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AIBS NAMES EMERGING PUBLIC POLICY LEADER *Emory University Graduate Student Receives Award*

WASHINGTON, DC – The [American Institute of Biological Sciences](http://www.aibs.org) (AIBS) has selected the winner of the 2016 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award. Julia Omotade is a Ph.D. candidate in the Biochemistry, Cellular and Developmental Biology program at Emory University.

“AIBS is proud to recognize Ms. Omotade’s notable accomplishments as the leader of a successful student movement about the importance of federally supported research,” said AIBS President Dr. Joseph Travis.

Julia Omotade co-founded the Emory Science Advocacy Network, a group that encourages graduate students to advocate for federal research funding. She has helped members of the group meet with their lawmakers in Georgia and in Washington, DC. For the past two years, Julia has co-organized a letter writing campaign, which resulted in more than 600 letters to members of Congress in 2015. Julia has a B.S. in biology from The Catholic University of America. Her Ph.D. research investigates how brain cells communicate during development and adulthood and how this communication is dysregulated in diseases such as Alzheimer’s.

“Currently, the breakthroughs of tomorrow are threatened by dwindling federal investment in research,” said Omotade. “As a graduate student, I have witnessed exciting scientific projects come to a halt because scientists are no longer able to pay for the expensive costs of equipment or highly-trained individuals.”

“Julia joins a distinguished group of Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award winners who have demonstrated great promise in science policy,” said AIBS Interim Co-Executive Director Dr. Robert Gropp. “I am confident that Julia’s participation in Congressional Visits Day will add to her ability to influence science policy throughout her career.”

Since 2003, AIBS has recognized the achievements of biology graduate students who have demonstrated an interest and aptitude for making contributions to science and science policy. AIBS will sponsor Julia’s travel to Washington, DC in April to participate in a training program on communicating with policymakers and a briefing on the federal budget for scientific research. She will also meet with her congressional delegation in conjunction with the annual Biological and Ecological Sciences Coalition (BESC) Congressional Visits Day, an event co-organized by AIBS. In addition, Julia will receive a one-year membership in AIBS, which includes a

subscription to the scientific journal *BioScience*.

AIBS will also recognize three additional outstanding leaders as Honorable Mentions. Donald Gibson is pursuing a Ph.D. in Integrative Genetics and Genomics at the University of California, Davis. Kevin Morris is working towards a Ph.D. in biochemistry at Emory University. Caroline Smith is a Ph.D. candidate in behavioral neuroscience at Boston College.

For more information about the Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award, including past recipients, visit http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/resources/EPPLA_Summary.pdf.

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