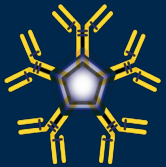


June 2–5, 2026

ASHEVILLE, NC



2026 Southeastern Immunology Symposium

Program Book

Advancing Science Through Collaboration

Crowne Plaza Resort and Conference Center · Asheville, NC



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2026 Southeastern Immunology Symposium

13th Annual · June 2–5, 2026

ABOUT

About SIS

Building off of more than 10 years of successful symposia, the Southeastern Immunology Symposium (SIS) Inc., incorporated as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit dedicated to healthcare, science, and education. The mission of the corporation is to establish and facilitate a community of immunologists within the Southeastern United States to gather at an annual symposium that fosters networking and the exchange of ideas to encourage the advancement of science and discovery and ongoing collaboration. The Conference Committee, Organizing Committee, and Board of Directors comprise the SIS Inc. Council and work to ensure successful, collaborative annual meetings and long-term stability for this collaborative network.

13th Annual Edition	3 Keynote Speakers	22 Invited Speakers	12 Contributing Institutions
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CONTRIBUTING INSTITUTIONS

<i>Duke University</i>	<i>University of Florida, Scripps</i>
<i>Emory University</i>	<i>University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill</i>
<i>Medical College of Georgia at Augusta University</i>	<i>University of Virginia</i>
<i>Medical University of South Carolina</i>	<i>Vanderbilt University</i>
<i>St. Jude Children's Research Hospital</i>	<i>Virginia Commonwealth University</i>
<i>University of Alabama at Birmingham</i>	<i>Virginia Tech</i>

Venue: Crowne Plaza Resort and Conference Center, Asheville, NC

Dates: June 2–5, 2026



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Saskia Hemmers <i>Duke University</i>	Derek Sant'Angelo <i>Virginia Commonwealth University</i>
Sebastian Joyce <i>Vanderbilt University</i>	Laura Solt <i>University of Florida</i>
Thiru Kanneganti <i>St. Jude Children's Research Hospital</i>	Justin Taylor <i>University of Virginia</i>

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Emory University

Luc Van Kaer

Vanderbilt University

Liwu Li

Virginia Tech

Jason Whitmire

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SIS, Inc. would also like to thank Fran Lund and Troy Randall, Heidi Reis and Mike Krangel, & Valerie and Jerry Boss for their generous donations to trainee awards



INVITED FACULTY

Speakers

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

KEYNOTE

Diane Mathis

Harvard Medical School

KEYNOTE

Edward Pearce

Johns Hopkins University

KEYNOTE

Dario Vignali

University of Pittsburgh

INVITED SPEAKERS

Rama Rao Amara

Emory University

Brent Hanks

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Ruben Barricarte

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Bo Hu

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

Allison Bayer

University of Florida

DaeYong Lee

Virginia Tech

Mark Boothby

Vanderbilt University Medical Center

Emily Moser

University of Florida

Kay Chung

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

Marco Orecchioni

Augusta University

Isidoro Cobo

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Anne Sperling

University of Virginia

Erika Crosby

Duke University

Michelle Theus

Virginia Tech

Yongqiang Feng

St. Jude Children's Research Hospital

David Tobin

Duke University

Matthew Gardner

Emory University

Qiwei Wang

University of Virginia

Nicholas Gascoigne

Augusta University

Yuan Zhai

Medical University of South Carolina

Maria Grant

University of Alabama at Birmingham

Hailong Zhang

Medical University of South Carolina



SCHEDULE

Tuesday

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

3:00–8:45 PM *Registration & Check-In*

5:00–5:10 PM *Welcome*

Session 1

Moderators: *Saskia Hemmers · Ayana Ruffin*

5:10–5:35 PM

Brent Hanks

Stress within the Tumor Microenvironment Drives Dendritic Cell Tolerization and Compromises Immunotherapy Efficacy

5:35–5:50

Claire Conarroe

Combination CD40 and TLR3 agonism drives durable anti-tumor immunity through cDC1-mediated intracranial and peripheral CD8+ T cell stimulation in a murine model of glioblastoma

5:50–6:15 PM

DaeYong Lee

Macrophage reprogramming using nanotechnology for cancer immunotherapy

6:15–6:30 PM

Yeun-po Chiang

Subset- and stage-dependent regulatory T cell programs control inflammation and tumor immunity in metabolic liver disease

6:30–7:45 PM

Evening Reception

7:45–8:45 PM

Opening Keynote Presentation: Dario Vignali

LAG-3: The Third Checkpoint Inhibitor & its Synergistic Interactions with PD1



SCHEDULE

Wednesday

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

6:30–8:00 AM *Breakfast*

8:00-8:10 AM *Welcome/Announcements*

Session 2

Moderators: *Boyoung Shin · Amber Gomez*

8:10–8:35 AM **Kay Chung**
Landscape of transcription factors driving context-dependent CD8+ T cell state programming

