



Scientific Committee Chair Job Description

Introduction

The Mission of the Alliance is to reduce the impact of cancer by:

- Conducting high quality multidisciplinary cancer control, prevention, and treatment trials that engage a comprehensive research network;
- Furthering our understanding of the biological basis of the cancer process and its treatment; from discovery, to validation, to clinical practice;
- Providing a scientific and operational infrastructure for innovative clinical and translational research in the academic and community settings.

The Alliance is organized into Scientific Committees, whose members collaborate to achieve these aims by designing, conducting, analyzing, and reporting research within their area of expertise. Each Scientific Committee is led by a Chair, who directs the activities of the Committee according to the policies and procedures of the Alliance. Committee Chairs are appointed by the Group Chair, based upon input from the members of the Executive Committee. Scientific Committee Chairs are appointed to a 5 year term of office. It is expected that committee chairs and their institutions actively open and accrue to the studies developed by their respective committees. These activities will be an important criterion for selection and retention of committee chairs.

Committee Chair responsibilities

Each Committee Chair is responsible to the Group Chair and to the Executive Committee for the design, conduct, analysis, and reporting of each research project within the committee's scope. The work of the Alliance is judged on three main criteria: 1) scientific excellence, 2) operational efficiency and productivity; and 3) extent of collaboration with other NCI-funded clinical trials groups. It is the responsibility of the Committee Chair to direct the activities of their Committee in a manner that ensures success in each of these areas.

Committee Composition

Committee Chairs are responsible for staffing their committee in accordance with rules set forward by the Executive Committee. These rules involve inclusion of particular modality or discipline representatives in committee leadership and committee membership, and management of funds available to the committee for travel to Group and Scientific meetings. These rules will be distributed to each Committee Chair by the Group Chair's office.

Committee Vice Chairs

Each Committee Chair will propose one or more Vice Chairs for approval by the Alliance Group Chair. Each Vice Chair is expected to have clearly described responsibilities, established by the Committee Chair and approved by the Executive Committee, that

define their role in Committee operations. These responsibilities are assigned to complement the expertise of the Committee Chair and facilitate maximal scientific and operational success of the committee. As a result, it is expected that committees will differ in their strategies for Vice Chair appointments. For example, a solid tumor Disease Committee Chair will generally include as Vice Chairs individuals able to represent contributions from medical oncology, surgery, radiation oncology, and translational research, as needed. Alternatively, Vice Chairs of committees within the Cancer Control, Prevention and Health Outcomes Program may be chosen based upon expertise within a particular disease, modality (e.g. oncology nursing), or investigational discipline (e.g. health economics). Each Committee Chair, with the assistance of the Group Chair and Operations Group of the Executive Committee, will establish the optimal number and scientific focus of the Vice Chairs.

Committee members

To ensure maximal integration of Alliance activities, Disease Committee Chairs are required to consult with appropriate Modality or Discipline Committee leaders when selecting committee members to represent particular modality or discipline categories. For example, the Chair of the Breast Committee should obtain input from the Chair of the Community Oncology Committee when selecting community oncology representatives to serve on the Breast Committee. Similarly, Chairs of Modality and Discipline Committees should consider the roles of Disease Committee members when structuring their rosters. The goal of these interactions is to ensure cross-fertilization of Disease, Modality, and Discipline Committees to achieve high scientific impact and maximal leveraging of study development resources. These interactions will also optimize use of limited travel funding and other resources throughout the Alliance committees.

Study Chair and Co-Chair selection

Committee Chairs are responsible for leading their committee in a manner that produces the best possible scientific output. Scientific Committee Chairs shall nominate prospective Study Chairs to the Group Chair, who shall appoint investigators to chair studies with due cognizance of their contribution of ideas to the study and other relevant factors, such as commitment to study accrual and local institutional support. The Executive Committee shall review and approve all such appointments. In addition to the position of Study Chair, protocols involve a number of Co-Chairs that represent operational or scientific contributions to the study. For example, each protocol must also include both a biostatistician and a community oncologist as Co-Chairs. Additional Co-Chairs, where relevant, may include representatives from translational research, oncology nursing, etc. As with selection of committee members, Committee Chairs should consult with the leaders of relevant Modality and Discipline Committees when selecting study Co-Chairs in their area of expertise. Finally, each study will involve one or more operations leaders within the Central Protocol Operations Program, such as representatives from data management and protocol operations. Committee Chairs will assign these positions based upon recommendations from the Principal Investigator of the Central Protocol Operations Program.

Meetings and Conference Calls

Committee Chairs are responsible for convening all meetings of their Committees, including those occurring at the time of Scientific and Group Meetings of the Alliance. These meetings are used to conduct Committee business, and in the case of Group Meetings, to provide information concerning Committee activities to the broader research community. Committee Chairs must communicate in a timely and accurate manner with the Alliance travel and meetings coordinator to maintain accurate rosters of members receiving travel funding for meeting attendance. Committee Chairs are also responsible for convening frequent conference calls to manage committee business during the intervals between formal committee meetings.

Participation in NCI-sponsored Committees

It is essential that the leaders of the Alliance actively support the larger NCI-funded clinical trials network. For final study review and approval, Committee Chairs serve as representatives from the Alliance to the NCI-sponsored Disease-Specific Steering Committees. In addition, Committee Chairs are expected to collaborate with their counterparts in other cooperative groups and other NCI-supported clinical and translational research groups (e.g., SPORes, cancer centers, other NCI-funded consortia) to achieve study development and prioritization for the system as a whole. Committee Chairs must also actively promote accrual to studies led by other cooperative groups. The goal of these activities is to maximize Alliance scientific and operational contributions to the NCI Clinical Trials Network.

Adherence to Alliance Policies for Study Management

Committee Chairs must adhere to all Alliance policies and procedures for study design and conduct. In particular, Committee Chairs must assist the Central Protocol Operations and Alliance Administration staff by routinely providing data and assistance in matters of study status, staffing of the Alliance Study Concept Review Committee, management of relationships with industry partners, adherence to publication policies, participation in study budget development, and management of research conflict of interest, to name a few essential activities.

Grant preparation

Committee Chairs are expected to assist the Group Chair, Group Vice Chair and Program Principal Investigators in completing all new and continuing funding applications to the NCI and other funding agencies. In particular, Committee Chairs must submit a yearly written summary of the activities of their Committee that includes specific aims/plans for scientific development, summaries of work accomplished, and a description of intergroup collaborations.