



Royal  
Astronomical  
Society

## **A 2023 Honorary Fellowship of the RAS is awarded to Dr. Rita Sambruna**

Dr Rita Sambruna has made exceptional contributions to astrophysics through her leadership and pioneering research, along with her leadership and service at NASA of a broad portfolio of activities advancing science and enabling others. Dr. Sambruna is exemplary in both careers: research and science administration.

Dr. Sambruna is one of the foremost experts in X-ray observations of relativistic jets in Active Galactic Nuclei (AGN). Dr Sambruna's research provided pioneering and foundational work in the field, significantly advancing understanding of extragalactic relativistic jets and their formation near supermassive black holes (SMBHs): understanding how energy is extracted from SMBHs, how they maintain energy over vast distances, and their impact on the surrounding environments. Dr. Sambruna's work with these extreme objects aided development of a unified model for AGN (radio galaxies to blazars), and played a significant role in developing X-ray astrophysics and multi-wavelength studies of jets. She is a Fellow of the American Astronomical Society and the American Physical Society.

Furthermore, Dr. Sambruna has been a science enabler through her role as Program Scientist at NASA Headquarters, including leading the Physics of the Cosmos Program, shepherding NASA's contribution to and guidance from the Astro2020 Decadal Survey, and strategic planning for the Astrophysics Division. She was awarded NASA's Exceptional Achievement Medal for this work. She fostered future national and international astrophysical research from individual scientists to next generation instruments, including serving as Program Scientist for cutting-edge projects like NICER (Neutron star Interior Composition Explorer) and LISA (Laser Interferometer Space Antenna), an ESA-led mission with NASA participation to detect gravitational waves in space. Dr. Sambruna is currently Deputy Director of the Astrophysics Division at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center, overseeing a staff of 300 people. She continues to promote diversity, mentor junior scientists, and has created a multi-institution multi-messenger data centre ([MOSSAIC](#)). She is Acting Deputy Director of the Science Exploration Directorate at NASA's GSFC.

For these reasons Dr. Rita Sambruna is awarded an Honorary Fellowship of the RAS.

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