



2014 George C. Eickwort Student Research Award

GENERAL STATEMENT

This award is given annually by the NAS/IUSSI in memory of George Eickwort. The award recognizes exceptional research and scholarly activity by a senior graduate student or recent PhD recipient in the field of social insect biology. The award consists of a certificate, an honorarium, and a one-year subscription to *Insectes Sociaux*. This year's NAS/IUSSI Awards Committee consisted of Sean O'Donnell (chair), Terry McGlynn, and Michele Lanan.

AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

The committee is pleased to announce that **Dr. Sara Lawson** is the recipient of the 2014 Eickwort award. Sara currently holds a postdoctoral position with Sandra Rehan at the University of New Hampshire, after earning her PhD in 2014 working with Patrick Abbott at Vanderbilt University.

The committee was highly impressed with the breadth of Sara's accomplishments, her research productivity, extensive outreach efforts, and her involvement in scientific societies. Sara has published in top journals, and she has presented at numerous scientific meetings including IUSSI venues. She has garnered awards for her presentations, and organized symposia at national and international meetings.

Sara's PhD research focused on the evolution of social behavior in gall-forming aphids, an important lineage for comparison with better-studied Hymenoptera and termites. Her work has focused on costs and benefits of social behavior, considering the interplay of genetic and ecological factors as drivers and enablers of social evolution. She has taken a broad comparative approach, including studies of the evolution of aphid social parasites, and interactions with fungi. She has combined field collections and observations with laboratory behavioral experiments, and performed genetic analyses in support of insect phylogenetics and microbial ecology.

In addition to solid university-level teaching experience, Sara has been exceptionally active bringing science to young minds, having taught in several K-12 programs. She has mentored an impressive number of undergraduate and high school researchers.

The committee agreed with one of Sara's references who stated simply, "she has been a leader in research, teaching and in her service to her profession." This balance of skills and contributions befits the spirit of the Eickwort award.