

# Genetics Day

Friday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Save the date!

Genetics Day is an annual event including poster sessions and plenary lectures that brings together the University genetics community defined in its broadest sense.

---

## 7th Annual Fred Sherman Lecture

**Dr. Robert Tjian**



### *"Transcriptional Mechanisms Regulating Differentiation and Stem Cell Pluripotency"*

The regulation of gene expression is one of the most fundamental processes in biology. Few scientists have contributed more to our understanding of this process than Dr. Robert Tjian.

Research by Dr. Tjian has established many paradigms that permeate today's textbooks and inform research in a broad swath of the life sciences. Among other discoveries, he showed that transforming viral proteins and oncogene products function as transcription factors. He defined the first promoter specific cellular transcription factors. Many important insights into the mechanisms of transcription activation were contributed by Tjian's work. Over the years the Tjian lab has applied cutting edge research technologies to understand transcription regulation at all levels. This research has taken Tjian from atomic structural studies to the function of transcription factors at the cell and organism level. Important current research interests, in addition to his long standing curiosity of the principal biochemistry of gene activation, include the transcriptional regulation of stem cell function, and the regulatory causes for neurodegeneration.

Robert Tjian is a Professor of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, and a Howard Hughes investigator, at the Department of Cellular and Molecular Biology of UC Berkeley. He was a founding member of the successful Biotech Company Tularik. He serves as director of the Berkeley Stem Cell Center and as faculty director of the Li Ka Shing Center for Biomedical and Health Sciences. He is a member of the National Academy of Sciences and has received many awards honoring his scientific contributions, including the Alfred P. Sloan Prize from the General Motors Cancer Research Foundation and the Louisa Gross Horwitz Prize from Columbia University. He was named California Scientist of the Year in 1994. **In 2009, Dr. Tjian will replace Thomas R. Cech as President of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute.**