

Siavash Kurdistanani

Professor and chair, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), Department of Biological Chemistry

Webpage

Statement of Interest

The ASBMB's voice in shaping national discourse on science policy and funding is more critical than ever, especially in a climate where scientific research is increasingly politicized and funding uncertain.

My lab studies chromatin biology, developing a framework that views chromatin as a metabolic organelle. We're guided by evolutionary events that led to the emergence of ancestral histones and their presence in early eukaryotes. A discovery from our lab is that histone H3 functions as a copper reductase enzyme, producing bioavailable copper for cellular and mitochondrial metabolism. Our work suggests histones were essential for eukaryogenesis and may contribute to human disease in unexpected ways.

I have served as Chair of my department for the past 10 years and have worked to cultivate an environment where faculty and trainees have wide latitude to pursue curiosity-driven research, and where such work is both valued and rewarded. I've learned that effective leadership in science requires not just vision, but a commitment to solving people's problems.

If elected, I will work to identify and recruit leaders who reflect the full breadth of our scientific community – across disciplines, backgrounds, and career stages. We need leaders who advocate for the importance of fundamental research, navigate today's challenges, and inspire the next generation. Doing science is a privilege, and yes, it should be fun. I would be honored to help ensure ASBMB remains vibrant and forward-looking, while staying engaged with emerging challenges, including advocating for robust research funding, and protecting the integrity of open scientific inquiry.

Education and Training

- A.A., Biology, Santa Monica College, 1991
- B.S., Biochemistry, UCLA, 1994
- M.D., Harvard Medical School, 1999
- Postdoctoral Training, Molecular biology, UCLA, 2000-2004

Awards and Honors

- UCLA College of Letters & Science Scholar Award, 1993
- UCLA Chancellor's Award for Postdoctoral Fellows, 2003
- Beckman Young Investigator Award, 2007
- NIH Director's New Innovator Award, 2009
- Elected to the American Society for Clinical Investigation (ASCI), 2019
- Faculty Teaching Award, UCLA Molecular Biology Institute (MBI), 2024

Relevant Experience

- Editorial board member, Molecular and Cellular Biology, 2012-2014
- Co-director, UCLA Medical Scientist Training Program (MSTP), 2013-15
- Chair, UCLA Department of Biological Chemistry, 2015-present

continued

ASBMB 2025 Election: Nominating Committee Candidate

- Editorial board member, Epigenetics & Chromatin, 2020-present
- Chartered member, NIH/NCI Gene Regulation in Cancer (GRIC) study section, 2024-2030
- Session co-organizer, ASBMB Annual Meeting, 2024