



STEP Newsletter
June 5, 2015

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Welcome from ESA President – Phil Mulder

You and other ESA Student Transition and Early Professional (STEP) members represent the future of our discipline and our Society. I recognize the many contributions you make to so much of what we do at every meeting associated with ESA. We genuinely appreciate your engagement, and encourage you to become lifelong contributing members of your chosen professional society. I have no doubt that the future leaders of ESA are among the STEP group and I see their contributions in the impact you and others have through developing symposia, working with the Education and Outreach Committee, attracting more participation and members into the Society, highlighting the benefits of membership to new and incoming members, and becoming actively involved in strategic initiatives that will continue to grow our Society and enrich the experience of entomology for everyone.

The efforts of the STEP Committee continue to be herculean and this year, Mrs. Tamra Reall Lincoln, the Student Representative to the ESA Governing Board and a member of the STEP Committee, joined me for the Council of Scientific Society Presidents meeting in Washington D.C. In addition, two STEP members were in D.C. last month to begin the arduous task of participating in the first training as Science Policy Fellows for ESA. This level of leadership for so many at such an early time in their career speaks volumes for the quality of STEP membership and the STEP Committee. Obviously, we must continue to recognize the importance of your and other STEP members to ESA through special programs, representation, incentives, and awards. We hope you will take advantage of these and other opportunities to earn distinction within ESA. Thank you for your active participation in the Entomological Society of America.

Submit a Paper or Poster for Entomology 2015

Stay on top of the latest research in your field and share your own new discoveries with colleagues from all over the country through a paper or poster presentation. Submit today- deadline June 12.

<http://www.entsoc.org/entomology2015/submit>

\$50,000 in Travel Funding to ICE 2016 for Students and Early Professionals Outside the U.S.

ESA's Student Transition and Early Professionals Committee (STEP) will award a total of \$50,000 to 25-30 participants from outside of the U.S. to support their travel to ICE 2016, along with complimentary registration for the Congress. Awards will be based on criteria such as the scope and importance of the applicant's research to be presented at the Congress, how the applicant's attendance and participation at the Congress will benefit his or her professional development and the science of entomology, and how the applicant's attendance will contribute to the diversity of attendees at ICE 2016. The application deadline is September 1, 2015. Click here for more information.

<http://ice2016orlando.org/esas-student-transition-and-early-professionals-committee-step-travel-funding-competition-for-ice-2016/>

Call for 2015 ESA Science Policy Fellow Applications

Want to learn how science policy and science funding decisions are made at the federal level, engage with lawmakers, legislative staff, and federal agency leaders in Washington, D.C., and build your resume/cv? Apply today.

<http://www.entsoc.org/sci-pol/esa-science-policy-fellows-program>

Reminders

- Don't forget to submit a paper or poster for Entomology 2015 (deadline June 12!)
 - <http://www.entsoc.org/entomology2015/submit>
- Come to the STEP Lunch and Learn in Minneapolis, "Marketing Yourself for Employment Across Sectors" - free lunch provided!
- Do you or someone you know reside outside of the U.S. and need help getting to ICE2016? Check out the ICE Travel awards
 - <http://ice2016orlando.org/esas-student-transition-and-early-professionals-committee-step-travel-funding-competition-for-ice-2016/>
- Missed an ESA webinar? ESA members have 24/7 access to webinar archives
 - <http://www.entsoc.org/students/esa-webinar-series>

Thoughts from a Science Policy Fellow

Dr. Jamin Dreyer

It was impossible to ignore the airliner's aggressively banked landing approach into Reagan National Airport in Washington, DC. I had come to meet with the other four Science Policy Fellows, ESA staff and consultants, and eventually congressional offices from some of the districts I have called home. Like pilots weaving jets through restricted airspace above marble monuments, selling entomology to policy makers requires careful maneuvering and a clear focus on the goal ahead. My over the wing view stretching down the National Mall is memorable, but looking “under the hood” at government in action changed my understanding of Washington itself.

Getting noticed in a diverse democracy of 320 million people with endless competing interests isn't easy. Accordingly, ESA is increasing the visibility of entomology in the capital with specific goals to share our expertise and protect federal funding for basic research. This strategy includes the creation of the Science Policy Fellowship; two-year, overlapping cohorts of five fellows interceding for ESA to members of the federal government.

To most, spring means warmer weather, but in Washington DC it means heated budget debates. Since creating or destroying federal agencies is very difficult, the purse-strings have *de facto* control of government priorities so budget battles are anything but inconsequential. Appropriations for major federal science agencies (NIH, NSF, USDA, EPA, etc.) are negotiated between the president and congress. Because so much basic science relies on federal dollars, advocating for insect research to people who craft and pass the federal budget is imperative.

