



Society for Immunotherapy of Cancer

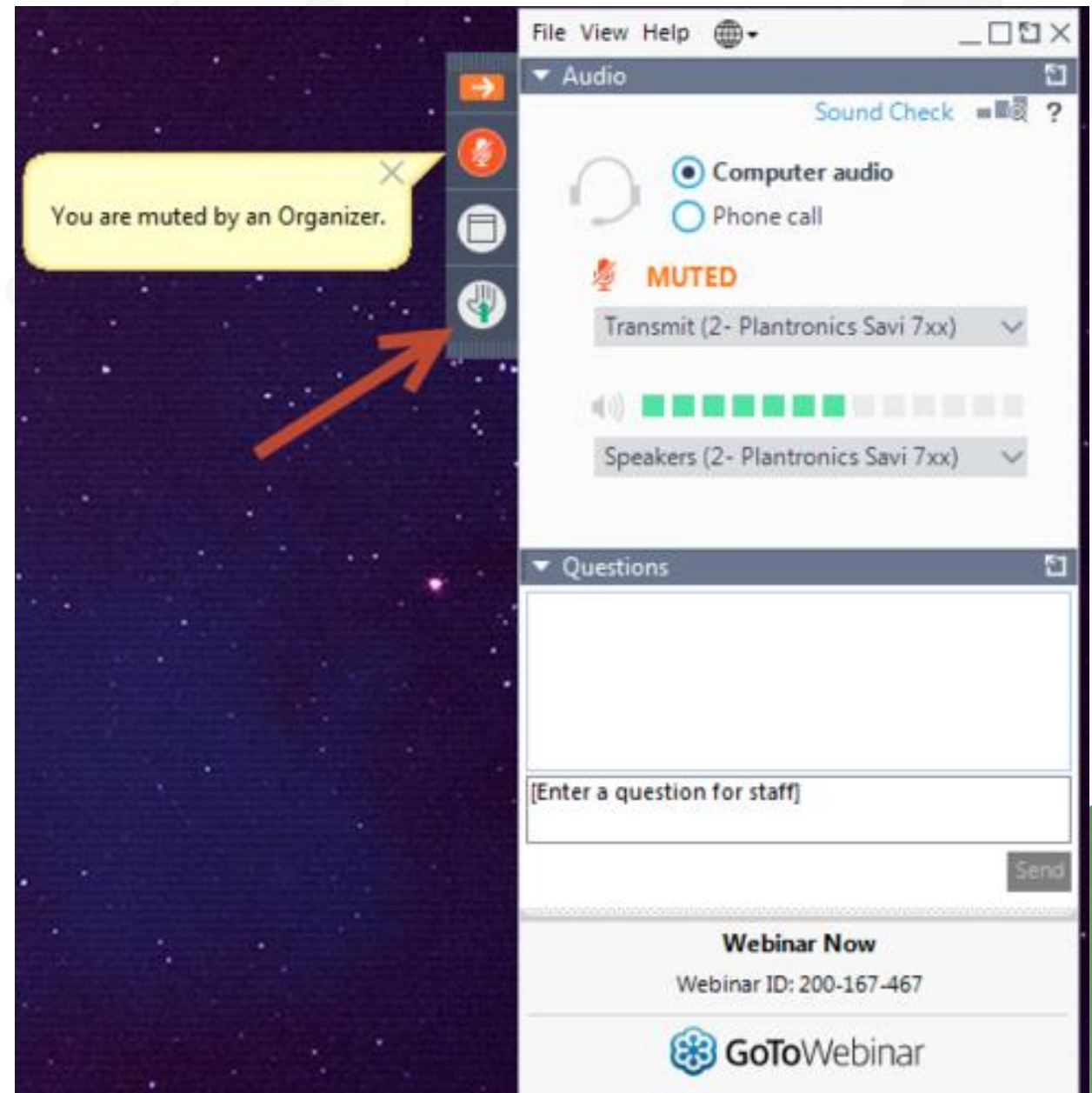
Welcome to the Meet-the-Expert Webinar: How to Survive in Academia

Friday, March 8, 2019

2-3 p.m. ET

Welcome to the Meet-the-Experts Webinar Series: How to Survive in Academia

Raise your hand if...



