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► **COVER:** 'Adapting to change' by Claudia Bentley, inspired by the Perspective on p403.



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Chemistry and biology are typically viewed as discrete academic disciplines, yet the two are highly integrated. Today, scientists increasingly use chemical tools to study dynamic biological processes at the gene, cellular and organismal level, and this integration was reflected in the programme of this year's annual meeting of the American Association of Cancer Research (AACR; April 1–5 2006).

A strong translational focus has been a growing trend at this meeting in recent years, especially since the advent of targeted therapies, but one thing that did stand out this year was the emphasis on the chemist's role in cancer research. The Chemistry in Cancer Research working group for the AACR, chaired by Lawrence Marnett at Vanderbilt University, has been working for over a year to bring more focus on chemistry within the AACR. This work has paid off, with a big increase in the number of abstracts submitted for the annual meeting from chemists. There were also three well-attended educational sessions highlighting the role of chemistry, entitled 'From chemistry to the clinic: pathways for drug discovery and development', which included sessions on target identification and validation, lead generation, and the impact of chemical structure on drug optimization and development. In addition, there were symposia on chemistry platforms for cancer drug discovery, and chemical biology and cancer.

This engagement of chemists with the cancer biology community can only benefit both groups, encouraging communication and collaboration among researchers. The recent launch of both *Nature Chemical Biology* and the American Chemical Society's journal *Chemical Biology* will also help the exchange of ideas between the chemical and life sciences.

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