

## ■ FROM THE DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

**Retreating to Advance—CCR Tenure Track Investigators Taking Charge of Their Future**

**D**o you know your SIP from your CRTA? How about your NCI Tenure Review Panel from your CTC? And what is this site visit thingyabobber all about anyway?!

Being a new tenure track investigator is an exciting time, having the opportunity to build and run the laboratory group you always wanted and the ability to pursue the science you think is *most* important. But new tenure track investigators face many challenges in trying to navigate the CCR, NCI, and NIH to get the answers they need to their questions. With shrinking budgets and fewer new recruits, it becomes difficult to find colleagues who have been “in the trenches” recently and can show you the ropes, particularly when the trenches keep moving and the ropes keep changing! To address issues pertinent to tenure track investigators and to facilitate communication within the tenure track community and between tenure track investigators and the CCR, the Tenure Track Investigators’ Committee (TTIC) has been established.

**Goals of the Tenure Track Investigators’ Committee**

The TTIC was established to accomplish several goals outlined in a TTIC charter. First, the committee seeks “to raise the visibility of tenure track investigators at CCR.” Second, the committee seeks to establish an infrastructure to facilitate communication within the tenure track community and between tenure track investigators and the Office of the Director as well as the scientific community as a whole. The recently developed Tenure Track Investigator Web site (<http://ccrintra.cancer.gov/TTI>) and the CCR Tenure Track Investigator email listserv have been excellent resources for investigators to find the answers to their questions and to increase communication for the tenure track community. The third goal of the TTIC is “to raise awareness about issues specific to junior principal investigators and pertinent to obtaining tenure at NCI/NIH.” As part of this effort, members of the TTIC have raised awareness of the issue of mentoring over the last year, and this has led to a shift within the CCR toward a more institution-wide recognition of the importance of second mentors and advisory committees for tenure track investigators. To continue raising visibility, promoting communication, and addressing issues for the tenure track investigator community, the TTIC has organized an annual retreat in the spring to bring together tenure track investigators and other members of the CCR, NCI, and NIH communities. In addition to providing information directly to tenure track investigators, these retreats will provide useful information to lab and branch chiefs and program

directors, who play a role in mentoring these investigators.

### **The 2006 Tenure Track Investigator Retreat: Educating Investigators on the Tenure Process**

The first Tenure Track Investigator Retreat was held June 16, 2006, in Rockville, Maryland. The retreat had an instructional focus and excellent representation by the senior leadership. Many diverse topics relevant to the success of tenure track investigators were presented, and the PowerPoint slides for most of the presentations are available at the Tenure Track Investigator Web site (<http://ccrintra.cancer.gov/TTI/retreat.asp>). The morning session focused on the process of getting tenure, with Michael Gottesman, MD, Doug Lowy, MD, Robert Wiltout, PhD, and Lee Helman, MD, providing an overview of different aspects of the tenure process. Ira Pastan, MD, and Arlyn Garcia-Perez, PhD, presented the perspective of the NCI Tenure Review Panel and the Central Tenure Committee, respectively, while Frank Balis, MD, and Thomas Waldmann, MD, described the aspects of the tenure process specific to clinical investigators. The morning session concluded with a presentation on mentoring initiatives by Beverly Mock, PhD, and a presentation on the site visit process by Florence Farber, PhD. This session gave an excellent overview of the tenure process and provided tips for tenure track investigators to consider from the very beginning on their road to tenure.

The afternoon session of the retreat was entitled “Making the Most of Your Money” and focused on how to take advantage of NIH resources to maximize your budget, a topic of great interest in this age of shrinking budgets. Rick McGee, PhD, began the session by describing the Graduate Partnership Program at NIH and the various mechanisms for bringing students to work in the laboratory. Next, David Goldstein, PhD, presented information on the Office of Science and Technology Partnerships and the Research Technology Program. Finally, Karen Maurey, Director of NCI’s Technology Transfer Branch (TTB), discussed the issues of technology transfer at NCI, including patents, licenses, and cooperative research and development agreements (CRADAs). Overall, this session was very informative on the resources currently available to investigators, and even the most seasoned of tenure track investigators learned something new!

### **The 2007 Tenure Track Investigator Retreat: Highlighting the Science of Tenure Track Investigators**

Communication is a two-way street. The first tenure track investigator retreat successfully informed tenure track investigators about different aspects of the CCR, NCI, and NIH. Now, the TTIC thinks the tenure track community should inform colleagues about the work it is doing! For this reason, the second retreat has been scheduled for May 11, 2007, in Bethesda to highlight the science of current tenure track investigators. One of the goals of this retreat will be to increase interactions between CCR tenure track investigators and DCEG, as well as senior leaders from other NIH institutions. A take-home message from the last retreat was that to get tenure at NIH, tenure track investigators should become full-fledged members of the broader trans-NIH community through collaboration and interaction. The TTIC will

invite leaders in various fields from other institutions to present keynote speeches, followed by presentations by CCR tenure track investigators and panel discussions. A preliminary agenda will be available soon. The TTIC hopes this retreat will build ties between tenure track investigators and other institutions that will lead to future collaborations and possibly better visibility with members of the Central Tenure Committee. The TTIC encourages all tenure track investigators to participate and to consider how they might benefit from inter-institution collaboration. The TTIC also encourages senior investigators to make suggestions and help build bridges between individual tenure track investigators and colleagues throughout NIH. Any questions or comments on the TTIC or the upcoming retreat can be addressed to the TTIC chair, Esta Sterneck, PhD ([sterneck@ncifcrf.gov](mailto:sterneck@ncifcrf.gov)), or any of the other TTIC members listed at <http://ccrintra.cancer.gov/TTI/contact.asp>.

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