

Michele M. Fluck is a university distinguished professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, the first woman hired in a tenure track position within that department. She joined MSU in 1979 with the hope of having a good career, but also to be helpful to MSU students. She was immediately engulfed in a group of courageous professional and faculty women feminists (such as Teresa Bernardez and Barrie Thorne) who were striving to improve the status of women. Together, and with a receptive Administration, much was accomplished, starting with what became "The 14 steps of hiring." The Fluck laboratory used a mouse tumor-inducing virus, as a model to study the interactions of a virus with its host cells. A crucial discovery concerned the unexpected role of the viral tumor-inducing protein to control the expression of the viral genes and the viral genome replication via the induction of cellular "transcription factors." Recently, the lab proposed that these factors represent the main motor of the tumor cells. The lab thinks that this motor is universal, working in all types of tumors. Inhibitors of this motor should inhibit the growth of most tumors. Fluck received her B.S. and Ph.D. from the University of Geneva in Switzerland and was a postdoctoral fellow and assistant professor at Harvard.