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News Release

IAEM-USA Announces the 2024 Student of the Year

Oct. 22, 2024 (Falls Church, Va.) – The Awards & