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Nobel Prize Laureate Capecchi to speak at South City Campus

Once in a lifetime opportunity happens on November 19

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On Wednesday, November 19, SLCC is hosting an event that, for some, represents a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. On that day, Nobel Prize Laureate Dr. Mario R. Capecchi will speak as part of the Tanner Forum on Social Ethics. The event is free and open to the public.

Capecchi, who shared a Nobel Prize in Medicine last year, will speak at the South City Campus' Grand Theatre from noon to 1 p.m.

A reception in Capecchi's honor is planned from 1:15 to 1:45 p.m. in the east foyer of the South City Campus and will be followed by an informal discussion with the Nobel Laureate in room N185 from 1:45 to 2:30 p.m.

The title of Capecchi's November 19 lecture is "The Promise of Embryonic Stem Cell Therapy: Euphoria or Ethical Quagmire."

Capecchi is best known for pioneering the technology that targets genes of embryo-derived stem (ES) cells in mice. The technology allows scientists to create desired mutations in the genes of mice.

The use of stem cells - particularly ES cells - is a divisive subject. Pro-lifers, certain religious groups as well as other individuals are vehemently opposed to the use of ES cells for research and/or gene manipulation.

On the flip side, people with chronic illnesses, cancer and other maladies are hopeful that ES cells might provide a cure to or relief from their medical conditions.

Students planning to attend the informal discussion with Capecchi are urged to prepare by reading informed opposing views about stem cell research. Readers can visit www.procon.org and type in "stem cell research" to read more about the subject.

Born in Verona, Italy, Capecchi received his B.S. in chemistry and physics from Antioch College in Ohio in 1961. He received his Ph.D. in biophysics from Harvard University in 1967. At Harvard, Capecchi became a Junior Fellow then Assistant Professor in the Department of Biochemistry at the Harvard School of Medicine. In 1971, he was promoted to Associate Professor.

Capecchi joined the University of Utah in 1973 as a Professor of Biology. Since 1993, he has been a Professor of Human Genetics at the U's School of Medicine.

Some of the awards and prizes Capecchi has received over the years for his work include the Kyoto Prize in Basic Sciences (1996), Peczoller Foundation AACR International Award for Cancer Research (2003) and March of Dimes Prize in Developmental Biology (2005).

If students or SLCC staff members need proof of attendance, they can pick up an "amnesty card" at the end of the lecture. Faculty and supervisors are encouraged to allow students and staff to attend the event.

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