Webinar Agenda

2:00-2:05 p.m. ET

2:05-2:25 p.m. ET

2:25-2:55 p.m. ET

2:55-3:00 p.m. ET

Welcome and Introductions

How to Survive in Academia

Question and Answer
Session

Closing Remarks



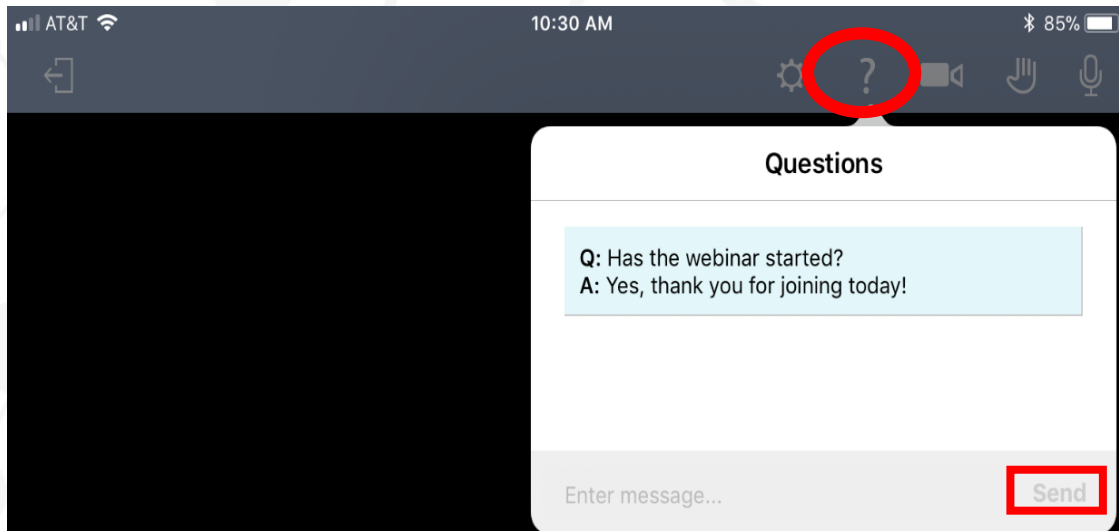
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Question and Answer

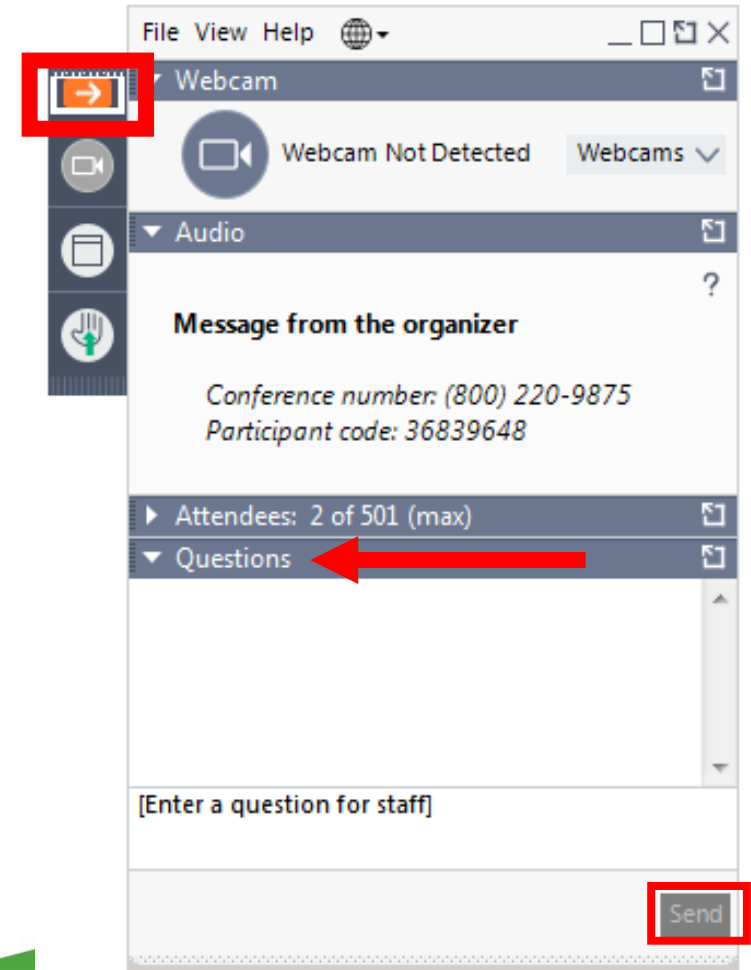
To submit a question:

