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NEWS FROM THE ASCB: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Cell Biologists' Society Awarded NIH "Stimulus Grant" to Build Virtual Library of Cell Images for Researchers and Public

October 1, 2009, Bethesda, Maryland—A \$2.5 million "stimulus grant" announced yesterday by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will enable the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) to build an unprecedented, online image library of the cell that will be readily accessible to researchers, educators, students, and the public, according to ASCB Executive Director Joan Goldberg.

"We are very grateful to receive this support from the NIH for a project that will advance science, health, and education," said Goldberg.

"This is terrific news, as this grant will enable the ASCB to establish a comprehensive, easily searchable public resource database of cell images, videos, and animations," Principal Investigator (PI) Caroline Kane noted. Kane is emerita at the University of California, Berkeley, and will oversee the grant.

"By visualizing the structure and dynamic behavior of a broad range of cells, scientists and clinicians will be better able to understand the nature of specific cells and cellular processes – normal and abnormal. This will likely lead to new discoveries about diseases and drug targets in the future," Kane added. "I'm hoping that teachers and the general public will find the resource illuminating as well."

The National Institute of General Medical Sciences (NIGMS) awarded the ASCB a two-year grant through economic stimulus funding for the NIH's "Grand Opportunities" program. The ASCB grant will support the development of an online resource called "The Cell: An Image Library." The Library will become immediately useful to a broad range of research scientists – including cell biologists, geneticists, immunologists, and pathologists.

Building on the foundation of its original Image & Video Library, the ASCB will transform that much smaller database into a comprehensive, international digital library. The Library's images, videos, and animations will be vetted and annotated by scientists, and instantly accessible and searchable for a wide range of users. By developing a systematic protocol for acquiring, reviewing, annotating, and uploading the images, the ASCB will create an efficient platform for building the library at a rapid rate.

The Image Library grant will have two co-investigators working with Kane and others. Janet Iwasa of Harvard Medical School will oversee the infrastructure development, while John Murray of the University of Pennsylvania and other scientist annotators will focus on selecting and annotating the contents.

Funded through the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, "The Cell: An Image Library" will stimulate the economy through the creation of jobs for supporting scientists and staff in locations across the country, including California, Massachusetts, Maryland, and Pennsylvania.

"ASCB is very grateful for the NIH's show of confidence and support for our mission," ASCB President Brigid Hogan said. Founded in 1960, the Society has approximately 10,000 members and hosts the largest annual cell biology conference in the world. (The ASCB 49th Annual Meeting, will be held December 6-9, 2009, in San Diego.) The ASCB also publishes the scientific journal, *Molecular Biology of the Cell*, offers a variety of career development resources for scientists and scientists-in-training, and briefs Congress on scientific developments. For more information on the ASCB, visit www.ascb.org.

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