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ASHG 2025 Presidential Symposium Biographies

Moderator

Sarah Tishkoff, PhD

David and Lyn Silfen University Professor in Genetics and Biology at the University of Pennsylvania

Speakers

Janet Kelso, PhD
Research Group Leader, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology

Janet Kelso heads the Computational Ancient Genomics research group at the Max-Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany. Her research focusses on the reconstruction and analysis of ancient genomes, particularly the genomes of archaic humans such as Neandertals and Denisovans. Her group has is interested in developing novel computational approaches for the analysis of ancient DNA, and in using these approaches to gain insights into genome evolution. Janet received her PhD in bioinformatics from the South African National Bioinformatics Institute at the University of the Western Cape where she was supervised by Professor Winston Hide. She is the co-Editor-in-chief of the journal Bioinformatics together with Inanc Birol and has been an active member of the Board of the International Society of Computational Biology for many years. She was named a Fellow of the Society in 2015.

David Reich, PhD
Professor, Harvard University

David Reich is a professor of genetics at Harvard Medical School, a professor of human evolutionary biology at Harvard University, and Investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, and an Associate at the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard. He is a population geneticist who analyzes modern and ancient DNA to learn about history and biology.

Loic Yengo, PhD
Professor of Statistical Genomics, The University of Queensland

Dr. Loic Yengo is a Professor of Statistical Genomics at The University of Queensland. His lab investigates the causes and consequences of genetic variation within and between human populations, and develops and applies novel statistical methods to analyze large volumes of genomic data. Loic's research has contributed to improve understanding of the genetic and phenotypic consequences of non-random mating (inbreeding and assortative mating) in human populations, and has led to identify novel genetic loci associated with complex traits and diseases. Loic was the 2022 recipient of the Gani Medal of the Australian Academy of Science recognizing outstanding contributions to research in human genetics, and the 2024 recipient of the American Society of Human Genetics Early Career Award. In 2024, he was awarded a Snow Medical Research Foundation Fellowship to accelerate the deployment of genomic risk prediction in the clinic and improve the benefit of genomic medicine in all populations

Francesca Luca, PhD
Professor of Human Genetics, University of Chicago

Dr. Francesca Luca's research investigates genetic and environmental factors contributing to human variation in molecular and complex phenotypes of biomedical interest. She completed her graduate studies in Population Genetics at the University of Calabria (Italy), collaborating with the Pasteur Institute (Paris). She joined the University of Chicago as a postdoctoral fellow, where she pioneered research on genotype x environment interactions (GxE) in gene expression. From 2012-2024, she was a faculty member at Wayne State University. Dr. Luca uses functional genomics and statistical genetics approaches to identify DNA variants that regulate cellular responses to environmental stimuli, and their role in complex traits (asthma and cardiovascular disease). She established a human-microbiome co-culture system to study host gene expression in response to the gut microbiome. She is committed to training the next generation of scientists and to science education outreach. Her research is funded by NIH-NIGMS, American Heart Association, NIH-NHLBI, NIH-NIEHS, Chan-Zuckerberg Initiative.