

UCSD to Host Public Conference on 'Social Justice and Stem Cell Research'

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Barry Jagoda

The University of California, San Diego will host a public conference, "Social Justice and Stem Cell Research," on Saturday, May 13. This free event will be held on the La Jolla campus in UCSD Center Hall from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Registration is required at <http://ethicscenter.net>. A registration confirmation will include an agenda, directions and parking instructions.

"For the San Diego community, this upcoming conference will be one of the most significant public gatherings on stem cell research since the passage of Proposition 71 in November of 2004," said Michael Kalichman, professor of pathology, director of the UCSD Research Ethics Program and co-founder of the San Diego Center for Ethics in Science and Technology, which is a co-presenter of the conference.

"We have a world-class roster of speakers for the symposium, experts who will speak from their diverse perspectives on the ethics of embryonic stem cell research," said Mary Blair-Loy, UCSD associate professor of sociology and advisor to the Episcopal Student Association at UCSD, which is also a co-presenter of the conference. "This is an issue that profoundly affects the lives of the citizens of California, and UCSD is pleased to offer this opportunity to help the public make their own informed decisions."

Speakers for the conference include:

Larry Goldstein, UCSD professor of cellular and molecular medicine, a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator and a leader in advocating for the passage of Proposition 71 who has spoken across the country on stem cell issues, including appearing before a U.S. Senate subcommittee on embryonic stem cell research in 1999. His research focuses on basic cellular mechanisms in neurodegenerative diseases and nerve injury, including research on Alzheimer's and amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) where the next logical step is to begin working with human stem cells.

Wesley Smith, a senior fellow with the Discovery Institute in Seattle and an award-winning author, named by the National Journal as one of the nation's top expert thinkers in bioengineering, whose articles and columns on the subject of ethics have been published in major newspapers across the country. He has appeared on national television programs including *ABC Nightline*, *Good Morning America*, *Larry King Live*, *CNN Crossfire*, *CNN World Report* and *CBS Evening News*.

John Evans, UCSD associate professor of sociology and author of "Playing God? Human Genetic Engineering and the Rationalization of Public Bioethical Debate," who is following the stem-cell debate from the perspective of the sociology of bioethics and science, religion and politics, and who examines the polarization of public opinion on issues such as abortion and reproductive genetic technologies, including genetic engineering, cloning and pre-implantation genetic diagnosis.

Alta Charo, Warren P. Knowles Professor of Law and Bioethics at the University of Wisconsin and currently visiting professor of law at the University of California, Berkeley. Charo serves on the NAS Board on Life Sciences

and was its liaison to the Committee on Guidelines for Human Embryonic Stem Cell Research. She also serves on the Scientific and Medical Accountability Standards Working Group of the California Institute of Regenerative Medicine. She is a past member of the NIH Human Embryo Research Panel and the presidential National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

In addition to the Episcopal Student Association at UCSD and the San Diego Center for Ethics in Science and Technology, conference sponsors include UCSD Thurgood Marshall College, The Burnham Institute, Episcopal Diocese of San Diego, The Salk Institute, UCSD Burke Lectureship Board, UCSD Health Care - Social Issues, UCSD Sixth College, Newman Center, Catholic Community at UCSD, St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral Peace & Justice Committee, United Methodist Wesley Foundation, and Center for Ethics and Spirituality at UCSD. The San Diego Center for Ethics in Science and Technology is a partnership of San Diego institutions, including UCSD, the University of San Diego, San Diego State University, the Salk Institute of Biological Sciences, The Burnham Institute and the Neurosciences Institute. For more information about the conference, go to: <http://ethicscenter.net>

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