

Scripps Oceanography Microbiologist Receives Honors

Elected fellow of American Academy of Microbiology and receives honorary degree

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Farooq Azam, professor of marine microbiology at Scripps Institution of Oceanography, University of California, San Diego, has been elected a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology (AAM). Azam is associated with Scripps's Marine Biology Research Division and Center for Marine Biotechnology and Biomedicine.

AAM "recognizes excellence, originality, and creativity in all subspecialties of the microbial sciences." Fellows are elected through a highly selective, peer-reviewed process, based on scientific achievement and original contributions to microbiology. Azam received the honor at the Academy Fellows Luncheon as part of the American Society for Microbiology's general meeting in New Orleans on May 26.

On May 14, Azam received an honorary doctorate from Sweden's University of Kalmar. The doctor of philosophy, honoris causa, was presented by the faculty of the department of natural science and engineering at the university's commencement ceremonies.

Azam's research focuses on the ecology, diversity and population dynamics of marine bacteria and viruses. Of special interest is the role played by marine bacteria and viruses in the oceanic carbon cycle through their control of organic matter decomposition, which can lead to a better understanding of the effects of global climate change on the marine food web.

"Farooq likes to think 'outside the box' and has a unique perspective on the roles of microbial communities in the sea," said Ronald Burton, director of the Marine Biology Research Division at Scripps. "His work has been absolutely instrumental in awakening oceanographers to the fundamental role of marine microbes in marine food webs and the global cycling of nutrients like carbon and silicon. Farooq is a captivating lecturer and an excellent role model for young scientists. As a prized colleague and collaborator, he continues to lead and participate in projects spanning the global oceans."

Azam received his doctorate in microbiology from the Czech Academy of Science in Prague in 1968, then completed a postdoctoral fellowship at the State University of New York, Stony Brook. He arrived at Scripps as a postdoctoral fellow in marine biology in 1969, and has held research and faculty appointments at the institution. Azam's past awards and honors include the UCSD Excellence in Research Award (1997), the G. Evelyn Hutchinson Medal from the American Society for Limnology and Oceanography (1995), and the Rosenstiel Medal in Oceanographic Sciences from the University of Miami (1984). He is a member of the American Society for Limnology and Oceanography.

AAM is the honorific leadership group within the American Society for Microbiology, the world's oldest life science organization. Based in Washington, D.C., AAM has more than 2,000 fellows in 37 countries.

The University of Kalmar is located in the city of Kalmar in southeast Sweden. The university is well known for its traditional courses in teaching, maritime studies and natural sciences with specialization in environmental studies and technology.

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