



G-Rex[®] Grant Tour

Supporting the Emily Whitehead Foundation

LOS ANGELES

THURSDAY

AUGUST 20, 2026

CALIFORNIA NANOSYSTEMS INSTITUTE

570 Westwood Plaza, Building 114, MC 722710

Los Angeles, CA 90095

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AGENDA (10:00AM – 7:00PM)

10:00 – 10:30AM – Registration | Refreshments | Networking

10:30 – 10:45AM – Opening Remarks

10:45 – 11:15AM – Fireside Chat with Patient & Caregiver Advocates

- Ms. Laurie Adami
 - Cancer Survivor & CAR-T cell therapy recipient
- Dr. Vicki Plaks, Johnson & Johnson (moderator)
 - Senior Director, Head of Cell Therapy, Oncology Translational Research

11:15 – 12:00PM – Business Roundtable 1 (Innovation Ecosystems)

- Dr. Vasiliki Anest | Chief Innovation Officer | USC Keck School of Medicine
- Mr. Steve Gilison | Chief Operating Officer | Alliance for SoCal Innovation
- Ms. Emily O'Connor | Head of US Marketing | Kite Pharma
- Mr. Ignacio Núñez | Founder & Principal | BioExcellence (moderator)

12:00 – 1:00PM – Lunch | Networking | Sponsor Presentations

1:00 – 2:45 PM – Hope for cancer patients with solid tumors through CAR-T cell therapy

- Dr. Joshua Sasine | Associate Director, CAR-T Cell Therapy Program | Cedars Sinai Medical Center
- Dr. Saul Priceman | Founding Director | KSOM/Norris Center for Cancer Cellular Immunotherapy Research
- Dr. Talar Tokatlian | Senior Director, Process Development & Analytical Sciences | A2 Biotherapeutics

2:45 – 3:15 PM – Break & Refreshments

3:15 – 4:00PM – Business Roundtable 2 (Manufacturing Platforms & CMC)

- Dr. Taby Ahsan | Vice President, Cell Therapy Operations | City of Hope
- Dr. Dhruv Sareen | Chief Biomanufacturing Officer | Cedars Sinai Biomanufacturing Center
- Dr. Carl Schoellhammer | Principal | Deci Bio
- Mr. Ignacio Núñez | Founder & Principal | BioExcellence (moderator)

4:00 – 5:00 PM – Innovations in ex vivo cell & gene therapy manufacturing

- Dr. Lili Yang | Professor of Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics | UCLA
- Dr. Mohamed Abou-el-Enein, | Executive Director | USC/CHLA Cell Therapy Program

5:00 – 5:05PM – Closing Remarks

5:05 – 7:00 PM – Dinner & Drinks | Networking | Poster Session