

Journal of Biological Chemistry names new editor in chief



BETHESDA, Md., March 3, 2016

– The American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology announced Tuesday that Lila M. Gierasch, a distinguished faculty member at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, will be the next editor in chief of the Journal of Biological Chemistry, the nonprofit's peer-reviewed journal.

Gierasch's five-year term will begin July 1. She will take the reins from the journal's interim editor, F. Peter Guengerich, a researcher at Vanderbilt University and longtime associate editor who has steered the highly cited journal since July 2015.

Gierasch holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Mount Holyoke College and a Ph.D. in biophysics from Harvard University. She was an editorial board member for the JBC from 2000 to 2003 and has served on numerous other editorial boards since. She is an expert on protein folding, structure and function, with an emphasis on how proteins fold in vivo. She is strongly committed to

interdisciplinary science and to deploying physical and chemical approaches to elucidate physiological mechanisms.

"All of us associated with the ASBMB are delighted that Lila Gierasch will assume the editorship of our flagship journal," said Steven McKnight, chairman of the biochemistry department at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas and the president of the ASBMB. "Lila is distinguished as both a discovery-oriented researcher and a scientific leader."

Gierasch said she looks forward to working with the JBC team to "affirm the JBC's preeminence among biochemical journals" by building on its rich 110-year-old history and openness to new directions in scientific publishing.

"I am honored and excited to be chosen. The JBC has long been known for publishing rigorous, significant research in biological chemistry. The ongoing scientific discoveries in mechanistic biochemistry and cell biology are stunning, with ever deeper understanding of the molecular underpinnings of physiological processes emerging daily," Gierasch said. "Our goal for the future is to attract authors and readers from across the globe to consider the JBC as the go-to journal for top research in mechanistic biochemistry and cell biology."

Gierasch also expressed gratitude for Guengerich's leadership as interim editor, which she said "positions us to build on strength in preparing JBC for its next chapter." She continued: "I am delighted that Fred will continue to serve as deputy editor, enabling us to work in partnership."

Guengerich, an expert in cytochrome P450s, has been an associate editor for the JBC since 2006. He was named deputy editor and then interim editor in 2015. Guengerich's relationship with the journal dates to 1975, when he published the first of, at last count, 120 articles in the JBC.

"The ASBMB is extremely fortunate to have two superb researchers and highly accomplished leaders at the helm. We are excited to have Lila Gierasch as editor in chief. She will bring exceptional creativity and fresh vision. And we are grateful to Fred Guengerich, who as deputy editor will continue to contribute his wisdom and years of experience," said Natalie Ahn, a professor at the University of Colorado Boulder and president-elect of the ASBMB.

Gierasch, who will be the 110-year-old journal's second female editor in chief, started her academic research career at Amherst College in 1974. She moved in 1979 to the University of Delaware, where she rose to full professor. In 1988, she assumed the Robert A. Welch Chair in Biochemistry at UT-Southwestern, where she founded the graduate program in molecular biophysics. She moved in 1994 to UMass to lead the chemistry department and in 1999 became head of the biochemistry and molecular biology department.

She has a long list of awards to her name. She won election as a fellow to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1989, won an NIH Director's Pioneer Award in 2006, won the Protein Society's Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin Award in 2010 and won the ASBMB's Mildred Cohn Award in Biological Chemistry in 2014.

Gierasch also has a substantial history of service to the scientific community. For example, she was president of the Biophysical Society from 1995 to 1996, served on the ASBMB's governing council from 2003 to 2006, and is a current member of the National Institutes of Health Office of the Director Council of Councils.