk + 5 min Q&A at the end of each presentation)</i>
1:00pm-1:20pm	<i>"Evidence for pre-existing tumor cells with a gene expression pattern consistent with resistance to CAR T cells"</i> Lawrence Boise, PhD Professor and R. Randall Rollins Chair in Oncology, Dept. of Hematology and Medical Oncology Emory University School of Medicine Associate Director for Education and Training Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University
1:20pm-1:40pm	<i>"Targeting a Novel Immune Checkpoint Pathway in Cancer"</i> Edmund K. Waller, MD, PhD, FACP Rein Saral, MD Professorship in Cancer Medicine Winship Cancer Institute of Emory University Professor, Dept. of Medicine, Pathology, and Hematology and Medical Oncology Medical Director, Center for Stem Cell Processing and Apheresis Emory University Hospital Director, Center for Regenerative Engineering and Medicine Emory University, Georgia Tech and The University of Georgia
1:40pm – 2:00 pm	<i>CLOSING: BOLD IDEAS & COLLABORATIONS</i> Chrystal Paulos, PhD Co-Leader, Cancer Immunology Research Program