



The Jeffery P. La Fage Student Award for Applied Research on Social Insects recognizes a graduate student for distinguished research and scholarly activity on social insects, with an emphasis on applied projects. The award consists of a plaque and an honorarium. The North American Section of the International Union for the Study of Social Insects is proud to announce that **Ashley St. Clair, currently at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign**, is the recipient of the 2020 Jeffery P. La Fage Award. Ashley completed her Ph.D. in December 2019 under the direction of Amy Toth and Matthew O’Neal at Iowa State University. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Murray State University.

Ashley focused her doctoral work on globally declining honeybee health by studying the impact of row-crop agriculture in the Upper Midwestern USA and finding solutions to this problem. She found that managed honeybee colonies undergo a feast-famine dynamic in row-crop agriculture environments along with seasonal harvesting activities. The better colony health in native prairie habitats suggests an integrated prairie agriculture landscape to support wild and managed bees. This work has been published in PNAS with Ashley as a shared co-first author. Additional work demonstrated that diverse farmed landscapes benefit wild bee populations as well as managed honeybee colonies without negative interactions between the two. Furthermore, she investigated viral transmission from managed colonies to native bees and the use of prairie habitat by managed honeybees. Ashley was invited to present her work in several symposia of the IUSI conference in Brazil, 2018, and various conferences of the Entomological Society of America. Besides her impressive research activity, she was engaged in many outreach activities promoting honeybee health and bee conservation. For example, she produced several videos on conservation and methodologies to monitor and improve the health of bee hives in line with the spirit of the La Fage Award. On top of these activities, she mentored numerous undergraduate projects with one leading to an undergraduate first authorship in a submitted manuscript. Her teaching efforts were rewarded with a Teaching Excellence Award from Iowa State University.

Her letter writers were highly impressed by her level of independence and leadership. They stressed her central contributions to major research grants and her outstanding productivity. She excels “in so many areas of scientific engagement, from research to teaching to service, from extension to mentoring” while “her energy and motivation are truly limitless”. The awards committee is very pleased to have Ashley as an award-winning member of our society.

IUSI-NAS Awards Committee

Christina Kwapich, and Jürgen Liebig (co-chairs), Rachele Adams, Kaitlin Baudier, Sarah Bengston, and Floria Mora-Kepfer Uy