Type your question in the Questions box of your webinar panel.

Mobile View



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Webinar Faculty



Tullia Bruno, PhD
University of Pittsburgh



Greg Delgoffe, PhD
University of Pittsburgh



Charles Drake, MD, PhD
*Columbia University
Medical Center*



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Question 1: What is your current career status?

- A. Graduate Student
- B. Academic Post-Doc
- C. Industry Post-Doc
- D. Industry Scientist
- E. Junior Faculty



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Question 2: What are your career plans as of now?

- A. Pharma
- B. Biotech
- C. Government
- D. Academia



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How to Survive in Academia

Academic Medicine



Charles G. Drake MD / PhD

Director GU Medical Oncology

Co-Director: Immunotherapy Program

Associate Director for Clinical Research

Professor of Oncology

Herbert Irving Cancer Center at Columbia University



**COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
MEDICAL CENTER**

Herbert Irving Comprehensive Cancer Center

 **NewYork-Presbyterian**

Biography

1963 Born in Rahway NJ

1976 First job: Lifeguard / Pool Manager

1985 BS Electrical / Biomedical Engineering, Rutgers University

1985 – 1989 Computer Aided Design Engineer, Anadigics Inc

1989 – Masters Science Biomedical Engineering*

1989 – 1997 MD / PhD U Colorado / National Jewish

Seminar by John Kappler on T Cell Recognition

1997 – 2002 Residency / Fellowship Johns Hopkins

2002 – 2016 Faculty at JHU

2016 – To Columbia University (Lead GU Medical Oncology)

In Two Words

- Papers
- Grants

Papers

- The Perfect is the Enemy of the Good
- Pubmed = the leveler
- Staleness



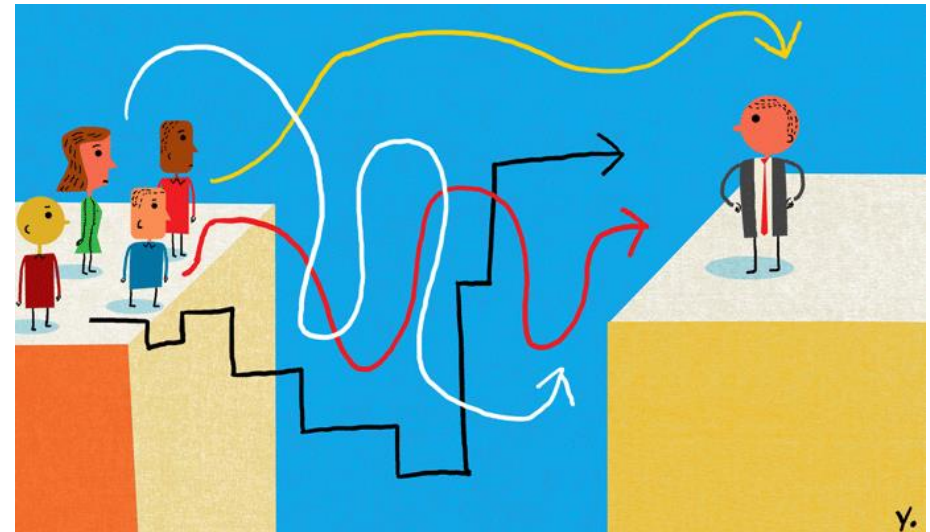
Grants

- Get on a Study Section
- The Unbearable Capriciousness of Reviewers
- Recycling is Good for the Planet
- Timing
- CALL your program officer



