Meet the Future Leaders in the Field of Host-Microbe Interactions

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Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) dramatically altered our lives in 2020, a vivid reminder that infectious disease continues to threaten society. Public health measures designed to limit the spread of the causative agent, severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), have perforated all aspects of public life, but they also helped to limit fatalities, which resulted in COVID-19 being only the third leading cause of death in the United States in 2020 after cardiovascular disease and cancer. However, we might not be able to stem the rise of infectious diseases for long. Fatalities from infections with antibiotic-resistant bacteria are predicted to surpass cardiovascular disease and cancer as the leading cause of death in the United States by the year 2050 (1). We will rely on the next generation of infectious disease researchers to confront this challenge.

Who are the future researchers that will lead this charge? Last year, Infection and Immunity published a special collection of review articles recognizing scientists in the field of host-microbe interactions who are in the early stages of their professional careers and have already shown promise as leading researchers (2). In the wake of this special collection, we used social media and e-mails to ASM members to broadly solicit nominations for leading early-career scientists to be featured in this year’s special review issue. The response has been magnificent, with over 90 early-career scientists nominated by their peers from countries around the world. Our minireview editors had the difficult task of selecting eminent candidates from this list, with preferences given to seasoned early-career scientists who might no longer be eligible in future years and with attempts to balance the topics that were covered. In this issue, Infection and Immunity is proud to honor the most promising early-career scientists with a special collection of review articles. We hope that you will enjoy reading about new concepts and ideas from future leaders in our field.

Infection and Immunity is planning to publish similar special issues annually to keep you up to date on who is who in infectious disease research. Do you know a future leader in the field of host-microbe interaction? Infection and Immunity wants to hear from you. Our minireview editors are currently accepting nominations of exceptional early-career principal investigators in microbe-host interactions for the next round of minireviews. Of note, we were not able to work with all the candidates nominated last year, so if your candidate is still eligible, feel free to renominate!

Please send all nominations to minireview editors Karen Ottemann and Tony Richardson by accessing the following URL: https://forms.gle/58zEkLk8HK9xN8T37. We look forward to featuring their contributions soon!
REFERENCES