

Scott D. Emr Elected To American Academy of Arts & Sciences

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Scott D. Emr, Ph.D., UCSD professor of cellular and molecular medicine and an investigator with the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, has been elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (AAAS), one of the highest honors bestowed on individuals in academe, business, the arts and public affairs.

In addition to Emr, two additional UCSD faculty members were elected: Ted J. Case, Ph.D., professor of biology and Nolan R. Wallach, Ph.D., professor of mathematics. A total of 178 new fellows and 24 new foreign honorary members were named to the academy this spring.

The Emr lab studies the mechanism by which proteins are made inside cells and how they pass through different membrane compartments as they are secreted to the outside of cells. His team is especially interested in a particular set of membrane compartments called the endosomal system of the cell, which plays a major role in the capture of proteins and their uptake through a process called endocytosis.

The AAAS noted that Emr was selected because he was the “first to 1) establish a role for phosphoinositide lipids in the spatial and temporal control of membrane trafficking pathways, 2) identify numerous effector molecules (containing FYVE and PX domains) that directly bind the lipid PtdIns(3)P, and 3) identify the molecular machinery (ESCRT complexes) required for receptor down-regulation and HIV viral budding.”

“I am honored to welcome these outstanding and influential individuals to the nation's oldest and most illustrious learned society,” said Patricia Meyer Spacks, president of the academy. “These new members have made extraordinary contributions to their fields and disciplines through their commitment to the advancement of scholarly and creative work in every field and profession.”

The Academy was founded in 1780 by John Adams, James Bowdoin, John Hancock and other scholar-patriots “to cultivate every art and science which may tend to advance the interest, honor, dignity, and happiness of a free, independent, and virtuous people.”

The unique structure of the academy allows it to conduct interdisciplinary studies on international security, social policy, education and the humanities that draw on the range of academic and intellectual disciplines of its members. Its current membership of over 4,500 includes more than 150 Nobel laureates and 50 Pulitzer Prize winners. Former members include George Washington, Ben Franklin, Daniel Webster, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Albert Einstein and Winston Churchill.

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