

THE DOSSIER

Supporting SS/SC Through Transition: Launch of the Displaced Staff Scientist Committee (DSSC)

SS/SC are central to the scientific mission of the CCR, providing continuity, deep technical expertise, and long-term contributions to research programs. However, displacement can occur regardless of performance or dedication, often due to factors beyond an individual's control, such as funding changes, leadership transitions, shifts in programmatic priorities, or PI retirement. These transitions can create significant stress and uncertainty, affecting both professional trajectories and personal lives.

During the recent Annual Professional Development Day held on December 15, 2025, open and candid discussions among colleagues highlighted an important concern within the CCR SS/SC community: the challenges faced by Staff Scientists who are either experiencing displacement or living with the uncertainty of potential displacement.

Displacement most often occurs at the mid-career stage or later, when SS/SC have accumulated highly specialized expertise and long-standing commitments. At this stage, securing a new position that fully aligns with one's experience can be particularly challenging. While NIH and CCR have established policies and resources to support displaced employees, many colleagues benefit from additional peer-level guidance, shared experience, and centralized access to information.

To better address these needs, we are launching the Displaced Staff Scientist Committee (DSSC) within the SS/SC Organization, with strong support from our current SS/SC Co-Chairs. The DSSC will provide specialized, structured, peer-driven support for SS/SC who are displaced or at risk of displacement. A key strength of the DSSC is its foundation in the lived experiences of displaced Staff Scientists who have navigated these transitions themselves. By directly learning from firsthand navigated these transitions themselves. By directly learning from firsthand

experiences, the DSSC will serve as an information hub, facilitate peer mentoring on an opt-in basis, and coordinate with existing NIH-wide resources, including the CCR Office of the Director (OD), the Office of Human Resources (OHR), and programs such as STEP, SCEP, and Technology Transfer.

Strengthening support during periods of uncertainty is expected to have a positive impact on the productivity and retention of SS/SC. Reducing stress enables scientists to remain focused on their work, preserves valuable institutional expertise, and supports continuity across CCR. This is especially important for long-term Staff Scientists, for whom transitions can become increasingly complex over time. The DSSC represents a proactive step toward recognizing SS/SC as core institutional assets and ensuring that their expertise continues to benefit CCR and NCI.

The DSSC invites participation from SS/SC with displacement experience. Colleagues who are interested in participating, sharing experiences, or contributing ideas are warmly encouraged to get involved. We recognize the complexity and challenges associated with sudden change and transition, and we hope that experienced peers within the DSSC can provide meaningful support to colleagues navigating this process.

Please consider self-nominating or recommending colleagues to join the DSSC. We welcome your participation and support. To get involved, please contact:

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On behalf of the CCR SS/SC Organization.