

February 11, 2019 | By Michelle Franklin

UC San Diego Welcomes Nobel Prize Winner Michael W. Young to Campus

Young will speak at the 9th annual Center for Circadian Biology Symposium (Feb. 13-15, 2019)

UC San Diego will host its ninth annual Center for Circadian Biology Symposium February 13-15, 2019. The three-day event, entitled “From Cells to Clinic,” will culminate with a talk from the winner of the 2017 Nobel Prize in Medicine Michael W. Young, who will speak about delayed phase sleep disorder.



Center for Circadian Biology logo

Young, who is vice president of Academic Affairs at Rockefeller University, won the Nobel Prize alongside Jeffrey C. Hall and Michael Rosbash for “the discoveries of molecular mechanisms controlling the circadian rhythm.” Using fruit flies, they were able to identify a gene that encodes a protein which accumulates during the night but is degraded during the day. This work helped lay the foundation for understanding the mechanics of the circadian clock in humans.

In addition to Young, this year’s symposium will feature talks from scientists around the world on a wide range of topics touching on circadian biology. Highlights include how artificial light affects circadian rhythms, the possible connection between sleep patterns and suicide, and how plants respond to changes in their light environment.

There will also be a half-day workshop from 1-4 p.m. on Feb. 13 geared toward the general public called “It’s About Time for Health: Exercise, Light and Food.” The workshop will have three featured talks focused on how circadian rhythms can impact exercise, sleep and diet—and vice versa. The goal of the workshop is to increase public awareness regarding the impact of lifestyle behaviors and environmental conditions on circadian rhythms and sleep, as well as to discuss daily strategies to improve sleep, metabolism, and health through modest, manageable changes. Registration is required for this free event.

Circadian rhythms are the internal rhythms, approximately 24 hours in length, that act as our internal biological clock. Circadian rhythms have great relevance in shaping medical treatment, guiding research and providing new targets for drug development. The importance of this work goes beyond sleep disorders says Stuart Brody, founding director of the Center for Circadian Biology (CCB): “There’s hardly any area of medicine that’s not touched by this—depression, chemotherapy, school performance, jet lag, shift work, accidents, insomnia and weight loss.” In short, a better understanding of our circadian rhythms can have significant impacts in almost all areas of human life.

The center was created in 2008 with the help of Brody, who is also professor emeritus of molecular biology at UC San Diego. CCB was created as a multidisciplinary research center bringing together not just doctors and clinical researchers, but also faculty from biology, physics, psychology, philosophy, engineering, neuroscience and pharmacology. Additionally, the center collaborates with researchers from Salk Institute, Scripps Research and other University of California campuses. CCB is widely recognized as a leader in circadian biology research, in part because of the annual symposium.

Center Director Susan Golden states, “We can honestly say that the ‘time has come’ for time to be recognized as an important aspect of biological processes. The 2017 Nobel Prize has been accompanied by a clear increase in articles in the popular press on circadian biology and the health consequences of modern lifestyle habits of shiftwork, mistimed light exposure, and round-the-clock eating habits that cause the circadian clock to become misaligned with the solar day-night cycle. We have an opportunity to raise awareness of circadian rhythms among scientists and the public, and CCB is proud to play a role in facilitating those interactions.”

For more information about the symposium, [visit CCB’s event page](#).

To register for “It’s About Time for Health,” [visit CCB’s public workshop event page](#).

MEDIA CONTACT

Michelle Franklin, 858-534-8564, m1franklin@ucsd.edu

UC San Diego’s [Studio Ten 300](#) offers radio and television connections for media interviews with our faculty, which can be coordinated via studio@ucsd.edu. To connect with a UC San Diego faculty expert on relevant issues and trending news stories, visit <https://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/media-resources/faculty-experts>.