

“Understanding Roles of Physicians and Scientists in Policy Advocacy and Public Discourse”

Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP) Fall 2025 Retreat

DESCRIPTION

This retreat will offer a scholarly exploration of how scientific knowledge should or can inform public discourse and policy decisions but is not tied to any specific policy. Skills utilizable for advocacy will be described and explored through philosophical and didactic presentations on techniques and process, interactive exercises, and hearing diverse perspectives and experiences of individuals engaged in advocacy activities.

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The UC MSTP Retreat on Advocacy focuses on advocacy skills, not positions. The retreat specifically does not promote or encourage advocacy on specific controversial public policy topics. Disclaimers This seminar does not advocate for or against any specific policy or political position. The content is intended for academic exploration of how scientific evidence can interact with public understanding of science and decision-making by non-governmental and governmental organizations. The views expressed and by individual speakers are their own and do not represent the views of the University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati Children's, or the UC MSTP Program. This seminar is for educational purposes only and does not endorse any political, ideological, or policy position nor does it encourage participants to engage in advocacy for any specific topics. Participants are encouraged to consider and express multiple perspectives and engage in critical, respectful dialogue.

RETREAT PREPARATION

The retreat has two interactive activities to teach about how advocacy works and to facilitate practicing advocacy in a neutral space without promoting any position: 1) evaluating videos on social media; 2) practicing advocacy communication. **Please identify an issue of importance to you where you might either 1) personally choose to advocate or 2) dialogue with others in society who are choosing to advocate. Be ready with your topic for activity #2 and an idea of your target audience.** Examples:

- Sustaining funding for scientific research – *congressperson, NIH official*
- Reducing regulatory burdens in clinical research – *funding agency, FDA*
- Preserving scientific independence – *Department chair, institutional or government official*
- Enhancing telemedicine access for underserved rural areas – *congressperson, medical licensing agency*
- Improving mental health access for graduate and other students – *institutional official, funding agency*
- Improving care for veterans – *congressperson, hospital administrator*
- Improving options for affordable housing – *city council member, state legislator*
- Reforming malpractice system – *state or federal legislator or administrator*

RETREAT GOALS

1. Better understand the interface between science and the public and the implications for science advocacy
2. Gain basic knowledge of effective advocacy practice

RETREAT AGENDA

9:00 – 9:15 AM: Arrive & Sign In

9:15 – 9:45 AM: Breakfast

9:45 – 10:00 AM: Welcome & Intro

- Donald Gilbert, MD, MS – MSTP Associate Director



10:00 – 10:40 AM: Keynote: “Responsive Science: What do biomedical scientists owe the public and why?”

- **Introduction:** Ellie Kim, G1
- **Presenter:** Angela Potochnik, PhD
- **Format:** 25-minute presentation, followed by 10 minutes of Q&A



10:40 – 11:15 AM: “Advocacy 101: How to consider getting involved and actionable steps for approaching advocacy”

- **Introduction:** Ellie Kim, G1
- **Presenter:** Nicole Damari, MD
- **Format:** 20-minute presentation, followed by 10 minutes of Q&A



11:15 – 11:30 AM: Break

11:30 – 12:20 PM: “Patient Advocacy in Action” Joint Presentation/Panel

- **Moderator:** Ellie Kim, G1
- **Presenters:** Andrew Beck, MD; Maggie Jones, MD; Emily Miller, MD; Carlie Myers, MD; Carley Riley, MD
- **Format:** Each presenter will speak for up to 7 minutes. At the end of the joint session, there will be up to 15-minutes of Q&A. The faculty will also attend lunch to answer additional questions.



12:20 – 1:20 PM: Lunch with cross-class assigned seating

1:20 – 1:50 PM: “Advocacy in the Social Media Space”

- **Presenter:** Donald Gilbert, MD, MS
- **Format:** Students will watch 3 advocacy videos on social media. Each table will grade effectiveness.



1:00 – 2:30 PM: “Halve your Pitch: Time Compression Advocacy Exercise”

- **Presenter:** Donald Gilbert, MD, MS
- **Format:** Students will pair up and share the advocacy issue they are passionate about and to whom they imagine advocating. They will then each “pitch” their issue (educate AND advocate) to their partner during repeated time periods of decreasing length.

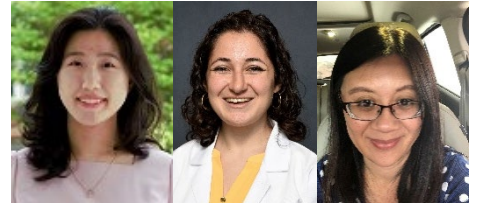




2:30 – 2:45 PM: Break

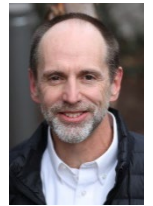
2:45 – 3:20 PM: “Techniques for Advocacy during MSTP Years”

- **Introduction:** Ellie Kim, G1
- **Presenter:** Elida Kocharian, G1 & Vi Nguyen, MD
- **Format:** 25-minute presentation, followed by 10 minutes of Q&A



3:20 – 3:30 PM: Wrap-Up

- Donald Gilbert, MD, MS – Associate Director of MSTP



3:30 – 3:45 PM: Survey & Clean-Up

Please complete the post-retreat survey and clear your spots

- Ellie Kim, G1



3:45 PM: Adjourn

THANK YOU FOR COMING!

2025-2026 Enrichment Committee

Donald Gilbert, Olivia Gittens, Ellie Kim, Akshata Rudrapatna, & Jenny Rindler Fridrich

