



**NIGMS May 2020 Advisory Council
Public Session
American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) Comments
May 21, 2020**

I want to begin by thanking Jon and the NIGMS staff for all the work they are doing for our community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The ASCB is pleased that Marty Chalfie at Columbia was recently elected by our members as the 2022 ASCB President. We are very lucky that Marty will be the 6th Nobel Laureate to lead the ASCB.

As soon as it became clear that COVID-19 would force a closure of institutions and labs around the country, the ASCB staff began the development of a series of programs to address both online learning and the very unique dynamics of working from home for what now appears to be a lengthy time. We have been very successful using all our social media platforms to communicate with our members. We have also been creative in how we used each of those platforms. We continue to use webinars but have also launched Ask Me Anything (AMA) sessions, Twitter Takeovers, an eight week-long Connect & Calibrate email alert highlighting various topics facing our community. We have also made sure that all the activities we provide for our members is available to them given the new work environment.

Recognizing that our members would be faced with transitioning all their in-person lectures to the web, we began by holding a webinar on how to transition to on-line teaching. This was a very popular webinar with over 300 people signing up to participate in the initial session. We've also held a webinar on navigating the F32 grant process and a webinar regarding the review process for K99 and R00 grants.

Recognizing that there are consequences of spending all our time in our homes, we have prepared a series of programs for our members centered on COVID-19-related anxiety and mental health. Recognizing that daily routines while working at home are different than usual, we held a Twitter Chat using the twitter hashtag #HowToScienceAtHome to have our members share how they are doing their science at home. One of our members even used our twitter feed to track the process of baking challah bread.

Over the last several months, we have also been aware of the public policy concerns associated with the pandemic. We continue to work to make sure that NIH and the NSF will have the funding necessary to make sure labs are able to open again and resume important research. There have been costs associated with lab closure and, at some point, the opening of these labs.

The ASCB is also concerned about international trainees and young scientists. These people are vital members of the American research community and we want to make sure U.S. visa regulations allow them to stay to complete their training.