

# The Provost's Forums on the Public University and the Social Good

Friday, March 6, 2015

## Rescuing Biomedical Research: The Path Ahead

### Dr. Bruce Alberts

Chancellor's Leadership Chair in Biochemistry and Biophysics for Science and Education,  
UC San Francisco



**Dr. Bruce Alberts** is a United States National Medal of Science awardee (2014). He has served as Editor-in-Chief of *Science* (2008–13) and as one of President Obama's first three United States Science Envoys (2009–11). Dr. Alberts holds the Chancellor's Leadership Chair in Biochemistry and Biophysics for Science and Education at the University of California, San Francisco. He returned to this position after serving two six-year terms as the president of the National Academy of Sciences.

Distressed by the perverse incentives that have generated the current hyper-competitive biomedical research environment in the United States, Dr. Alberts and three colleagues—Marc W. Kirschner, Shirley Tilghman, and Harold Varmus—published an open-access article in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* entitled, "Rescuing US biomedical research from its systemic flaws." Despite widespread agreement concerning the problems, the authors argue, any substantial change in the system is bound to be controversial. For this reason they believe experiments are needed.

In a recently published follow-up piece, "Opinion: Addressing systemic problems in the biomedical research enterprise," the authors announced the formation of a steering committee to oversee a new website designed to collect suggestions for actions ameliorating the identified problems, as well as to identify promising changes that are either under way or proposed. They are encouraging other groups to contribute to this effort. In his talk, Dr. Alberts will outline some possible ideas for overcoming the inertia that prevents progress.

Dr. Alberts will be joined by a panel composed of UC Davis faculty, postdocs, and graduate students.

**Lecture:**

3 to 4:30 p.m.  
Multipurpose Room  
Student Community Center

**Reception:**

4:30 to 5 p.m.  
Multipurpose Room  
Student Community Center

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