

News Release

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Rumbaugh Named Fellow by American Academy of Microbiology

Kendra Rumbaugh, Ph.D., a professor in the Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) School of Medicine's Department of Surgery, has focused her research career on investigating bacterial biofilms and their role in wound infections. Those efforts were recently recognized by the American Academy of Microbiology (AAM), which named Rumbaugh one of its 65 new Fellows for 2024.

AAM Fellows are elected annually through a highly selective, peer-review process based on their records of scientific achievement and original contributions that have advanced microbiology. AAM is an honorific leadership group within the American Society for Microbiology (ASM).

ASM is comprised of 36,000 scientists and health practitioners, making it one of the largest professional societies dedicated to the life sciences. Its mission is to promote and advance the microbial sciences through conferences, publications, certifications, educational opportunities and advocacy efforts. It enhances laboratory capacity around the globe through training and resources and provides a network for scientists in academia, industry and clinical settings.

AAM received 156 nominations for the 65-member Fellowship Class of 2024. Of those selected, 25% are female and 12% come from countries outside the U.S., including Hong Kong (Greater China), France, Germany, South Africa, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Sharmila Dissanaïke, M.D., professor and chair in the Department of Surgery, said she is proud of the consistently great work conducted by Rumbaugh and her lab for many years.

"Dr. Rumbaugh has made ground-breaking discoveries in many aspects of surgical infections, especially in biofilm research," Dissanaïke said. "It's great to see her earn this well-deserved recognition, and we're thrilled to have such a distinguished scientist on our team."

Rumbaugh, whose lab is currently studying potential biofilm dispersal agents that can induce microbes to leave the safety of the protective biofilm and become more susceptible to antibiotics, has been an ASM member since 1996 when she was a graduate student at TTUHSC. Her service to the organization includes stints as president-elect (2011-13) and president (2013-2015) for ASM's Texas Branch.

Rumbaugh said ASM membership has been an invaluable resource that has introduced her to microbiologists outside TTUHSC and helped her establish a network of colleagues and collaborators.

As the second TTUHSC microbiologist to receive AAM Fellow status — David Straus, Ph.D., who retired in 2013 was the first in 1996 — it's an honor she takes to heart.

“There are approximately 2,600 scientists who have become AAM Fellows over the last 50 years,” Rumbaugh said. “When I look at that list, I see the names of many of the most accomplished microbiologists in the world, individuals who have made imminent contributions to the field of microbiology and infectious disease. I am just very proud and humbled to now be included among them.”

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