

**For Immediate Release**

**Wesley I. Sudquist receives 2017 Rosenblatt Prize**

May 8, 2017—Wesley I. Sundquist, distinguished professor of biochemistry at the University of Utah, was honored with the Rosenblatt Prize for Excellence, the U’s most prestigious faculty award. The $40,000 gift is presented annually to a faculty member who displays excellence in teaching, research and administrative efforts.

The Rosenblatt Prize Committee, a group of distinguished faculty members, recommends selected candidates for the award. University President David W. Pershing made the final selection.

“Dr. Sundquist’s discoveries have enriched the field of biochemistry and hold enormous promise for improving human health,” Pershing said. “His dedication as a teacher and mentor ensures that his influence will be felt for generations to come. The University of Utah is fortunate to have a scientist and educator of his caliber, and it is a pleasure to honor him with the institution’s most distinguished faculty award.”

### **About Wes Sundquist**

Sundquist holds a doctorate in chemistry from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, was a postdoctoral fellow at the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology in Cambridge, England, and began his career at the University of Utah in 1992 as an assistant professor in the Department of Biochemistry. He became the Samuels Presidential Chaired Professor in 2015 and a distinguished professor in 2017.

Sundquist is chair emeritus of the School of Medicine Executive Committee and former chair of the Benning Society. He has also served as co-chair for the Department of Biochemistry with Chris Hill since 2009. Under their leadership, the department has increased in size by 50 percent, and the department consistently ranks in the top 20 biochemistry departments in total National Institutes of Health funding. This feat is especially noteworthy given that the U’s department has fewer faculty members than any other top-20 department.

He is internationally recognized for his research discoveries in Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) replication and fundamental processes in cell biology. His work has transformed the understanding of the architecture, assembly and budding of HIV, and his research on viral structures is leading to new strategies for HIV therapeutics that have transformative potential for human health. He is the director of a $24 million award that involves 18 principal investigators from nine institutions across the country.

“Dr. Sundquist is a rare scientist with a combination of vision, creativity, knowledge, rigor and drive that have made him truly transformative to his field,” said a nominator. “His body of work is extraordinarily impressive not only for the importance of the insights he has provided, but also for the diversity of structural, biochemical and genetic approaches that he has employed.”

During his 25 years at the University of Utah, Sundquist and his colleagues have published more than 100 scientific journal articles, 16 of which appeared in the prestigious journals, Cell, Nature and Science. He is one of the most cited researchers in the field of HIV/AIDS. He routinely plays a leading role in organizing scientific conferences and is currently the elected chair of the Public Affairs Advisory Committee for the American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology, the leading organization for the field. He is a senior editor of the Journal of Virology and a member of the board of reviewing editors for eLife. For six years, he served on the National Advisory Committee for the Pew Scholars Program in the Biomedical Sciences, and he has served on multiple scientific advisory boards for federal organizations, research programs and biotechnology companies. Additionally, he has been elected to the National Academy of Science and American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

As a mentor, Sundquist has trained more than 40 graduate students and postdocs, many of whom currently hold positions in academic and private-sector institutions.

“His passion for science is genuine and contagious,” said a nominator and former student. “[Among the] most important lessons that I’ve learned from Wes is the importance of being a well-rounded scientist and always looking for universal connections between seemingly different fields. His innovative approaches often change the way that people approach science.”

**About the Rosenblatt Prize**

The Rosenblatt Prize, a $40,000 cash award, is presented annually to “recognize, encourage and honor excellence in teaching, in research and administrative efforts, collectively or individually.” The Rosenblatt endowment, from which the prize money is drawn, was established in 1983 by the Joseph and Evelyn Rosenblatt family to honor the civic leadership and generosity of Joseph’s parents, Nathan and Tillie Rosenblatt, who immigrated to Utah from Russia in the late 19th century.

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