Management

- It's a SCIENCE
- Training
 - Courses
 - Reading



Service / Teaching

- Undervalued by Promotions Committees
- Machiavelli



**SERVICE
TO OTHERS**

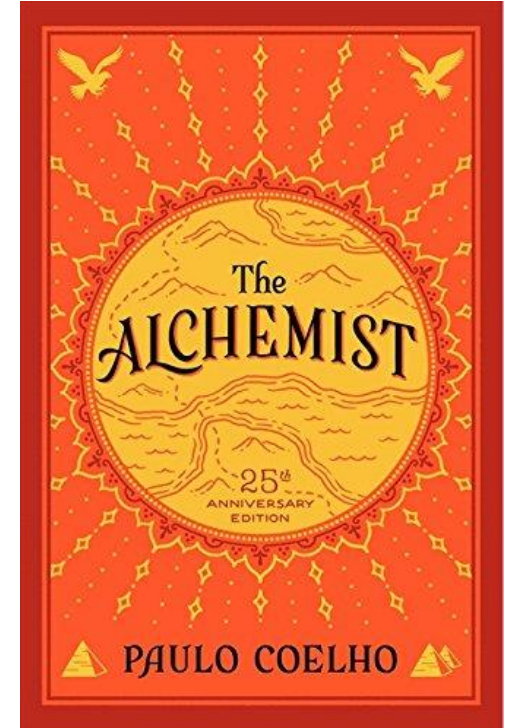
Personnel

- Everyone is NOT like you
- Get the right people on the bus / the wrong people off the bus



Reading

- The Alchemist
 - Paulo Coelho
- The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People
 - Stephen R. Covey
- Good to Great
 - Jim Collins
- Emotional Intelligence
 - Daniel Goleman
- How to Win Friends and Influence People
 - Dale Carnegie





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How to 'survive' in academia

SITC Webinar

03/08/2019



UPMC | **HILLMAN
CANCER CENTER**

Greg M. Delgoffe, Ph.D

Assistant Professor of Immunology

Tumor Microenvironment Center

UPMC Hillman Cancer Center

delgoffe-lab.com - **@DelgoffeLab**



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DISCLOSURE

Greg M. Delgoffe, Ph.D

The following relationships exist related to this presentation:

Consultant: Pieris Pharmaceuticals, Western Oncolytics

Research Support: Pfizer, Bluebird Bio, TCR² Therapeutics

Founder and Scientific Advisor: TTMS, Inc.



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DISCLOSURE

Greg M. Delgoffe, Ph.D

While honored to ask to give this presentation,
I must admit, I haven't really 'survived' yet.

While 'surviving', funding is still tight, tenure is still in process, and
it's still tough dealing with the academic machine.

But I will try during this time to share what I know.



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DISCLOSURE

Greg M. Delgoffe, Ph.D

There will also be an insanely hilarious amount of stock photography in this presentation.

My story

- Bachelor's Degree: Western Michigan University
- Ph.D at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine (Immunology Training Program)
 - Trained under Jonathan Powell
 - Studied the role of mTOR signaling in T cell differentiation
- Postdoc at St. Jude (Immunology Department)
 - Trained with Dario Vignali
 - Studied regulatory T cell biology in cancer and homeostasis
- Started my own group at University of Pittsburgh in 2014
 - Explore the role of metabolism in regulation of antitumor T cell immunity



Objectives

- Planning your faculty trajectory
- Interviewing and getting your faculty job
- Starting your lab
- Growing your lab



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Your faculty search starts right when you begin your postdoc (maybe before)

- If your sights are truly set on an academic career, then make sure you choose a postdoc lab that can give you a platform for success
- This is not just the mentor or the project or the institution: it's the whole landscape of everything together
- Does your postdoc lab have the pieces in place to make an impactful contribution and bolster your career?



