

My Glass Is Overflowing... with Optimism!

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An optimist views a half glass of water as half-full. A pessimist views it as half-empty. According to my wife, I perceive the glass to be knocked over and the water spilled all over the table. I guess that is the price one pays for a life lived largely in administration. One prepares for the worst and hopes for the best. Well, I may be becoming an optimist after spending the week of September 12 immersed in the life of a cancer educator. The week began on Tuesday, September 13 when I attended a NCI Cancer Education workshop hosted by Dr. Ming Lei and assisted by Dr. Jeannette Korczak. This workshop brought together approximately 50 investigators from across the country. We were updated on the R25 FOAs including an overview of the program by Dr. Ming Lei who began by giving us an overview of the program. This was followed by Dr. Jeannette Korczak who provided a very insightful review of the history of the program as well as a presentation on current guidelines for the PARs for R25s focused on skills development, research experiences, curriculum or methods development, courses or skills development—diversity and research experiences—diversity. This was tremendously helpful in preparing participants for afternoon breakout sessions. We also benefited from a presentation by Dr. David Chung on the cancer education grants program to promote diversity. Presentations were also given by the PIs (Drs. Von Hoff, Joiner, Haspel, Waterbor, Chang, Ramirez) of six R25 programs each with a unique focus. Afternoon breakout discussion sections were meant to generate feedback to NCI staff on these various training programs. Discussed were which R25 programs I have the greatest impact on the research or clinical

workforce; most effective designs or models for R25 programs: identify aspects of the R25 grant applications that should be critically evaluated; and most effective approaches to increase participation of underrepresented minorities to enhance workforce diversity. I cannot begin to present an overview of these presentations or discussions in the limited space afforded by this editorial. However, I am confident that a more formal presentation of this Workshop will be made in a future JCE manuscript.

Meetings of the International Cancer Education Conference (joint meeting of the American Association for Cancer Education and Cancer Care Patient education network) with a series of workshops covering the areas of health literacy (Cathy Meade, Vivekka Suppiah), interprofessional training in cancer genomics for best practices (Kathleen Blazer, Kathy Calzone, Jeffrey Weitzel), use of interpreters in healthcare (Maria Bishop), provider training for cancer survivorship (Noreen Aziz, Mandi Pratt-Chapman), and communication as comfort in palliative care (Elaine Wittenberg). Workshops at the annual meeting are becoming ever more popular as we strive to develop new and refine existing skill sets. Many of us are already looking forward to the workshops which will be presented at our next annual meeting in Cleveland Ohio on September 13–15, 2017. The formal portion of the annual meeting began with a presentation by Valerie Fraser on the power of advocacy followed by a keynote presentation on cancer education in the precision medicine era by Douglas Lowy who is the acting director of the NCI; the third plenary presentation was by Olivia Carter-Pokras on health literacy and cultural competencies. These presentations certainly set a high mark for the rest of the presenters. Presentations presented comprehensive reviews of the state of their science as well as challenges to all those in attendance. Kudos go out to Maria Bishop, Jackie Foster, and the Conference Planning Committee for their tireless

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efforts in producing such a highly educational week. As in past meetings, multiple concurrent sessions were held throughout the week covering all aspects of our field. It is the hope of the JCP Editorial Board that many of these presentations will be transformed into publications so that our wider readership may also benefit. The meeting also bore the unmistakable touches of our outgoing president, Amr Soliman, who has done so much to expand the international outreach organization. These included presentations by Lisa Stevens on cancer and global health: perspectives from the NCI; Global challenge of communicating about cancer survivorship; and the Samuel C Harvey lecture by Elmer Huerta on two sides of the coin in cancer prevention at the Washington Cancer Institute. The final plenary session was given by Charles Kelly our colleague from the European Association for Cancer Education on shared decision-making as an educational tool cancer management, an outstanding array of plenary presentations. Again, I cannot provide detail on the individual podium and abstract presentations given at this year's meeting. For those who could not attend, I regret that you missed some wonderful presentations and only hope that you will be in attendance at next year's meeting.

John Vetto and I were also honored to be able to lead annual Journal of Cancer Education Editorial Board meeting. We began by recognizing the passing of our founding editor (Richard Bakemeier). Attendees were then made aware of Journal metrics covering the past year. Chief among these was the rising Impact Factor the JCP which is now at 1.37 (a mere 5 years ago it was at 0.682). Journal to be selective (55 % acceptance rate) and is ranked 16th out of 20 of the top journals in the categories of education, scientific disciplines. Strength of the works presented in the JCE is also attested to increasing our article found the site which in the past year approached 60,000 (5 years ago we stood at approximately 19,000). The growing positive perception of the Journal is due to the contributions of our authors and the tireless work of our reviewers. We owe them all a great deal of thanks. That said, we are always looking for more qualified reviewers. If you are a colleague would like to review, please let me know. Also, if any of you have questions or comments relating to the journal please do not hesitate to email me (amm3@buffalo.edu).

For all of the above reasons, I am becoming an optimist! It was a wonderful week to network with old and new friends as we continue our efforts to minimize untoward consequences

of cancer. Unfortunately, not all recent news has been good. One of the many hats that I wore in my administrative career was as a research integrity officer. Not exactly a position that engenders rampant optimism. In that capacity, I reviewed allegations related to scientific misconduct, including plagiarism. The NIH, in its policy on Research Integrity, defines plagiarism as "The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit." [1] We, at the Journal, recently experienced an allegation of plagiarism. This led to a thorough review of the allegation and related manuscripts. It was our conclusion that extensive sections of the article were taken verbatim from another document without benefit of attribution. We were left with no choice but to retract the offending manuscript. You will find the retraction in this issue of the Journal. Springer has a clearly articulated policy on publishing ethics that covers integrity, piracy, and plagiarism. [2] I would like to take this opportunity to use this incident as a teaching moment. Plagiarism is a most heinous offense. The theft of another's intellectual property should never be taken lightly. In my experiences, some cases of alleged plagiarism are intentional and others unintentional. Unintentional episodes are due to individual ignorance of when and how to properly reference. I encourage all mentors to review the broader issue of plagiarism and more specific issues related to referencing with all their mentees. There are many reference works devoted to the broader issue of plagiarism as well as instructional aids for your use with your trainees. Several years ago, we published a series of case studies related to ethics and one in particular on plagiarism [3]. Please work with your trainees on these issues. We must warn trainees of the consequences of errors of commission and teach them to avoid errors of omission.

Time to go mop up that spilled glass of water. Be well.

Arthur M. Michalek, PhD, FACE.

References

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