

ROBERT A. LUE



DEAR FRIENDS,

We are writing to you with heavy hearts and sad news. Our long-time Faculty Director, Robert Lue, passed away on Wednesday.

Rob was an education innovator. The vision that united all of his initiatives was one of exchange between disparate groups in science, technology, art and education. Rob orchestrated these collaborations seamlessly, resulting in the creation of unique communities of educators and life-long learners. Rob's passion for facilitating authentic educational experiences gave rise to uniquely impactful programs.

Not surprisingly, Rob wore many hats. In addition to being Professor of the Practice of Molecular and Cellular Biology, he also served as the Richard L. Menschel Faculty Director of the Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, Faculty Director of the Harvard Ed Portal, UNESCO Chair on Life Sciences and Social Innovation, and the Faculty Director of LabXchange. Previous appointments included Director of Life Sciences Education at Harvard, Founding Faculty Director of HarvardX, Dean of the Harvard Summer School and Advisor to the Crimson Summer Academy.

“We have the research and resources, and the teachers have the deep understanding of the needs of the students and their curriculum. So when we can partner with them as peers, and give them time to generate new teaching materials, then we have a true ally in the classroom.”

- ROBERT A. LUE

In 2002, Rob founded Life Sciences Outreach (LSO) with funding from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute and support from Harvard University's Department of Molecular and Cellular Biology. Residing at the very core of LSO's mission was Rob's desire to make cutting-edge Harvard research accessible to the high school audience. In 2010, Rob expanded Life Sciences Outreach to include the Amgen Biotechnology Experience (ABE) program, having witnessed the power of giving teachers and students equipment to enable hands-on biotechnology lessons. Several years later, Rob envisioned creating an online learning platform where ABE students, teachers, Amgen Scholar undergraduates, Amgen staff and University faculty could all co-contribute to better prepare students for research experiences, and LabXchange was born.

Rob's respect for high school teachers and commitment to educational excellence at all levels was the driving force behind Life Sciences Outreach. He was also cognizant of the isolation faced by many teachers and forged a tightly knit, collegial LSO community. He regularly engaged LSO teachers as sounding boards before embarking on new initiatives, placing unprecedented value on teacher input and elevating the teaching profession.

Rob was both a scientist and an artist. His passion for the arts bled into LSO programming as he injected the arts into the communication of scientific concepts. Unveiling the animation he created with Alain Viel, "The Inner Life of the Cell," was a pivotal moment for our teacher audience. The animation enabled LSO teachers to envision how they might bring challenging scientific concepts to life through multimedia. Rob afforded teachers the opportunity to author and design animations, and made sure their ideas came to fruition with the help of professional animators. As one teacher participant commented, "concepts that were merely words in a book now have life."

For nearly twenty years, the impact of Rob's vision for collaborative, intergenerational learning has been far-reaching. By bringing together high school teachers and students, undergraduates, graduate students, researchers and industry scientists to work in partnership on advancing teaching in STEM, Rob tapped into their collective wisdom. This type of subtle, yet transformative, experience was Rob's specialty. Teachers credit their participation in Life Sciences Outreach programs with a renewed passion, energy and enthusiasm for their profession.



We are forever indebted to Rob and we are committed to keeping Rob's legacy alive by continuing programs that align with his vision and which provide a platform where voices from global educational and research communities can unite to create exceptional and accessible STEM education. Please know that you, our LSO educators, are fulfilling Rob's vision: instilling a value for lifelong learning and an excitement for science in our young people.

Sincerely,

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Please feel free to contribute thoughts and memories to share with Rob's family and share your photos with the LSO community. You can read more about Rob's amazing legacy in today's Harvard Gazette article.