Not Grad School 2.0: Staying goal-oriented as a postdoc

- Your postdoc time is limited: the longer you take (past a certain point at least), the harder it will be to be competitive for a faculty job
- Thus, it's important to maintain high productivity and publish as well as you can
- Go to meetings (but not too many), give talks, but most importantly, generate as much data as possible



Understand what it takes

- To compete for a faculty job in this field, there are a few things you must possess
 - You need at least one very good keystone paper: high impact (CNS) or mid-high (Nature Immunology, Immunity, etc.)
 - In reality, you need multiple papers around a scientific idea
 - Excellent (top 1%-type) recommendations from well known individuals
 - Evidence of national recognition
 - A good, original idea **that you know how to do** that isn't just a rehash of your postdoc
 - A well written one-pager that describes your future research program
 - A scientific identity



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Build (and USE) all your networks

- Take advantage during grad school and postdoc to meet faculty, especially in places you are interested in for your lab
- It's tough to cold call, so ask your bosses' help in this
- Be social at meetings: this is where real science gets done
- Reach out to your collaborators: they're a great resource
- When the time comes: **don't be afraid to cash in on your hard work**



When are you ready?

- Simply put: **when you can get a job**
 - Papers
 - An identity
 - Strong recommendations
 - Maybe some funding
 - A thick skin (more on that later)



Every department is different

- The one thing I can tell you about all of my interviews is that **every one was different**
- Each search committee has an identity (even within institutions), and there are essentially no rules for how it goes
- Don't take it personally: if they want a microbiome person and you study T cell differentiation, you may get the interview (because you have a good CV), but you won't get the job
- Do not send out a generic research plan and letter: tailor each package specifically to the institution and **do your homework!**



Every department is different

- Some departments like two visits (one formal talk, one chalk talk), many squeeze them in to one
- Some chalk talks are literal (no slides), others want a full presentation
- Some will want a teaching statement; for others providing one might actually be a red flag
- If you get invited to an interview, **ASK YOUR HANDLER (admin, search committee member) what they expect**
- Practice your chalk talk: alone, with colleagues, with your boss/network



Your faculty visits:



- Some candidates really go crazy on the visits, 10, 20 institutions: you can only have one job, so only visit places you actually see yourself being
- Give a strong, engaging research talk - it's ok to ease up on the details a little bit (where appropriate) to deliver your message and research vision
- Put a slide or two about your envisioned research program (many people in the room will not go to your chalk talk)
- You need to be **on** at all times: rest assured you are being evaluated from the moment you arrive – a single bad interview with a search committee member could tank your whole application
- Take nothing for granted – search committees are fickle



The chalk talk

- While the rules are different everywhere, this is usually a faculty-only closed session where you discuss your research program
- Sometimes, people want this broken down as if it were an R01 (by aim) – but again, every place is different
- Strike a balance between big ideas (why it's important) and fine detail (why only YOU can do it)
- Make sure you highlight how you can interact/collaborate with the department
- **PRO TIP:** Bring your own dry-erase markers



You had a great visit– now what?!



- Usually after some number of visits (usually with the dean, chair, administrators, etc.), you will get a verbal confirmation of interest
- As junior faculty, negotiation is important but most start-up packages are pretty similar, but this is the time to also evaluate what you need
- **Do your homework:** I had a spreadsheet for almost every expense I planned to have for three years – this justified any requests for more money
 - Meet with core directors, facility managers, business office admins, etc.

You had a great visit – now what?!

- Weigh all the options and ask questions:
 - What do techs cost?
 - What's the mouse per diem?
 - How do people pay for flow?
 - Who pays for student tuition? How many T32s does the institution have?
 - Does your space have hoods, etc. already in place? Is there any large equipment available/in storage?
- All of these things change the 'value' of the offer – the same amount of money in two different places means two very different things for your program
- At the end of the day, you can only have one job, so go with your gut: what makes you feel like you will be valued/at home?