On 13 May, each fellow met with 6-7 legislative offices on Capitol Hill. Senators and Representatives cast the vote, but swarms of anonymous young staffers run day-to-day operations. ESA works with a consulting firm specializing in science policy advocacy, and these invaluable professionals (including former Hill workers and PhD research scientists) arranged meetings with relevant staffers, prepped materials and talking points, shepherded us through the Byzantine halls of congressional office buildings on both sides of the Capitol, and helped guide our conversations.

Meeting with a congressional staffer is basically speed dating. Their interests vary and as only one in a slew of daily meetings, you might need to make your best pitch and exit gracefully in only minutes. After rapid introductions and hopefully some friendly questions from the staffer, you must cut to the all-important “ask.” The “ask” is why you requested 15-30 minutes of invaluable face time; in our case the specific funding levels for research agencies that ESA supports (e.g. \$450 million for USDA-AFRI). As we said thank you and moved for the door, a single sheet “leave behind” paper reminded them of our ask and about the mission and scope of ESA.

The short term goal is to secure robust funding for agencies that support our work in the 2016 federal budget. But the long game is to make ESA a resource for policy makers as they consider legislation that impacts entomological issues like pollinator health, invasive species, and insect-

vectored disease.

Regardless of future interaction with the 30-odd congressional offices we reached, our message that entomology is an exciting and important science was delivered to 10% of the Senate and 5% of the House of Representatives; not bad for one day! Science fellows got a taste for the “sausage making” of government, and communicated with a *very* different audience than we are used to. This fall, the five of us plus five new fellows* will reconvene in DC to explore the workings of federal research agencies. I'm already looking forward to my view from the air, but especially from the ground.

For a similar article published in ESA's EntomologyToday blog, visit <https://arielrivers.wordpress.com/2015/05/18/entomological-society-of-america-esa-science-policy-fellows-do-dc/>

**If you've read this far, perhaps you want to consider joining Class Two of the ESA Science Policy Fellowship. Apply today at <http://www.entsoc.org/sci-pol/esa-science-policy-fellows-program>*

An interview with a Science Policy Fellow

Ariel Rivers

What kind of role do you see policy playing for ESA, and where do the policy fellows fit in?

Last month, the five ESA fellows had the opportunity to meet with the offices of 30 Senators and Representatives of Congress (individually, we hit about 6-7 each). As most of us are from somewhere else, living somewhere else, we covered a wide geographic area and range of political affiliations, with the intent of discussing ESA as a resource for these offices and promoting our science. Since it is “Appropriations Season,” we timed this visit to emphasize the importance of different agency budgets in funding entomology. One staffer in an office I visited with did not even know what entomology was (that was actually my favorite office!), and so this advocacy seems to be incredibly important in educating people regarding the wide implications of our science. We as a group of fellows have had long discussions regarding how these visits will actually benefit ESA, but as the first class of fellows, the five of us have a lot of freedom in dictating how we will engage with ESA as a group. We suspect that it may take time, but as we build a network of individuals with the background in how to appropriately engage with our policymakers, over time we may notice more discussion about entomology by entomologists in congressional hearings, etc.

What are you learning? What kind of insights have you gained?

I have been surprised by how much I still have to learn about the legislative process. The offices we visited with were incredibly busy, meeting with several other organizations throughout the day with similar advocacy agendas. It seemed like the offices really took into consideration what I had to say, and especially in regards to how it would affect their constituents. This surprised me for some reason, and while it felt effective in terms of advocating for specific funding, it was also super fun to talk to adults about why I think my science matters. I suppose the most basic “lesson learned” so far is that everyone should take the opportunity to engage with their representatives (and they seem to make it easy if you are in DC, with opportunities to visit offices, constituent events, tours they can arrange for you of the Capitol, etc.).

How does the program help your career?

I have always had an interest in outreach and advocacy, and I really enjoy engaging with people in informal settings to discuss my scientific areas of interest. The fellowship is providing excellent opportunities to practice this skill, while increasing my knowledge and capacity in communicating with non-scientists. I am also learning so much about our field and society from four other practicing entomologists, while building camaraderie with the group (shout out to Marianne, Rayda, Jamin, and Anders!). Obviously, it remains to be seen how it will help my career over the long-term, but I find these types of activities very motivating, which is definitely helpful in the short-term.

Meet the STEP Committee



Theresa Cira is a PhD candidate at the University of Minnesota where she is studying the biology and management of the brown marmorated stink bug *Halyomorpha halys* (Stål), an invasive agricultural pest. Additionally, through a minor in Science, Technology, and Environmental Policy, she is exploring how science and policy interact. Theresa is particularly interested in how, through interdisciplinary work, entomologists can play a part in creating a more sustainable food production system. In the STEP committee Theresa has gained opportunities to learn and practice career and leadership skills, acquired professional connections, and found a meaningful way to give back to the ESA community.



