

Med School Watercooler

NEWS FROM FREDERICK P. WHIDDON COLLEGE OF MEDICINE
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA

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USA basic medical sciences student selected for international policy fellowship network

Translating the written work of scientific research into something everyone else can understand often is an art form that takes years to perfect. A student in the basic medical sciences program at the Whiddon College of Medicine at USA is among a group of students taking part in an initiative with the aim of building better science policy advocates who can write and understand the often complicated and nuanced language used by the scientific community.

Marcy Cage, M.S, M.P.H., a Ph.D. candidate in the basic medical sciences program, has been selected to take part in the Japan-U.S. Science Communication and Policy Fellowship Network (SciComm Policy Network).



Marcy Cage, M.S., M.P.H.

The Okinawa Institute of Science and Technology Graduate University (OIST) program recruits, cultivates leadership, and inspires excellence among fellows from underrepresented backgrounds in the United States and Japan, Cage said, to become the next generation of successful science policy advocates. The intentional recruitment efforts create cohorts with diverse personal positions relating to science policy issues, with a goal of those fellows bringing a range of experiences to inform scientific research and policy.

"As a scientist in training, it is very important to me that I am skilled to communicate my research on any platform and that I am effective enough to influence policy at all levels," Cage said. "I believe that the OIST program is providing me with an opportunity to achieve this goal."

As part of the program, Cage has been taking part in two sessions per month for a six-month period and plans to attend a symposium in Japan or Washington, D.C., in January 2023. During the first four sessions, participants are trained in the art of storytelling by

using four principles: find the fun, activate the audience, tell the truth, and embrace the flop.

During each 2.5-hour session, students are separated into groups of four where they share stories and provide feedback based on those principles. "Although we are sharing stories about anything at the onset," Cage said, "the moderators center us on a research focus at the end of the session."

A third-year student in the department of physiology and cell biology, Cage is mentored by Thomas Rich, Ph.D., associate professor in the department of pharmacology, and Troy Stevens, Ph.D., a professor and Lenoir Louise Locke Chair of Physiology and Cell Biology. Her current research focuses on the effects of air pollutants ozone and PM2.5 in high-school-aged children living in Mobile.

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