



AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL ENGINEERS
120 WALL ST., FL. 23
NEW YORK, NY 10005

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Contact: Gordon Ellis
Phone: 646-495-1348
Email: gorde@aiche.org

AICHE Presents Inaugural Langer Prize Fellowship to César de la Fuente

The American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) has awarded its first Langer Prize for Innovation and Entrepreneurial Excellence to César de la Fuente, Presidential Assistant Professor in the departments of bioengineering, microbiology and psychiatry at the University of Pennsylvania. The fellowship — administered by AIChE’s Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence and endowed by the AIChE Foundation — is named for biomedical pioneer Robert Langer of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The Prize, which aims to support rising stars in the early stages of their careers, provides an unrestricted grant to enable creative researchers and engineering entrepreneurs to tackle high-risk, high-impact challenges with the potential of achieving game-changing innovations. De la Fuente received the Langer Prize on November 10 at the 2019 AIChE Annual Meeting in Orlando, FL.

An innovator in the computerization of biological systems, de la Fuente leads the Univ. of Pennsylvania’s Machine Biology group, where he draws upon protein design, synthetic biology, bioengineering, microbiology, and computational biology to devise new therapies for biomedical problems such as antibiotic resistance, infectious diseases, cancer, and microbiome engineering. His discoveries have yielded numerous patents and more than 70 publications.

In 2019, de la Fuente was recognized by *MIT Technology Review* as one of the world’s top innovators for “digitizing evolution to make better antibiotics.” He was also named a “Top-10-Under-40” honoree by *Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology News*, and he received the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers’ Young Investigator Award.

Kristi Anseth, Distinguished Tisone Professor at the University of Colorado Boulder and a co-chair of the Langer Prize selection committee, said “We are delighted that César de la Fuente is the inaugural prize recipient.” She explained that AIChE’s goal for the Langer Prize “is to invest in the potential of chemical engineers — as innovators, inventors, and entrepreneurs. Our vision is to assist young researchers in pursuing big ideas that may open doors to new frontiers in areas including biological engineering, biomaterials, drug delivery, and biotechnology.”

For more information about AIChE's Langer Prizes, or to support the endowment campaign, visit www.aiche.org/giving/impact/funds/langer-prizes-endowment.

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