

*Basic Research Career in Cancer Prevention:
Lessons Learned*

Margie L. Clapper, PhD

Cancer Prevention and Control Program

Fox Chase Cancer Center

Philadelphia, PA

Career Path

- PhD - Genetics and Cell Biology, University of Connecticut at Storrs
- Postdoctoral Associate - Dept. Pharmacology, Fox Chase Cancer Center (FCCC)
- Assistant/Associate Professor - Division of Population Science, FCCC
- Professor - Cancer Prevention and Control Program
- Deputy Scientific Director – FCCC
- Samuel M.V. Hamilton Endowed Chair in Cancer Prevention

Responsibilities

- PI - Laboratory
- Member of Senior Leadership Team
- Co-leader - Cancer Prevention and Control Program
- Associate Chair - Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee
- Mentor - Junior Faculty and Postdocs
- Chair - Facility Advisory Committees - Biostatistics and Bioinformatics, Histology
- Associate Editor – Cancer Prevention Research
- Prime Contractor - Efficacy and Intermediate Endpoint Biomarkers, DCP, NCI
- Ad hoc Reviewer - NIH Study Sections; NCI IRG Subcommittee A for Review of Cancer Centers

Funding Sources

- NCI
 - R01s, R21s, R03s and Supplements
 - PREVENT Cancer Preclinical Drug Development Program, DCP
- Industry
- Foundations
- Philanthropy
- Intellectual Property

Key to Success

- Maintain a translational focus
 - Characterize the clinical relevance of model systems
 - Identify a target population for intervention
- Assemble multi-disciplinary working groups
 - Clinical, preclinical, specialized expertise, biostatistics, etc.
- Employ cutting-edge technologies
- Select collaborators with a proven track record of success

Network with Peers

- Establish a strong mentoring team
- Obtain critiques/reviews prior to submission
 - Grants
 - Publications
- Seek advice - candidate interviews, personnel management
- Become acquainted with national experts in the field

Remain coachable!

Lessons Learned

- Run several projects in parallel
- Maintain a presence in the lab
 - Experimentation
 - Consultation
- Meet with staff frequently to discuss progress
- Look for new funding opportunities now!

“I think you have to take some joy in the day-to-day life of a scientist and try to do science because you love it.”

William Kaelin, 2019