

RECOGNIZING EXCEPTIONAL GRADUATE STUDENTS

EMERGING PUBLIC POLICY LEADERSHIP AWARD

Since 2003, the American Institute of Biological Sciences has recognized outstanding graduate students with the Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award. The award is presented to current Master's and doctoral students who have demonstrated initiative and leadership in science policy.

Recipients obtain first-hand experience at the interface of science and public policy through their participation in the AIBS Congressional Visits Day. Award winners receive an expense-paid trip to Washington, DC, where they are trained in public policy and communication. They also meet with federal policymakers to discuss investments in the biological sciences.

Past award winners are currently working in congressional offices, federal science agencies, and non-governmental organizations. Many remain engaged in public policy, either through their job or through involvement with professional societies.

The program has been so successful that other scientific societies have initiated similar programs modeled on the AIBS award. The network of Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award winners is growing. AIBS remains in contact with past winners in an effort to build a stronger national science policy community.



Receiving the Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award was an enormously rewarding experience for me. I learned practical tips for communicating with policymakers, the media, and the general public. I could immediately apply these strategies to a full day of congressional meetings to advocate for increased science funding. This experience was a powerful way to hone my skills as a communicator, which will continue to directly benefit my career as a scientist.

—Brian Lovett, Ph.D.
2019 Award Recipient



EMERGING PUBLIC POLICY LEADERSHIP AWARD WINNERS

<i>Year</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Current Employer</i>
2025	JP Flores	Case Western Reserve University
2024	Alex Rich	Yale University
2024	Efraín Rodríguez-Ocasio	University of Wisconsin-Madison
2023	Mohammad Inam Jameel	University of Georgia
2023	Elena Suglia	California State Water Resources Control Board
2022	Heidi Waite	University of California, Irvine
2022	Michael McCloy	Texas A&M University
2021	Shyla Finley	DaVita Kidney Care
2021	Karl Palmquist	Sierra Club
2020	Renee Collini	The Water Institute
2020	Corinn Rutkoski	USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
2019	Brian Lovett	West Virginia University
2019	Barbara Del Castello	RAND
2018	Joanna Bairzin	Genentech
2018	Karena Nguyen	Georgia Institute of Technology
2017	Stephanie Bora	BOLDSCIENCE
2016	Julia Omotade	Association of American Medical Colleges
2015	Taylor Herren	Soil Carbon Initiative
2015	Kellyann Jones-Jamtegaard	National Institute of Food and Agriculture
2014	Andrew Adrian	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
2014	Amalia Almada	University of Southern California Sea Grant Program
2013	Jennifer Rood	Genentech
2013	Paul Tanger	Bayer
2012	Andrew Reinmann	CUNY Advanced Science Research Center
2012	Lida Beninson	National Academies
2011	Wesley Brooks	State of Florida
2010	Meredith Niles	University of Vermont
2010	Ryan Richards	Center for American Progress
2010	Leslie Smith	Dive into the Ocean, Inc.
2009	Adam Roddy	Florida International University
2009	Anna Ibarra	InterAmerican Institute for Global Change Research
2008	Cheryl Logan	California State University, Monterey Bay
2008	Caroline Ridley	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
2007	Amber Szoboszlai	North Bay Organizing Project
2007	Sarah Wright	Stanford University School of Medicine
2006	Madhura Kulkarni	Northern Kentucky University
2006	Christopher Hofmann	U.S. State Department
2005	Karen Laughlin	Stolte Family Foundation
2004	Allison Vogt	National Audubon Society
2004	Heidi Weiskel	Environmental Law Alliance Worldwide



This award gave me the opportunity to learn more about the political landscape surrounding science policy while also getting hands-on experience communicating with policy makers. Looking forward to a career as a scientist in science policy, this program was instrumental for me to learn and hone my communication skills.

—Heidi Waite
2022 Award Recipient



U.S. Senator Roger Wicker (seated second from left) meets with 2016 winner Julia Omotade (seated first from left) and other Congressional Visits Day participants.



This experience gave me insight into the realities of politics and diplomacy. I learned that effective communication with policymakers requires knowledge of the federal budget and the impacts a policy will have on their constituents. This positive and challenging experience solidified my goal of working in science policy and inspired me to apply for more policy opportunities.

—Lida Beninson, Ph.D.
2012 Award Recipient



U.S. Representative Kevin Yoder (second from right) meets with 2015 winner Kellyann Jones-Jamtgaard (second from left) and other Congressional Visits Day participants.