

[View this email in your browser](#)

Press Release

AIBS Announces 2019 Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award Winners *University of Georgia and University of Maryland Graduate Students Recognized*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, February 13, 2019

Contact: Jyotsna Pandey, jpandey@aibs.org

Washington, DC - The [American Institute of Biological Sciences](#) (AIBS) is pleased to announce that Barbara Del Castello and Brian Lovett have been selected to receive the 2019 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award (EPPLA). The EPPLA recognizes graduate students in the biological sciences who have demonstrated leadership skills and an aptitude for future professional success working at the intersection of science and public policy.

Barbara Del Castello is a doctoral student in genetics at the University of Georgia, where her research is focused on organ development. She studies the parathyroid, which controls the level of calcium in the body, and thymus, which produces T-cells, an important component of the immune system. She has worked as a policy intern at the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy and as a senior fellow at the Institute on Science for Global Policy, a science policy think tank. Del Castello earned her BA in biology with a minor in anthropology from Eckerd College, Florida.

Brian Lovett is a doctoral candidate in entomology at the University of Maryland (UMD), College Park. His research focuses on engineering a fungal disease in mosquitoes as a tool to eradicate malaria. Lovett's research has been recognized with the Student Presentation Award at the 2018 European Congress of Entomology and the Best Student Oral Presentation Award at the 2017 meeting of the Society for Invertebrate Pathology. Lovett received his BS in microbiology from Michigan State University, East Lansing.

Both awardees are active in their professional communities. Del Castello has previously participated in congressional district meetings as a participant in the AIBS Congressional District Visits event. As President of the Women in Science organization at the University of Georgia she has coordinated numerous programs to benefit women in STEM fields. Lovett serves on the Entomological Society of America Science Policy Committee, where he has contributed to position statements and developed informative fact sheets. He also serves on the Mycological Society of America Diversity Committee and has participated in media interviews about his research.

Del Castello pursued the EPPLA because she wants to be a science communicator and advocate for science. She says, "By engaging with policymakers, scientists can help create sound evidence-based policy that benefits our society. If we scientists aren't the ones reaching out to policymakers to help them, who will?" Like Del Castello, Lovett views the award as a unique opportunity to develop his policy and science communication skills. "Communicating research findings beyond publication and into the minds of the general public and policymakers is a critical, and too often ignored, part of the scientific process. Science and policy are indelibly intertwined with each supporting the other," he adds.

This is the sixteenth year that AIBS has recognized graduate student achievement through the EPPLA program. "We continue to be impressed by the outstanding leadership and accomplishments of the individuals who apply for the Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award every year," said Dr. Robert Gropp, AIBS Executive Director.

Del Castello and Lovett will travel to Washington, DC, in March to participate in an AIBS science communications training program and to meet with their members of Congress as part of the annual AIBS Congressional Visits Day.

AIBS is the national organization dedicated to promoting informed decision-making that advances the biological sciences for the benefit of science and society. The EPPLA program is one way that AIBS is working to build the capacity of the scientific community to promote sound decision-making.

The EPPLA program is made possible by the generous financial support of AIBS individual members. More information about the EPPLA program and AIBS membership is available at www.aibs.org.

- END -

