



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE, February 23, 2015**

Contact: Julie Palakovich Carr, [jpalakovichcarr@aibs.org](mailto:jpalakovichcarr@aibs.org), 202-628-1500 x 225

## **AIBS NAMES EMERGING PUBLIC POLICY LEADERS** *Graduate Students from California, Kansas Receive Award*

WASHINGTON, DC – The [American Institute of Biological Sciences](http://www.aibs.org) (AIBS) has selected two graduate students to receive the 2015 AIBS Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award. Kellyann Jones-Jamtgaard is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Microbiology, Immunology, and Molecular Genetics at the University of Kansas Medical Center. Taylor Herren is pursuing a Master’s degree in biology at California State University, Chico.

Taylor and Kellyann have extensive experience in science policy at the state level and within their universities. “AIBS is proud to recognize their notable accomplishments with the 2015 Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award,” said AIBS President Dr. Joseph Travis.

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. Herren and Jones-Jamtgaard will travel to Washington, DC in May 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.

“Each year we are impressed with the applications we receive for this award. It is heartening to see how many graduate students around the country are committed to making a difference in the world by bridging the divide that too often exists between science and good public policy,” said AIBS Interim Co-Executive Director Dr. Robert Gropp. “Kellyann and Taylor join an accomplished group of past Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award winners.”

“Science education and funding for research must be a priority if we are to overcome the challenges of the future,” said Taylor Herren. Science is an important part of “solving the most pressing issues facing society and will give future generations the tools that they need to address issues like global health, climate change, and food insecurity.”

Herren has been active in state policy, making dozens of trips to lawmakers’ offices and to attend

legislative committee meetings regarding funding for science education and research throughout the California State University (CSU) system. On campus, she has worked to increase support for undergraduate research opportunities. Herren played a leading role in a successful campaign that resulted in the CSU system adopting a sustainability policy. She is a board member of the California State Student Association and is the President and CEO of Associated Students Inc. Herren has been recognized with multiple awards from CSU for outstanding student leadership. Her B.S. is in animal science from CSU, Chico.

“Basic research enables us to demystify our world and creates the foundation that will lead to long-term advancements in both the public and private sectors,” said Kellyann Jones-Jamtgaard. As scientists, “we need to tell our stories, put a face on research, and advocate for funding levels that will keep the United States at the forefront of discovery.”

Jones-Jamtgaard co-organized the 2012 and 2013 Capitol Graduate Research Summits, events that highlighted for state policymakers the value of research performed by graduate students enrolled at state universities in Kansas. She has been active on campus, serving as President of the University of Kansas Medical Center Graduate Student Council, Vice President of the Student Governing Council, and as co-chair of the policy subcommittee of the Biomedical Research Resource Student Group. Her involvement also includes leading an initiative for the medical center to pass a childbirth accommodation policy for students. Jones-Jamtgaard serves on the Committee for Postdocs and Students for the American Society for Cell Biology. Her B.S. is in Biology and Spanish from Duke University.

AIBS will also recognize three Honorable Mentions. Julia Behnfedt is a Ph.D. student studying cancer biology at The Ohio State University. Don Gibson is pursuing a Ph.D. in Integrative Genetics and Genomics at the University of California, Davis. Tanisha Williams is a Ph.D. student in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Connecticut.

For more information about the Emerging Public Policy Leadership Award, including past recipients, visit [http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/resources/EPPLA\\_Overview.pdf](http://www.aibs.org/public-policy/resources/EPPLA_Overview.pdf).

- END -