

Tulane scientist named Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology

March 03, 2020 2:00 PM

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Chad Steele, professor and chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at Tulane University School of Medicine, has been named a 2020 Fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology (AAM). Steele's current research focuses on better understanding lung immune responses during acute versus chronic exposure to the opportunistic fungal pathogen *Aspergillus fumigatus*. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Chad Steele, professor and chair of the Department of Microbiology and Immunology at Tulane University School of Medicine, has been elected to the American Academy of Microbiology (AAM). This prestigious honor recognizes scientists for outstanding contributions in a wide variety of microbiology sectors, including research, education, public health, industry and government service. Steele is one of only 68 scientists worldwide to be elected as new fellows to the Class of 2020.

Steele's current research focuses on better understanding lung immune responses during acute versus chronic exposure to the opportunistic fungal pathogen *Aspergillus fumigatus*. The fungus is found in soil, plant matter and household dust, and produces airborne spores which can cause some people to get a range of illnesses, from asthma to pneumonia. In the Steele Laboratory at Tulane School of Medicine, Steele and his research team have developed experimental animal models that mimic the pathology observed in invasive pulmonary aspergillosis (fungal pneumonia) and fungal-associated allergic airway inflammation (fungal asthma).

Tulane University

Steele says being elected as fellow is exciting and humbling. “It means your peers have recognized your contribution to the field of microbiology over many years in terms of contributing to researching, supporting advancement of the field and training the next generation of scientists in microbiology,” Steele said.

Fellows of the American Academy of Microbiology are elected annually through a highly selective, peer-review process, based on their records of scientific achievement and original contributions that have advanced microbiology. The Class of 2020 represents fellows from 11 different countries, including Australia, Austria, Brazil, Chile, China, France, Germany, Israel, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

“Professor Steele is an outstanding scientist, and also brings dynamic, inspirational, and collaborative leadership to Tulane,” says Dr. Lee Hamm, dean of Tulane University School of Medicine. “He is not only performing outstanding scientific work himself but raising the level of achievement among those around him and in his area of work.”