

# PRESIDENT'S REPORT

~~MEMBERSHIP LIST FOR THE 2013-2014 FISCAL YEAR~~

The irony is breathtaking. This reduction in support comes at a time when real benefits in cancer research are emerging from work performed during the last two decades. Data from the American Cancer Society show that the cancer-related death rate per 100,000 Americans has been decreasing for the last 10 years, particularly for lung, colorectal and breast cancer. Such advances are not serendipitous but are rather the direct product of intensive basic and applied research over decades, made possible only because of a societal consensus regarding the importance of keeping financial support robust.

This is not the time to cut back on research. Rather, it is the right time to invest. New technologies, such as RNA interference (RNAi), mouse models for human cancer that accurately reflect the response that patients have to the illness, and genomic approaches to identifying new targets for therapy and diagnosis—all so prominently applied at Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, as described in the pages of this report—are now being integrated into new strategies for cancer research and therapy. We are also now combining tools developed for cancer research to begin to unravel the mysteries of the brain and neurological diseases such as autism, schizophrenia, and Alzheimer's. At the same time, basic research remains our priority because it is the source of our future advances in both basic and applied research.

Reduction in funding not only limits what existing researchers can do, but it also discourages new scientists from pursuing science as a career. Undergraduate and graduate students very rapidly detect the anxious state of their professors when research funds become scarce. If a new generation of students in America is not thinking about a career in research, in short order the very fabric of American science will be compromised.

During the past 5 years we have experienced belt-tightening as have nearly all scientists across the country. Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, however, has been able to survive and prosper due to the generosity of private donors who value our commitment to conducting outstanding research and education programs. Significant accomplishments in autism, schizophrenia, and cancer research have been supported either entirely or substantially by philanthropy. We are profoundly grateful for that support, but at the same time, we are obliged to raise a warning flag about public support for research over the long run.

Public support of science is vitally important because it complements the philanthropic support that enables great science to begin. For this reason, it is time to place science high on the list of public priorities. CSHL is in a position to challenge investigators—both those who work here and those who attend our meetings—to take an active role in public education and bring scientific discussion from laboratories into classrooms and living rooms in our community and across the country. It must be part of how we educate and train scientists today and in the future. We do this for our graduate students in the Watson School of Biological Sciences. This should be only the beginning of our efforts in this direction.

CSHL is also in a position to empower teachers and students of all ages by providing technological means with which they can enjoy easy access to real-time science. The Dolan DNA Learning Center (DNALC) is the key to the success of such an initiative. Through the DNALC and our educational and public affairs outreach, we must continue to broaden the

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