Holy !%@# they gave you a job



- When should you leave?
 - Unless you're sitting on a REALLY big paper, **move on**
 - Your CV 'starts over' as a PI, more first author papers are not likely to net you tenure, grants, etc (and it may serve as a distraction)
- Make sure everything is in place regarding any special reagents, mice, techniques that you may bring with you – it's harder to manage all this once they leave

Being realistic about your first year

- Transitioning to the PI role is *tough* – you are going to go from mono-focused, extremely busy to being rather diffuse and having a lot of free time (really!)
- Try to take advantage of this time because it won't last long
 - IACUC, IRB, biosafety, EH&S – get these approvals *before* starting experiments
- Do not rush into filling your lab space: taking your time and building a good team will continue to pay out as you get busier
- Go to meetings, become an 'intellectual collaborator', plan your big purchases



Your first hire



- For the first couple of years, **you** are your best worker
- So your first hire should be someone able to do the 'little' things that would bog you down and keep you out of the lab: ordering, meeting with vendors, managing budgets – in other words, a lab tech
- This person can additionally be another pair of hands for you: train them well and THEY can help train your future hires
- Get a sense of commitment from them (non-binding) when you interview: a really good person may not be that helpful to you if they plan to leave in 9 months
- **PROTIP:** Ask your department; they may have done some work for you! See if anyone recently hired a technician, and then ask them who their **SECOND** choice was, and why.



Be focused, but not too focused



- The freedom of running your own program is really exciting, but it's important not to start NINE projects when you begin your lab
- That being said, you want to follow the data – if you see something interesting in a cell type or model you hadn't planned to work on, it may be worth it to invest some time in it
- This is my personal bias, but I believe your start-up package is meant to be spent: don't pinch pennies worried that it will run out. Instead, do the experiment that will tell you the answer and get you a big paper or excellent preliminary data

Develop a funding strategy

Your colleagues in year 1:



- **Too many junior faculty try to write an R01 right away**
 - This is so much wasted time and effort
 - In this funding climate, with no last-author papers on your CV, the chances of funding are slim (not impossible, but highly unlikely)
- Further, your writing skills are limited, what you really need is *practice*
- Read your mentors/colleagues' **funded** grants, and get them to read your drafts (early, not one week before the deadline)



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Develop a funding strategy

- Start with local foundations, pilot grants
- Foundations with young investigator-type grants
- Cancer society grants
- Sponsored research
- REAL R21 (not mini R01) applications



Publish, publish, publish

- At the end of the day, we are here to publish papers – and papers get you grants (it's not the other way around)
- When you are in your first couple years, you have a lot of resources and a lot of time (and extra hands) – the sweat equity of generating data during this time will pay off
- You may also want to modify your expectations of journal impact – while you want to get a high impact paper, you also don't want to be in review for 2 years (because you need that CV!)



For the first couple years, say YES

- You will be asked to do a LOT of things as a junior faculty member
- As much as it pains you, it's important to say YES, at least for a while
- I was asked to give a talk last minute; it was incredibly inconvenient, but this talk paved the way for a new collaboration, papers, grants, and a clinical trial – all because I said YES



Questions?



