

# Christopher Davidson Forum

## Keynote Speakers:



### **Michael Curran, PhD**

Michael Curran received a PhD in Immunology from Stanford University where he was awarded the McDevitt prize for the best graduate thesis in his year. Dr. Curran was the first recipient of the prestigious American Cancer Society Levy Fellowship to fund his post-doctoral studies in the lab of Dr. James P. Allison.

While pursuing his postdoctoral studies at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center, Dr. Curran published several influential manuscripts describing how T cell co-stimulatory pathways could be modulated in tandem to mediate immunologic rejection of melanomas in mice.

Dr. Curran was the first to describe how combination blockade of the T cell co-inhibitory receptors CTLA-4 and PD-1 promoted the rejection of a majority of murine melanomas – a combination that remains the most effective FDA-approved immunotherapy.

At the MD Anderson Cancer Center, Dr. Curran is a Professor of Immunology and his Lab seeks to discover the underlying mechanisms of immune resistance in the “coldest” tumors, pancreatic and prostate adenocarcinoma and glioblastoma, so that rational therapeutic interventions can be developed to restore T cell infiltration and sensitivity to T cell checkpoint blockade. This research focuses on normalization of tumor oxygen metabolism to increase T cell metabolic fitness, activation of innate pro-inflammatory immune sensors capable of re-programming tumor myeloid stroma, and on discovery of novel immune checkpoint antibodies capable of depleting stromal elements responsible for T cell exclusion and function suppression.

