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Statement on the Resignation of NIH Director Elias A. Zerhouni

“Elias Zerhouni provided the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the American biomedical research community with strong leadership during a time of flat funding for biomedical research and politicization of scientific research,” said Bob Goldman, President of the American Society for Cell Biology. Goldman hailed Elias Zerhouni’s six years of service as NIH Director.

Zerhouni’s leadership was marked by innovation. He launched the NIH Roadmap for Medical Research, a program to accelerate medical research and focus the research community on new pathways of discovery. He also led the development of the NIH Public Access policy. In the last few years, Zerhouni also spoke out strongly against the current Bush policy limiting federal funding for human embryonic stem cell research.

“Throughout his tenure as Director, Zerhouni served as a strong voice for biomedical research in the halls of Congress,” Goldman continued. “Moreover, he was widely respected by Congressional leaders and individual members of Congress.”

During his time as Director, Zerhouni attended three ASCB Annual Meetings, speaking about his vision for the future of the NIH and biomedical research. During his remarks at the 2006 ASCB Annual Meeting in San Diego, Zerhouni called the ASCB “one of the most effective [groups] in Washington” at communicating the importance of biomedical research.