Johns Hopkins University Names APL's Sommerer as Inaugural Gilman Scholar

John Sommerer, head of the Space Department at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory (APL) in Laurel, Md., has been named one of the inaugural Gilman Scholars by university President Ronald J. Daniels and Provost Lloyd B. Minor. A total of 17 eminent Johns Hopkins faculty and professional staff members from across the university's divisions were named as Gilman Scholars, an initiative named for the school's first president, Daniel Coit Gilman. His leadership and vision helped establish a university that promotes the highest standards of scholarship and research in the sciences and in the humanities. Daniels said that in creating this designation, "we wanted to be able to honor and celebrate those colleagues from across the campus who embody the very best of Hopkins. We recognize—and are delighted with—the preeminence of our inaugural cohort of Gilman Scholars." "Of course, I'm pleased and honored to be included in such a distinguished group of university colleagues," Sommerer said. "But my contributions have largely been the result of teams that I've led or otherwise facilitated—and it's wonderful to see the university recognize the value of the teamwork that exemplifies APL."

Sommerer, who joined APL in 1980, has headed the Space Department since 2008. He has held technical and management positions in five departments, including stints as Head of the Research Center and as Lab CTO, and he led the development of a key Lab strategic plan. He established an international reputation in nonlinear dynamics, making both theoretical and experimental contributions to the field. His dynamics research has been featured on the covers of both Science and Nature, and he also serves on several National Academies-chartered technical advisory bodies for the US Government. Sommerer is also currently Chair of the Naval Research Advisory Committee as a special government employee. "John is truly deserving of this honor," said APL Director Ralph Semmel. "His scientific achievements and astute leadership have had a major impact on APL, and he embodies so much of what makes the Lab a unique center for innovation and research. I applaud the university for making this excellent selection."

"The newly created designation recognizes individuals who are exemplars of the highest ideals of the university, demonstrated through a record of distinguished research, artistic and creative activity, teaching and service," said Provost Minor. Gilman Scholars will retain the title as long as they remain at Johns Hopkins, or until retirement. The total number of Gilman Scholars will be strictly limited, and new members will be selected in part by the existing group of scholars, with a maximum of five new members annually. The honor is open to faculty members in the academic divisions, and to professional staff at the Applied Physics Laboratory. The inaugural 17 designees include Nobel laureates, Shaw prize winners, Lasker Award winners, MacArthur fellows, and a National Medal of Science laureate. In addition to Sommerer, the Gilman Scholars are: Charles Bennett, Adam Riess and Gabrielle Spiegel, from the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences; Peter Agre, Diane Griffin and Alfred Sommer, from the Bloomberg School of Public Health; Lisa Cooper, Andrew Feinberg, Carol Greider, Solomon Snyder and Bert Vogelstein, from the School of Medicine; Jacquelyn Campbell, from the School of Nursing; David Lampton, from the School of Advanced International Studies; Andrew Talle, from the Peabody Institute; and Joseph Katz and Michael Miller, from the Whiting School of Engineering.