

## **Student Science Policy Award Committee, Annual Report (2022-2023)**

**Committee Members:** J. A. Cook, A. V. Linzey, M. Schlis-Elias, A. Shenko, S. A. Smiley (Chair), & Jyotsna Pandey (Ex officio)

**Mission:** This committee administers the Student Science Policy Award (SSPA) which can be bestowed upon multiple graduate students each year. This award was created to facilitate ASM student members' involvement and training in science public policy. The award would not be possible without the collaboration of the American Institute of Biological Sciences (AIBS).

### **Information Items:**

(1) In January 2023, our committee advertised the ASM Student Science Policy Award available to graduate student members. We utilized social media and Mammal-L to advertise the 2023 award announcement. Making the award visible to potential candidates remains a challenge. We received few applications, but those received were reviewed favorably by the committee members with a majority vote of support.

(2) Our 2023 award recipient was Hannah Wilson from the University of Regina. Hannah accepted the award and traveled to Washington, DC to participate in Congressional Visits Day (CVD).

(3) This year's CVD event was the first held in-person since 2019, taking place in DC from April 24-26, 2023. As award recipients from 2020 and 2022 had only attended virtual events, past award recipients were invited to attend the in-person event in 2023. Attendees from previous years included Toni Androski (2020), Barbara Sugarman (2020), and Conner Philson (2022). It should be noted that this committee chose not to offer the Student Science Policy Award in 2021 because of the global pandemic and political instability in DC. Additionally, persons currently employed in federal positions may not be allowed to participate in advocacy, making it hard for all previous student recipients to attend post-graduation. Dr. Jyotsna Pandey reported positively concerning the ASM student awardees following the CVD. ASM supported four of the 18 participants at the 2023 CVD event. A short summary is available from AIBS at <https://www.aibs.org/news/2023/230505-2023-cvd-event.html#subheader>

(4) Committee composition did not change this year; all committee members are current members of ASM. Any persons interested in joining or chairing this committee are encouraged to reach out to the current committee chair.

(5) The SSPA committee members desire to continue to offer this program as long as it is supported by ASM and AIBS.

**Action Items:**

(1) The SSPA Committee requests \$5,000 to sponsor two students to attend Congressional Visits Day in Washington DC in spring 2024. The Award cost includes transportation, lodging, food, planning, logistical support, and a full day of policy training (Communications Training Boot Camp) provided by AIBS. The funding request increase over last year reflects higher costs associated with travel and lodging as reported by AIBS.

This award will continue to engage mammalogy students in conversations with policymakers on Capitol Hill. These interactions increase the scientific awareness of policymakers through discussions with awardees concerning the benefits of funding mammalian research, natural history collections, biological field stations, the National Science Foundation, and other programs. The awardees benefit from policy training, experiential learning, and interactions with federal scientists and respected policy decision-makers. The award is important for creating a future generation of mammalogists who are engaged in the science-policy interface and can serve as an active voice for our community. We've had very positive feedback from past student participants.

(2) We ask ASM members to help promote the award to current graduate students who have an interest in science policy. Many applicants apply from word-of-mouth advertisement. We anticipate next year's application deadline to be in late January 2024, contingent on funding renewal.

**Respectfully submitted,**

Sarah Smiley, Chair

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