

Candidates 2024-2026

SS/SC Executive Board (2023-2025)

Bethesda SS Co-Chair - David Davis



With my background on the regulation and inhibition of HIV-1 protease, I joined Dr. Robert Yarchoan's Retroviral Disease Section of the Medicine Branch in 1996 to study the process of viral maturation. A year later I was promoted to Staff Scientist and now I have expanded my research areas to include viral oncogenesis, hypoxia and immunomodulatory drugs for the treatment of viral cancers. I continue my work in Dr. Robert Yarchoan's lab who is now chief of the HIV and AIDS Malignancy Branch.

I have been a regular member of the SS/SC Professional Development Sub-Committee and I am proud to be part of several accomplishments including developing of an alumni database, providing new SS/SC hires with a thorough handbook, and organizing the annual SS/SC PDSC meeting which provides new ways to expand one's standing at the NCI.

I continue to explore different ways in which we can expand SS/SC's skill set at the NCI and believe that the NCI offers many tools to enhance our standing as scientists. As it becomes more and more difficult to publish in good journals, I, as an SS/SC leader, would strive to get SS/SC scientists to form a collaborative network to facilitate cross-fertilization and allow each of us to maximize our chances for publication and scientific recognition.

Bethesda SS Co-Chair - Swati Choksi



I joined NCI in 2002 as a post-doctoral fellow and became a Staff Scientist in 2009 in Dr. Zhenggang Liu's lab, in the Laboratory of Immune Cell Biology. I immediately became a member of the CCR SS/SC Organizations. I became a member of the Professional Development Sub-Committee and was part developing of an alumni database. In 2016, I was elected the Chair of the Professional Development Sub-Committee and have organized the agenda for monthly meetings, bi-annual surveys, townhalls, Professional Development Day and developed a variety of workshops such as Tech Transfer for the SS /SC community. Professional Development Day is targeted to providing training to SS/SC in a variety of soft skills to enhance their careers at NCI.

As part of the Liaison Committee, I have effectively helped institutionalize a strong tradition of regular communication with the OD to meet the needs of the SS/SC community. Several SS/SC programs such as SCEP, STEP, and SS/SC Research Award were a result of this communication.

As an elected member of the Council of the NIH Assembly of Scientists (AOS), I have access to NIH-wide regulations, and have collaborated with Dr. Carl Hashimoto (Senior Advisor for Faculty Development) to improve SS/SC positions. The most recent achievement of this collaboration has been the lifting of the percentage caps on SS titles NIH-wide, thus enabling the promotion of greater numbers of SS.

Frederick SS Co-Chair - Vladimir Majerciak



I am originally from Slovakia where I received my Ph.D. in virology from Comenius University in Bratislava. I joined NCI in 2003 as a postdoctoral fellow in Dr. Zhi-Ming Zheng lab at HIV and AIDS Malignancy Branch in Bethesda. My research centers on the contribution of virus infections to human cancers, with specific emphasis on the molecular mechanisms that control viral and host expression in cancer cells. I became a staff scientist in 2011 and I was recently promoted to associate scientist at HIV Dynamics and Replication Program in Frederick.

I am a member of SS/SC for many years and participated in the planning committee for several annual retreats. I spent most of my professional carrier at NCI in various carrier positions and worked in both Bethesda and Frederick campuses. Therefore, I am very familiar with the working conditions and challenges the most SS/SC members face.

As co-chair, I want to continue to advocate for proper working conditions for all staff scientists and staff clinicians, for support of their professional growth, and for recognition of their achievements. However, as we all facing new challenges and isolation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, I want to also want to reach out to as many individual members as possible to ensure their wellbeing and encourage all members to build a strong supportive network based on personal connections within their close community.

Frederick SS Co-Chair - Acong Yang



I have been a staff scientist in Dr. Shuo Gu's lab in RNA Biology Laboratory since April 2020. In the past two years, I have attended all meetings organized by SS/SC, including the SS/SC annual retreat, CCR SS/SC annual meeting, and the Professional Development Day. I wanted to connect with more fellow staff scientists and serve the SS/SC community, so I requested to join two sub-committee immediately after I learned about the opportunities in February 2021.

I attended the latest CCR SS/SC annual meeting on September 20th, 2022. I appreciated all the committee members, especially the co-chairs making efforts to organize such an informative meeting, so new staff scientists could benefit from it. It made me even more interested in becoming a member of the committee. I'm proud that I'm a member of the SS/SC professional development sub-committee and SS/SC annual retreat sub-committee.

I'm enthusiastic about contributing to the SS/SC community. I will establish networking with more fellow staff scientists and improve communication and leadership skills by serving the community. Therefore, I would like to nominate myself to be the co-chair of SS/SC for the Frederick campus for the years to come.

Bethesda SC Co-Chair - Esther Mena Gonzales



I initially joined the Molecular Imaging Program at the National Cancer Institute in 2009 as a clinical research fellow, and subsequently rejoined as a Staff Clinician in 2016, after completing my residency in Nuclear Medicine at Johns Hopkins University. My ongoing research involves the use of novel PET/CT imaging for diagnosis and management of prostate cancer, with the goal of using molecular imaging to understand the tumor biology and further improve clinical outcome. I am a lead and associate investigator of several clinical trials, and work closely with radiation and medical oncologists, radiologists, and computer scientists.

As a member of the CCR SS/SC, I would like to facilitate collaboration and networking between Staff Scientists and Staff Clinicians and bring opportunities for professional career development and mentorship.