8:35–9:00 AM **Yong Feng**
Control of T-cell tolerance by ascorbate and TET-DNA demethylation

9:00–9:15 AM **Dominic Albao**
Alternative splicing of RUNX transcription factors is an additional layer of transcriptional control of CD8 T cell differentiation

9:15 -9:40 AM **Rama Amara**
DNA-LNP based vaccines to induce potent and durable CD8 T cell and antibody responses

9:40-9:55 AM **Catherine Martinez**
Differentiation of tolerogenic Fgl2+ CD8+ T cells is driven by CEBP/a and BASP1

9:55-10:20 AM *Morning Break*

Session 3

Moderators: *Taru Dutt · Ravi Komaravolu*

10:20-10:45 AM **Isidoro Cobo**
Epigenetic Mechanisms of Macrophage Tolerance during Gout-Induced Atherosclerosis

10:45-11:00 AM **Adil Ijaz**
Sniffing Out Inflammation: Olf2r Fuels Lipid Uptake and Foam Cell Formation in Atherosclerosis

11:00-11:25 PM **David Tobin**
Construction and Immune Dynamics of the Tuberculous Granuloma

11:25-11:40 PM **Matthew Zimmerman**
Folate Receptor Beta Orchestrates Tumor-Associated Macrophage Immunosuppressive Functions

11:40-12:05 PM **Yuan Zhai**
Macrophage heterogeneity and regulatory networks in liver inflammation, injury, and repair

12:05-12:30 PM *Poster Flash Talks*

12:30-2:00 PM *Lunch and Poster session #1*

Session 4

Moderators: Jen Wang · Kathryn Moore

2:00-2:25 PM **Matt Gardner**
An immune shielding strategy to overcome host responses against AAV gene therapy

2:25-2:40 PM **Lupeng Li**
A guard function of RIPK3 triggers catastrophic susceptibility to an intracellular bacterial infection

2:40-3:05 PM **Anne Sperling**
Microbiome Drives Allergic Inflammation Independent of IL-33/ST2 Signaling

15:05:00 *Adjourn*



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SCHEDULE

Thursday

Thursday, June 4, 2026

6:30–8:00 AM *Breakfast*

8:00–8:10 AM *Welcome/Announcements*

Session 5

Moderators: *Hossam Abdelsamed · Jeffrey Morgan*

8:10–8:35 AM **Erika Crosby**
Tracking immune cells in situ

8:35–9:00 AM **Qiwei Wang**
Targeting Tumor–TAM Interactions to Enhance STING-Mediated Antitumor Immunity in Triple-Negative Breast Cancer

9:00–9:15 AM **Patrick Czabala**
Osteopontin spatially rewires tumor-immune niches to promote colon cancer liver metastasis

9:15–9:40 AM **Nick Gascoigne**
Rewiring T cell activation for improved immunotherapy

9:40–9:55 AM **Gislane De Almeida Santos**
CD38-NAD⁺ axis rewrites the fate of CD8⁺ TRMs with age

9:55–10:20 *Morning Break*

Session 6

Moderators: *Kay Chung · Stephen Opoku*

10:20–11:20 AM **Miltenyi Biotec Keynote Presentation: Diane Mathis**
Meningeal Treg control of brain homeostasis in health and disease

11:20–11:35 AM **Pamela Diaz-Saldana**
Hypoxic Niches Enforce Glycolytic Dependence to Sustain FOXP3 and Suppressive Function in Skin Tregs

11:35–12:00 PM **Ruben Martinez Barricarte**
Genetic and immunological dissection of Primary Amoebic Meningoencephalitis

12:00–12:30 PM *Poster Flash Talks*

Session 7**Moderators:** Kristin Anderson · Jeongsoo Lee

2:00-2:25 PM

Hailong Zhang*Enteric Neurons and Host Defense*

2:25-2:50 PM

Bo Hu*Neuro-immune crosstalk in adipose tissue and cancer*

2:50-3:05 PM

Stephen Opoku*Regulatory T-cells produce neuritin to drive tumor innervation and growth*

3:05-3:30 PM

Michelle Theus*Skull bone marrow-derived immune cells infiltrate the injured cerebral cortex and exhibit anti-inflammatory properties*

3:30-4:00 PM

*Afternoon break***Session 8****Moderators:** Rodney King · Subhadip Pati

4:00-4:25 PM

Emily Moser*Investigating ubiquitin ligases in B cells: New Insights into anti-viral humoral immunity*

4:25-4:40 PM

Susana Cheetham*Influenza-Specific Lung-Resident Memory B cells assist CD4 Recall Responses during Challenge Infections*

4:40-4:55 PM

Nana Charles-Chess*Memory Regulatory T Cells Reprogram into Protective Tfh-like Effectors in Recurrent Malaria*