Ian Grettenberger is a PhD student at Penn State University studying sustainable pest management via increased crop diversity in the form of variety mixtures. Ian first became involved with ESA in a leadership role as the Co-Chair and then Chair of the Eastern Branch Student Affairs Committee, and has been proud to serve a different component of the membership on the STEP Committee. Through ESA, Ian enjoys sharing research, connecting with other entomologists, and making use of the many opportunities for professional development.



Dr. Tamra Reall Lincoln is currently a postdoctoral researcher with the USDA-ARS at the Biological Control of Insects Research Laboratory in Missouri. She recently completed her PhD at the University of Missouri studying the influence of entomopathogenic fungi on founding pairs of subterranean termites. She also completed a teaching minor and certificate in science outreach. As a student, she participated in ESA events such as Linnaean Games, Student Debates, and presenting papers and posters. ESA has also provided opportunities to network and participate in many leadership opportunities. Previously, Tamra served as the Chair of the Student Activities Committee (SAC). Currently, she is the Student Representative to the Governing Board, on the STEP Committee, a member of the SAC, and is ESA's early career leader representative to the Council of Science Society Presidents.



Dr. Julie Peterson grew up in Louisville, Kentucky and joined the ESA in 2007 as a brand new graduate student. Since then she has completed a PhD at the University of Kentucky and a post-doc at the University of Minnesota. In March of 2014, Julie began as an Assistant Professor and Extension Specialist at the University of Nebraska's West Central Research & Extension Center in North Platte. She currently focuses on integrated pest management and resistance management for field crops, with interests in biological control, arthropod food webs, and agroecology. She has found incredible value in her ESA membership from both a professional and social point of view; by doing things like playing Linnaean Games, serving on North Central Branch committees, and applying for ESA awards, she felt she not only had an advantage on the job market, but also made friends and had a lot of fun.



Travis Prochaska is a PhD candidate under the supervision of Drs. Tiffany Heng-Moss and Gautam Sarath at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln working on the biochemical, physiological, and anatomical insights of insect-bioenergy grass interactions to help better understand the potential insect resistance mechanism among defined switchgrass populations. Previously serving as the Student Representative to the ESA Governing Board for the past two years, Travis has been able to learn about the topics of interest that STEP and other members find valuable to build webinars and ESA workshops to give back to the society. This has allowed him to make new contacts that STEP can potentially utilize in future projects to add value to the STEP membership.



Dr. Ashfaq Sial is currently working as an Assistant Professor in the Entomology Department at the University of Georgia where he has a research and extension appointment. The goals of his research program are to investigate biology and ecology of insect pests of small fruits in both field and laboratory settings, and to develop sustainable management programs. The majority of his current projects focus on invasive pest, spotted wing drosophila. He works directly with growers to help them implement IPM programs in conventional and organic production systems. His laboratory is well-funded through federal, stakeholder, and industry grants. He also serves as IPM Coordinator for the state of Georgia.



Dr. Sheena Sidhu is a postdoctoral researcher at University of California Riverside studying pollinator communities and pollination biology in both natural and agricultural systems of southern California. Sheena has valued the benefits of being an ESA member and particularly appreciated the focus on students at branch and annual meetings. She joined STEP to advocate for similar support for postdoc and in-transition members that are at the critical phase of early career development. Sheena is open to

hearing concerns, questions, and suggestions from fellow ESA members in order to provide a voice for STEP members within ESA and to foster a community among peers.



Dr. Jennifer Tsuruda works for Clemson University as the extension specialist in apiculture for South Carolina. She is developing an extension program to educate beekeepers, kids, and the public about the importance of honey bees and pollinators and works to breed bees that are resistance to hive pests. Jennifer is proud to serve on the STEP committee and aims to support the members of ESA who want to take strides in attaining their career and personal goals. STEP membership has benefited Jennifer in providing opportunities to work with fellow STEPs, as well as governing board members of ESA, to help drive the future of ESA and its members.



Dr. Ana Maria Velez is currently a postdoctoral research associate in the Insect Toxicology Lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Her research interests include evolution of insecticide resistance and the use of RNAi as a pest management tool. Ana joined ESA in 2009 when she arrived in United States from Colombia to pursue her PhD. She has found her ESA membership to be extremely valuable since it has provided her with an opportunity to share her research and to network with fellow entomologists. Ana has previous experience with leadership roles at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln but it is her first opportunity to serve with ESA. Ana is really excited to a member of the STEP committee and her goal is to generate a better experience for STEP members, especially the international community.

Want to get involved? If you have any thoughts, suggestions, or questions feel free to contact the STEP committee through esa.step.committee@gmail.com or join our ESA network. <http://esanetworks.org/>