



CAIRIBU ARCTICS COMMUNITY FORUM

NAVIGATING INDUSTRY FUNDING FOR UROLOGIC RESEARCH

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY – September 10, 2025



ARCTICS COMMUNITY FORUM

**FEAT: MARGOT DAMASER, PHD, KYLE WOOD, MD,
LISSETTE GUTIERREZ, MD**

GOAL: Understand the landscape of industry funding in urology and learn how to identify, approach, and collaborate with industry partners.

Summary

Dr. Margot Damaser: Navigating Industry Funding - Perspective from an Academic

Collaborating with Industry

- Dr. Damaser discussed her extensive experience with industry collaborations, including developing animal models for stress urinary incontinence and pelvic organ prolapse.
- She highlighted the importance of translating research into patient care and the efficiency of industry funding compared to government funding.
- Dr. Damaser explained the different types of collaborative relationships with industry, including sponsored research agreements and joint development agreements.
- She emphasized the need for clear communication and legal agreements to manage intellectual property and ensure both parties benefit from the collaboration.
- Some benefits of industry collaborations are that they may entail more efficient processes, offer the potential for bridge funding between grants, and focus on clearer milestone-driven goals.
- However, industry collaborations may operate on shorter timelines that may not sync with academic timelines and processes, require non- or confidential-disclosure agreements, and can create conflicts of interests necessitating conflict management plans.

Dr. Kyle Wood: Industry Collaborations

Introduction to Industry Funding

- Dr. Wood discussed the importance of aligning research expertise with industry goals to create meaningful collaborations, given that clinician scientists and basic scientists will not likely be able to survive on federal funding alone.
- He stressed the importance of understanding the vision of potentially relevant industry partners, and then seeing if one's research can turn in that direction, if it makes sense in the context of their research and career.
- Dr. Wood shared his experience with various industry collaborations, including Novo Nordisk, Alnylam, Arbor Therapeutics, and BioMarin Pharmaceutical.
- He highlighted the benefits of advisory board memberships and the importance of data use agreements to share institutional data with industry partners.

Challenges and Practical Advice for Industry Collaborations

- Dr. Wood discussed the challenges of working with industry, including legal and institutional bureaucracy.
- He advised investigators to get involved with their institution's legal or innovation offices early on to explore what resources they have to offer related to navigating legal agreements and intellectual property.
- Dr. Wood shared examples of successful collaborations, including publications and clinical trials, and emphasizes the importance of alignment with research goals.
- Dr. Wood provided practical advice on managing time and resources to ensure the benefits of industry collaborations.

Dr. Lissette Gutierrez: Building Academic-Industry Partnerships

Insight from an Industry Representative

- Dr. Gutierrez highlighted how industry collaborations enable investigators to increase their patient impact, resources, career growth, and visibility.
- She described the many ways investigators can get involved with industry, such as by interacting with advisory boards to engage in scientific dialogue, generating proposals in response to calls for investigator initiated studies (IIS), and taking advantage of industry-sponsored registries or clinical trials.
- While investigators may gain research funding, expertise, and mentorship through industry partnerships, they should be aware of institutional compliance policies, conflict of interest reporting, and regulatory restrictions.
- Focusing on a clear clinical question, the unmet need one seeks to fill, and the science before funding prepares investigators to maximize the benefits gained from partnering with industry. Remember to communicate honestly and often to foster transparency among teams.

Margot Damaser, PhD, is a Professor in the Department of Biomedical Engineering at the Cleveland Clinic Lerner College of Medicine. Her research focuses on urological biomechanics. Her lab uses tools such as wireless communication and integrated circuit design to improve treatments for conditions that are common among the elderly, including stress urinary incontinence, fecal incontinence, and pelvic organ prolapse. Her lab also investigates potential treatments to regrow/renew damaged pelvic tissue, including nerves, muscles, and the connective tissue between organs, with the goal of curing these common problems.

Kyle Wood, MD, is a Professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham trained in endourology with a primary focus on kidney stone disease. His surgical expertise is in complex kidney stone disease and surgeries. He is a trained open, endoscopic, laparoscopic and robotic surgeon. Dr. Wood and nephrology have one of the only multidisciplinary metabolic kidney stone clinics in the Southeast. The focus of this clinic is on the workup of kidney stone formers and implementing dietary, medical and lifestyle modifications to prevent future kidney stones. His kidney stone research focuses on the metabolic pathways that lead to kidney stone disease, specifically evaluating the role of obesity in kidney stone disease. His research has basic, translational and clinical projects.

Lissette Gutierrez, MD is a Medical Science Liaison (MSL) at Novo Nordisk, where she bridges the gap between cutting-edge medical research and real-world clinical applications. Her deep clinical knowledge and passion for evidence-based medicine allows her to provide invaluable insights and support to healthcare professionals, researchers, and stakeholders. Beyond clinical practice, she has also served as an educator and coach, nurturing the talents of aspiring healthcare professionals.

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