

IUIS Executive Committee Candidate

Personal description by the Candidate for 2019-2022 Vice-Presidency:

I am delighted to accept the nomination to stand for election for the Vice President of the International Union of Immunology Societies (IUIS) for the 2019-2022 executive term.

I am a United States (US) citizen since 2011 and I have lived and studied in three continents. I was raised in Algiers (Algeria) where I attended Algiers University Medical School. After finishing medical school, I moved to Paris (France) to do a residency in Hematology /Oncology and then moved to the US to start a PhD in Immunology. I have spent the last 20 years in the US including 5 years at Stanford for my Ph.D. and post-doctoral fellowship and 15 years at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York, where I have started my own research program in 2004.

My research focuses on understanding the mechanisms that control the development and functional identity of tissue resident antigen presenting cells (APC) during homeostasis and examining how these regulations are changed in cancer and inflammatory diseases. In 2016, I have taken the leadership of the Precision Immunology Institute at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York (PrIIISM) to continue to lead initiatives to enhance human immunology science. PrIIISM integrates immunological research programs across 42 laboratories with synergistic expertise in biology, medicine, technology, physics, mathematics and computational biology which come together to frame novel questions to understand the contribution of immune cells to disease initiation, progression and response to treatment, to implement novel technologies and to develop novel immunotherapy strategies for the treatment of human diseases.

My interest in the IUIS office stems from my upbringing in North Africa and the realization that disparity of knowledge between the three continents where I lived and studied never ceased to grow. In Algeria where I have been occasionally teaching immunology to medical fellows for the past 20 years and again at a conference organized by IUIS in Morocco in 2018, scientists from all Maghreb countries unanimously deplored the difficulty to access rigorous training in biomedical sciences and in immunology.

I will be interested to harness the IUIS framework to build a powerful engine to enhance scientific knowledge in emerging countries through different means including the use of novel online technologies. I have for example started a web-based immunotherapy course which is live transmitted to three countries (US, France, Brazil) where students across 3 continents have the opportunity to discuss and debate with the faculty (<https://immunoschool.org>). Similar initiatives to harness expertise across the world and distribute it to those in needs can help spread immunology knowledge and build a strong international immunology community that will regularly meet through online resources.

In addition to teaching, direct exposure to immunology science remains an important part of the training process. While fellowships to train students in expert laboratories abroad are very valuable, another strategy is to support sabbatical time for immunology experts to mentor research efforts in emerging countries and help build an immunology culture locally. Finally, as a woman scientist, I have witnessed and continue to hear about the many difficulties that women immunologists encounter during their career as scientists, which is sadly reflected by the low number of women leaders in academia and in the pharmaceutical industry. Here again the IUIS could play an important role by pairing young women scientists with role models across the globe and help prepare them better to embrace and thrive in leadership roles.

As a passionate immunologist, an Algerian-French-American and a woman immunologist, it will be my honor to contribute to and serve the IUIS mission.

Sincerely,

Miriam Merad, MD, PhD



Candidate for 2019-2022 Vice-President: **Miriam Merad**

