



## VIRGINIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE, ENGINEERING AND MEDICINE

### VASEM selects the 2021 cohort of COVES Policy Fellows

**Richmond, VA – April 30, 2021** - The [Virginia Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine \(VASEM\)](#) is excited to announce the second cohort of [Commonwealth of Virginia Engineering and Science \(COVES\) Policy Fellows](#). The fellowship will begin on May 17, 2021 and conclude on August 06, 2021.

The COVES Policy Fellowship aims at strengthening the ties between the scientific community and the state government of Virginia by placing fellows in various host offices throughout Virginia. Host offices include legislative offices, executive agencies, and prominent companies and nonprofits. Fellows will gain hands-on public service and policymaking experience by serving as science advisors for their host office and performing relevant tasks such as researching, drafting, and revising relevant policies.



Fellows are selected from a competitive applicant pool of graduate students and postdoctoral researchers in STEM-H fields at participating universities in Virginia. Fellows begin the program with a bootcamp to learn the necessary skills in science policy, science communication, and professional development. Over the 12-week program, the fellows have biweekly luncheons with science policy experts and develop mentorship through their host office and VASEM. At the conclusion of the program, the fellows showcase their accomplishments at a forum hosted by VASEM.

“The COVES Policy Fellowship is a unique program because it allows for early-career scientists and engineers to get hands-on experience with policymaking. Virginia is one of less than 10 states with a science policy fellowship and the COVES program is the only state-level science policy fellowship that utilizes a short-term structure and current graduate students. This fellowship also prides itself on placing fellows in industry and NGOs as well as governmental offices.” said Jim Aylor, President of VASEM. “We are excited that this opportunity was renewed for a second year and that we can provide meaningful policy experience to our Fellows. It is our hope that this experience will encourage more scientists and engineers to pursue public service and science policy at the state level.”

The program will welcome ten participants to the 2021 cohort. Congratulations to the [2021 COVES Policy Fellows](#):

Adele Balmer (Virginia Commonwealth University)  
Janey Dike (Virginia Tech)  
Isis Garcia-Rodriguez (Virginia Commonwealth University)  
Chelsea Gray (George Mason University)  
Tara Illgner (University of Virginia)

Nikita Lad (George Mason University)  
Sunil Manandhar (William & Mary)  
Margaret Nagai-Singer (Virginia Tech)  
Homa Jalaeian Taghadomi (Old Dominion University)  
Kelsea Yarbrough (Norfolk State University)

Learn more about the COVES Policy Fellowship and the 2021 cohort at  
<http://www.vasem.org/covesfellowship/>.

This fellowship is made possible through the sponsorship of participating universities in Virginia, Mitre, Huntington Ingalls Industries, and the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

**About VASEM** - The Virginia Academy of Science, Engineering and Medicine is a resource for independent expertise on science and technology policy matters facing Virginia. VASEM is comprised of elected members of the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine, as well as other key individuals that work throughout Virginia. Its nonpartisan network of experts provides rigorous analytical, technical, and scientific support to inform policy decisions that are critical to the future of the Commonwealth.

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