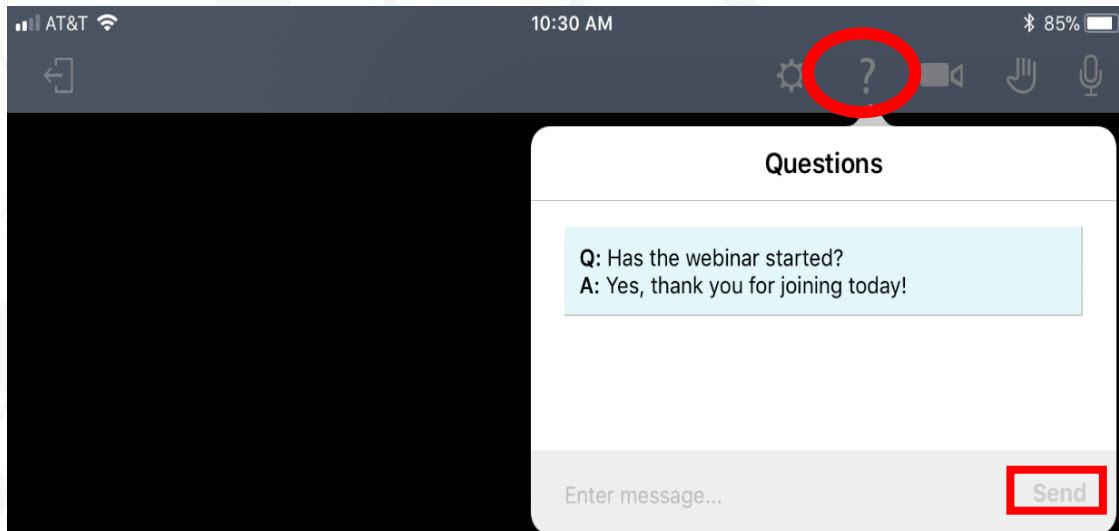
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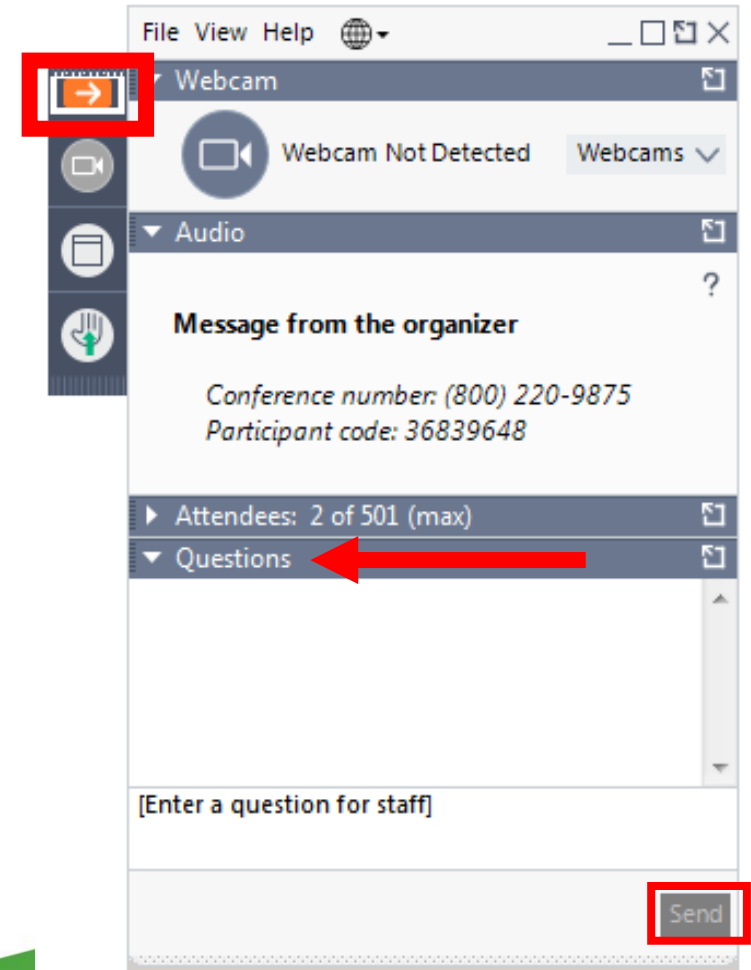
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Meet-the-Expert Webinar Series

SAVE THE DATE!

How to Kick Start Your Career in the US

Tuesday, April 16, 2019

Noon-1:00 p.m. CST

Faculty Experts:

Sruthi Ravindranathan, PhD - *Emory University*

Krishnendu Roy, PhD - *Georgia Institute of Technology*

To register, please visit: www.sitcancer.org/education/mte-webinars



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