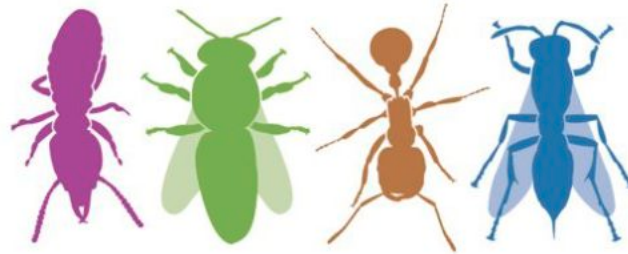


IUSSI-NAS

INTERNATIONAL UNION FOR THE STUDY OF SOCIAL INSECTS, NORTH AMERICAN SECTION



The **Jeffery P. La Fage Student Award for Applied Research on Social Insects** is awarded to the Ph.D. student that shows the most distinguished record of research and scholarly activity on social insects with an applied emphasis.

The 2025 winner of the La Fage Student Award is **Joanne Tzu-Chia Chen**, who will receive a certificate and a \$500 honorarium. Joanne is currently a Ph.D. student at the University of California Riverside in the Department of Entomology under the direction of Dr. Chow-Yang Lee.

Joanne is currently working to resolve long-standing taxonomic uncertainty surrounding the western U.S. *Reticulitermes* species, *R. hesperus*, which is potentially a species complex. By integrating whole-genome sequencing, morphometrics, and ecological niche modeling, Joanne will refine species boundaries, clarify evolutionary relationships, and formally describe new *Reticulitermes* lineages. This work has important implications for termite management, where proper species identification is crucial.

Previously, Joanne worked on black cocoa ant, *Dolichoderus thoracicus*, an important pest in both urban and agricultural settings in Taiwan. That work provided new insight into how social insects coordinate resource flow which has major implications for management because traditional ant baits rely on stomodeal trophallaxis to spread toxicants among colony members, but baiting programs using liquid baits may be ineffective against pests, like *D. thoracicus*, that primarily transfer nutrients through trophic eggs.

The Awards Committee wishes to recognize Joanne's strong research record and her work addressing fundamental questions about social insect pests that directly inform control practices. This work exemplifies the spirit of the La Fage Student Award.

IUSSI-NAS Awards Committee

Elizabeth Tibbetts, Joshua King (co-chairs).

Scott Powell, Natalie Lemanski, Mallory Hagedorn, and Alex Payne (committee members).