

THE UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

Regents Communication

ACTION REQUEST

**Adopted by the Regents
December 13, 2012**

Subject: Report of Faculty Death

Action Requested: Adoption of Memorial Statement

The Regents of the University of Michigan acknowledge with profound sadness the death of **Alan J. Hunt, Ph.D.**, professor of biomedical engineering in the College of Engineering. Professor Hunt died on October 28, 2012 at the age of 49, after a courageous battle with cancer.

Professor Hunt received his B.A. degree from the University of California, San Diego in 1986 and his Ph.D. degree from the University of Washington in 1993. From 1994-98 he completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Colorado. He joined the University of Michigan faculty as an assistant professor in 1998, and was promoted to associate professor in 2004, and professor in 2010. From 1998-2009, he held an additional appointment as assistant research professor in the Institute of Gerontology.

Professor Hunt made numerous outstanding scientific contributions that had a significant impact in the areas of microtubule self-assembly and mitosis, nanofabrication via ultrafast laser machining, and asymmetric stem cell division. He published the first computational model of mitosis that elucidated the molecular mechanical basis of mitosis. His research group has pioneered the use of optical tweezers to measure single microtubule self-assembly at the nanometer-scale, creating a molecular mechanistic framework with which to understand how microtubule-directed anticancer drugs exert their therapeutic influence. His group also studied the applications of applied femtosecond laser pulsing to create nanoscale features with high precision and accuracy. In collaboration with stem cell biologists, Professor Hunt discovered that centrosome mis-orientation reduces the ability of stem cells to divide, and his expertise in the dynamics of microtubules was vital in establishing this important link between the cytoskeleton and stem cell division. Professor Hunt was a truly talented and inspiring teacher who helped to design a modern biomedical engineering curriculum with a strong focus on principles of cellular and molecular engineering. Two of his courses—Molecular and Cellular Biomechanics and Quantitative Cell Biology—will have a lasting impact on biomedical engineering education at the University of Michigan and beyond. Professor Hunt was a caring and supportive mentor to ten Ph.D. students who have gone on to distinguished careers in academia and industry.

As we mourn the loss of our beloved colleague, we extend our heartfelt condolences to his wife Karen, his daughters Sarah and Deanna, and his many loving relatives and friends.

Requested by:



Sally J. Churchill, J.D.

Vice President and Secretary of the University

December 2012