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### **Mesecar Purdue cancer institute directorship supported with \$5 million Walther gift**

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. – Andrew Mesecar, recently ratified by the Purdue University Board of Trustees as the Robert Wallace Miller Director of the [Purdue Institute for Cancer Research](#) (PICR), will be supported in the role by the Walther Cancer Foundation Director's Fund, a \$5 million gift from the [Walther Cancer Foundation](#).

The fund will support critical priorities for the institute such as the recruitment of top research talent, procuring state-of-the-art research equipment and adding or expanding cancer-fighting research programs, such as the institute's recently announced [Tyler Trent Pediatric Cancer Research Center](#) and the affiliated cross-disciplinary [Evan and Sue Ann Werling Comparative Oncology Research Center](#).

The Walther Cancer Foundation supports and promotes interdisciplinary and inter-institutional laboratory and clinical cancer research. It also funds studies in supportive oncology, which encompasses the management of physical and psychological symptoms and side effects of cancer from diagnosis through treatment to post-treatment care. The foundation's goal is to help build cancer programs that expand the world's scientific knowledge, save lives and offer hope to patients and their families.

"We are extremely grateful for this support and for the opportunity to be on the same team with the Walther Cancer Foundation in the fight against all forms of cancer," said Mesecar, who became assistant vice president for research and director of the Purdue cancer institute in September. "Our goal is to demonstrate our gratitude for this support with ambitious research that produces results that will help conquer cancer."

"The Walther Cancer Foundation is pleased to continue our partnership with the Purdue University Institute for Cancer Research. The Institute is a proven leader in basic scientific research, bioinformatics, cancer imaging and drug development. This is a critical multifaceted effort which we are confident will lead to innovative new treatments for patients," said Thomas Grein, president and CEO of the Walther Cancer Foundation.

Mesecar, who also is the Distinguished Professor of Biochemistry and the Walther Professor in Cancer Structural Biology, was interim director for PICR as it transitioned from a center to an institute. Before that, he had served as both the deputy director for the cancer center beginning in 2010 and head of the Department of Biochemistry for seven years. His 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.

PICR's scientists currently are developing 26 immunotherapies and 37 drugs, including 11 in human clinical trials. Technology stemming from the center's research has generated 14 startup companies within the past five years.

Since 1978 the Purdue Institute for Cancer Research has been a National Cancer Institute-designated basic laboratory cancer center. Only seven institutions in the United States have earned this distinction, and Purdue is the only public institution in this prestigious group. The institute's work focuses on investigating the cause of cancers where they begin — at the cellular level — and using its findings to develop novel treatments and diagnostics. The institute leverages Purdue's strengths in engineering, veterinary medicine, biochemistry, nutrition science, chemistry, medicinal chemistry, pharmacy, structural biology and biological sciences to support its robust and ambitious research. Doctors and scientists worldwide use PICR discoveries to develop methods, medicines and medical devices to improve and save lives.

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