4:55-5:20PM

Mark Boothby*Synthetic auxotrophy in B cells reveals metabolic regulation of signaling and Ab responses*

5:20-6:30 PM

Break

6:30-8:30PM

Dinner and Poster session #3



SCHEDULE

Friday

Friday, June 5, 2026

6:30–8:00 AM *Breakfast*

Session 9

Moderators: *Chaoran Li · Yixel Soto-Vazquez*

8:00-8:25 AM

Maria Grant

ACE2, Microbes, and Metabolites: How Tryptophan Shapes Immune Control in Diabetic Retinopathy

8:25-8:50 AM

Marco Orecchioni

Emerging Roles of Olfactory Receptors in Immune Regulation and Inflammation

8:50-9:05 AM

Catherine Shelton

Early-life exposure to antibiotics disrupts the development of the small intestine microbiota, suppressing intestinal epithelial-immune crosstalk, and resulting in increased lipid absorption and adiposity.

9:05-9:30 AM

Allison Bayer

Reprogramming Autoimmunity: Antigen-Specific Treg Strategies for Durable Tolerance in Type 1 Diabetes

9:30-10:30 AM

Closing Keynote Presentation: Edward Pearce

Cell-intrinsic metabolic checkpoints constrain monocyte differentiation into macrophages optimized for immune activation

10:30-11:00 AM

Awards Ceremony and Farewell

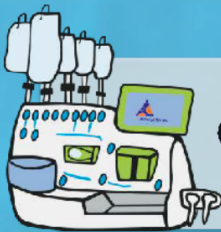
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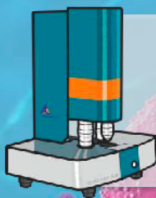
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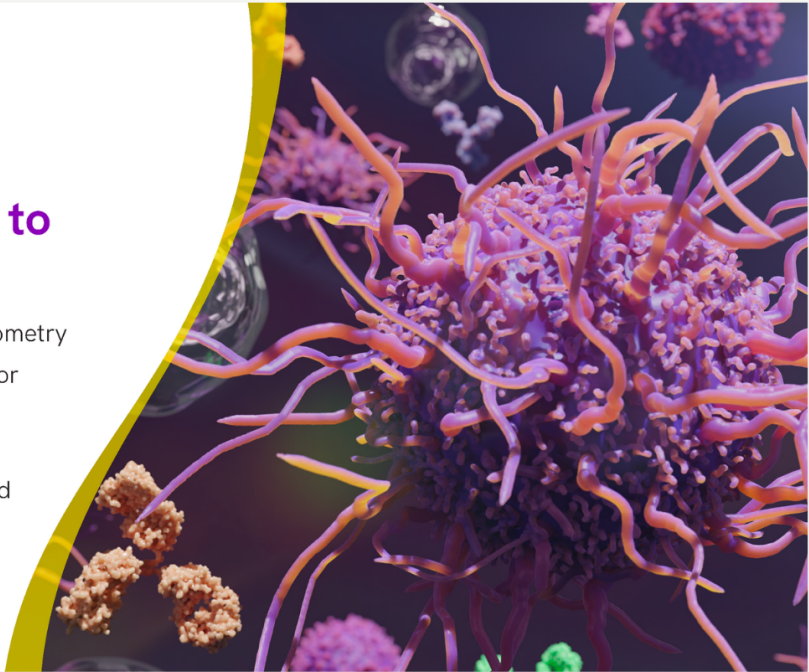
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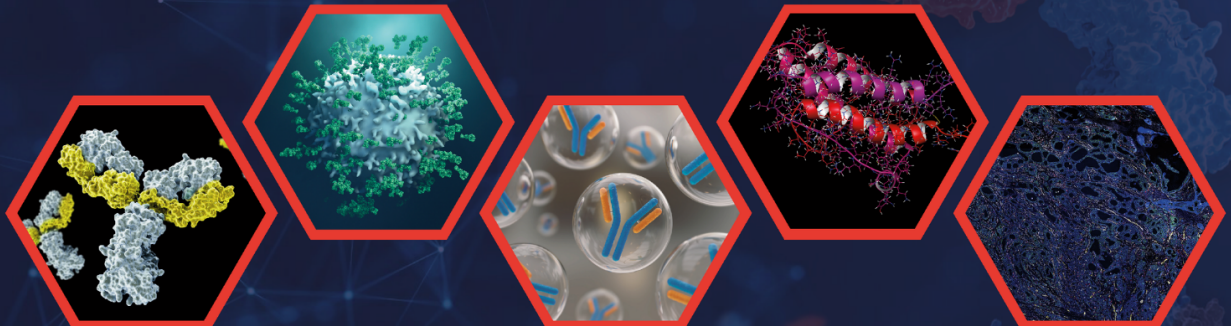


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