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AIBS NAMES EMERGING PUBLIC POLICY LEADERS *MIT and University of Iowa Graduate Students Receive Award*

WASHINGTON, DC – The [American Institute of Biological Sciences](http://www.aibs.org) (AIBS) has selected two graduate students to receive the 2014 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award.

Andrew Adrian is pursuing a Ph.D. in biology at the University of Iowa. **Amalia Aruda Almada** is a Ph.D. candidate in biological oceanography at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution.

“Amalia and Andrew have demonstrated leadership, initiative, and enthusiasm at the interface of science and policy,” said **AIBS President Dr. Joseph Travis**. “I congratulate them on their well deserved recognition and look forward to their involvement in the upcoming Congressional Visits Day.”

Since 2003, AIBS has recognized the achievements of biology graduate students who have demonstrated an interest and aptitude for contributing to science and public policy. Almada and Adrian will travel to Washington, DC in April to meet with their congressional delegations. They will also participate in a training program on communicating with policymakers and a briefing on the federal budget for scientific research. These events are in conjunction with the annual Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) Congressional Visits Day. The winners also receive a one-year membership in AIBS, which includes a subscription to the scientific journal *BioScience*.

AIBS is a professional scientific organization dedicated to informing and leading research, education, and policymaking at the frontiers of the life sciences.

“This is the twelfth year that AIBS has recognized outstanding graduate students for their achievements in science policy,” said **AIBS Executive Director Dr. Richard O’Grady**. “Amalia and Andrew join an accomplished group of Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award winners who are fostering a productive dialogue between policymakers and scientists.”

"As scientists, we understand the long-term impact and goals of our research, yet we often forget that we need to emphasize its relevance to society," said **Andrew Adrian**. "My goal is to bring my understanding of scientific research to policymakers and impress upon them the need for sustained investment in scientific research for a better tomorrow."

Adrian is a founding member of a student outreach organization that holds public lectures on

science. In his capacity as chair of that group's policy subcommittee, Adrian organized meetings with state and local officials about science policy. He also participated in the 2013 BESC Congressional Visits Day. Adrian is the trainee advisory representative to the board of directors for the Genetics Society of America, where he is helping to draft the society's position statements on legislation. He is an active member and secretary of the Iowa City Darwin Day organization. He has also served for four years on the University of Iowa's Graduate Student Steering Committee. Adrian's research focuses on how and why meiotic recombination happens. His B.S. in Biology is from University of Alabama in Huntsville.

"More than ever, policymakers need to understand the value of basic biological research and how it continues to fuel an economy of innovation, inspiration, and economic growth in the United States," said **Amalia Aruda Almada**. "The Congressional Visits Day sponsored by AIBS will provide critical training to hone my science communication skills to effectively express the importance and urgency of funding basic biological research."

Almada is a former public affairs intern with the Ecological Society of America, where she helped alert scientists to policy issues. As an undergraduate, she co-founded a student group to lobby for the national recycling of electronics being disposed of from college campuses. That group weighed in on federal e-waste legislation. Almada co-organized a course for graduate students on "Elements of Environmental Policy," and has completed several science communication workshops. She also was elected to serve as the biology student representative and treasurer of the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution (WHOI) student government. She expects to finish her Ph.D. on the association of bacteria with copepods—tiny shrimp like animals—at MIT-WHOI in 2014. Almada has a B.S. in Biology from Georgetown University.

This year, AIBS will also recognize two Honorable Mentions. **Sonja Brooks** is a Ph.D. candidate in Chemical and Physical Biology at Vanderbilt University. **Keerthi Shetty** is a Ph.D. candidate in Immunobiology at Yale University.

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