
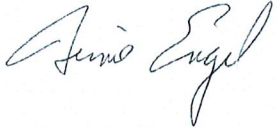


To: Patrick J. Wolfe, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Diversity

From: Karen Plaut, Executive Vice President for Research, 

Daniel Delaurentis, Vice President for Discovery Park District Institutes, 

Bernard Engel, Dean of the College of Agriculture 

Date: November 17, 2023

Re: Ratification of Dr. Andrew Mesecar as the Robert Wallace Miller Director of the
Purdue Institute for Cancer Research

We are pleased to recommend the appointment of Dr. Andrew Mesecar as the Robert Wallace Miller Director and Distinguished Professor of the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research (PICR) after a national search. Purdue University's prestigious Robert Wallace Miller Director of the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research is an endowed position established for "attracting and/or retaining a scholar who will provide leadership in discovery, learning, and engagement related to the mission of the Purdue Cancer Center." A copy of Dr. Mesecar's offer letter, a short biographical sketch, his short and full curricula vitae, and five external letters of support from distinguished cancer researchers nationwide are attached.

Andrew Mesecar received his bachelor's degree in chemistry from Purdue University in 1988 and his PhD in Biochemistry from the University of Notre Dame in 1995. After four years of postdoctoral research at the University of California at Berkeley and Lawrence-Berkeley National Lab, he became Assistant Professor in the Department of Medicinal Chemistry and Pharmacognosy and the Center for Pharmaceutical Biotechnology at the University of Illinois, Chicago. Mesecar joined the Purdue faculty in the Department of Biological Sciences in 2010 as the Walther Professor in Cancer Structural Biology. Simultaneously, Dr. Mesecar was appointed as the first deputy director for the Purdue Center for Cancer Research, and he served in that capacity for 13 years before being appointed as Interim Director in 2022. Dr. Mesecar also served as Head of the Department of Biochemistry in the College of Agriculture from 2015 to 2022.

Dr. Mesecar is an established leader in understanding the molecular mechanisms and functions of key enzymes implicated in health and disease. Dr. Mesecar's research expertise is in the structure

and function of enzymes and the use of structure-based approaches to design drugs that target enzymes involved in cancer, Alzheimer's disease, and coronavirus infections. His publications have influenced the direction of research in a wide range of fields with seminal impacts in the fields of cancer prevention and coronaviruses, including SARS-CoV-2 which caused the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Mesecar has maintained continuous federal funding since he was an assistant professor at the University of Illinois, Chicago. He is currently the PI and co-PI on cores of two large NIH Center Grants involving structure-based drug design and structural biology. In addition, Dr. Mesecar served as Associate Editor of Crystallography Reviews (2006-2008) and served on numerous NIH grant panels and site visit review teams for NIH National Cancer Institute proposals, including two in 2021 (Cold Spring Harbor Cancer Center and Fox Chase Cancer Center).

Mesecar began as Deputy Director of the Purdue Center for Cancer Research (PCCR) in 2010, providing oversight of six National Cancer Institute supported shared resources, running PCCR's pilot and shared resources grant programs, and planning the distribution of the Center's NCI Cancer Center Support Grant (CCSG) development funds. Under Mesecar, the Purdue Center for Cancer Research established a new Computational Genomics Shared Resource as a joint effort between PCCR, the IU Simon Cancer Center, and the Walther Cancer Foundation. PCCR also secured a large, multiyear grant from the Walther Cancer Foundation to establish the Purdue-IU Collaborative Core for Cancer Bioinformatics. The joint Core has been highly successful at both institutions, supporting hundreds of member projects and generating NIH funds for the supported investigators.

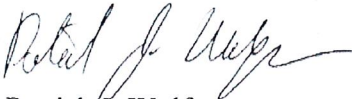
Dr. Mesecar was also head of the Department of Biochemistry for seven years from 2015 to 2022, setting the departmental vision and supporting the research and training success of faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students. During this time, the Biochemistry Department achieved several important strategic plan goals such as increasing the total undergraduate enrollment from an average of 100 students to over 160 students while simultaneously dropping the average time to graduation. The Department increased their Sponsored Program Expenditures (SPE) from an average of \$3.25M per year to over \$6.5M per year while keeping the total number of faculty constant. In 2021, Dr. Mesecar was selected as the Outstanding Graduate Educator in the College of

Agriculture and was the recipient of the Provost Award for Outstanding Graduate Mentor at Purdue University. He is a trainer on three NIH T32 pre-doctoral training grants at Purdue and has mentored twenty-seven PhD students and two MD/PhD students to their degrees.

In 2022, Dr. Mesecar was appointed Interim Director of the Purdue Center for Cancer Research . During his interim leadership, Mesecar led the transition of the PCCR to the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research, in recognition of its interdisciplinary and campus-wide reach and its expanded mission to train students and post-docs in cancer research to increase the biomedical workforce. The Institute's scientists are currently developing twenty-six immunotherapies and thirty-seven drugs, including eleven in human clinical trials. Technology stemming from PICR's research has generated fourteen startup companies within the past five years.

This memo is to request your approval to appoint Dr. Andrew Mesecar as the Robert Wallace Miller Director and Distinguished Professor of the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research.

Recommended Approval:



Patrick J. Wolfe

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Diversity
Miller Family Professor of Statistics and Computer Science

Approved:



Mung Chiang

President

Roscoe H. George Distinguished Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering