



March 26, 2021

To SUNY Poly Faculty, Staff, and Students:

I am deeply saddened to share with you that Dr. Michael Hochberg, Professor of Biology and Chemistry, has passed away. On behalf of our SUNY Polytechnic Institute family, we offer our most sincere condolences to his family, friends, and the many people he touched during his time here.

Dr. Hochberg received his Ph.D. from an NIH-sponsored cell biology program in 1973 from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He began working at SUNY Poly in January of 1974 with an interest in studying biochemical pathways in *Neurospora crassa*, a type of red bread mold, and how it related to reproduction and circadian oscillations. He also studied the Peptidoglycan Lattice chemical structure in the cell walls of gram-negative bacteria in an aqueous environment using biochemical and neutron scattering experimental techniques. He served as the Interim Dean for the College of Arts & Sciences in 2002. As a professor, he reached countless students while teaching cell biology, genetics, advanced physiology, nutritional health, immunology, epidemiology, meteorology, and ecology.

I had the very great pleasure of meeting him before his passing at the suggestion of several colleagues who knew I was seeking individuals in our community to help “shorten my learning curve” on the traditions and history of our institution. Dr. Hochberg was incredibly generous in all the ways I had hoped for, but I was particularly impressed by his commitment and love for his areas of study, his deep respect and commitment to our shared academic mission, and by the level of esteem in which he held our students. He wanted me to know, from a long-time faculty member’s perspective, what a special group of students, faculty, and staff have contributed to the SUNY Poly community through the years, and he clearly conveyed his sense of importance for the work we do together. As anyone who had met him knows, Dr. Hochberg had many interesting stories to share, and our hour-and-a-half together was filled with them. It is clear these stories must have translated into an incredible in-class experience for the students he loved so much.

Given the number of lives Dr. Hochberg has touched, many of us will feel his loss for some time to come. I would like to take this opportunity to remind any employee who may need it that the [New York State Employee Assistance Program is available](#) at no cost, providing services by phone or in person that can help those facing such a loss. Similarly, [counseling services are available](#) for students.

The [family is requesting donations in memory of Dr. Hochberg](#) be directed to the SUNY Poly Foundation to establish a scholarship in his name. We are deeply grateful that this will continue his legacy of uplifting students.

We will keep him, and his entire family, in our thoughts, as we gain comfort from the fond memories so many in our community now hold.

Sincerely,

Dr. Tod A. Laursen
Acting President
SUNY Polytechnic Institute