

PEOPLE

Nobel Chemistry Laureate Aaron Ciechanover Speaks at NTU

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Prof. Aaron Ciechanover (left) making a response in the Q&A session moderated by NTU President Wen-Chang Chen (right).

On April 1, 2024, NTU hosted a captivating lecture by Prof. Aaron Ciechanover, the esteemed 2004 Nobel laureate in Chemistry. He discussed “The Revolution of Personalized Medicine – Are We Going to Cure All Diseases and at What Price?” as part of the Royal Palm Lecture Series. Prof. Ciechanover discussed the transformative impact of medical breakthroughs, exploring the rapidly evolving landscape of personalized medicine and its potential intersections with privacy concerns.

NTU President Wen-Chang Chen introduced Prof. Aaron Ciechanover, Distinguished Professor of the Faculty of Medicine at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, highlighting his myriad accolades and affiliations with esteemed institutions globally. Academician Dr. Andrew H.-J. Wang explained Prof. Ciechanover’s groundbreaking discovery of ubiquitin’s pivotal role in cellular protein degradation, the milestone for which he was awarded the 2004 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.



2004 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, Prof. Aaron Ciechanover delivering a lecture in the Royal Palm Lecture Series at NTU.

In his lecture, Prof. Ciechanover traced the development of drug research from the serendipity approach of the 1930s through the 1960s, exemplified by the discovery of penicillin, to the paradigm shift ushered in by technological advances in chemical screening. He next stressed the third revolution in medical research of the present era. Recent breakthroughs in genome sequencing, stem cell technologies, and imaging techniques have induced the contemporary era of Personalized, Predictive, Preventive, and Participatory medicine. In a highly thought-provoking conclusion, the professor argued that societal protection and personal ethics hinge not on foreseeing every potential challenge but on embracing uncertainties about the future.

Following his lecture, Prof. Ciechanover shared inspiring insights from his own journey, encouraging faculty members and students to persevere in their academic pursuits despite challenges, affirming that steadfast dedication ultimately leads to success.

The Royal Palm Lecture Series, which commenced with Prof. Hiroshi Amano's lecture in September 2023, has featured a stream of luminaries from academia, including President Teruo Fujii of the University of Tokyo, President Kyosuke Nagata of the University of Tsukuba, and Professor Way Kuo, former President of City University of Hong Kong. These lectures provide invaluable opportunities for faculty members and students to engage with visionary leaders in their fields, enriching their academic experience and fostering a culture of intellectual exchange and growth.



Group photo of Prof. Aaron Ciechanover and enthusiastic participants.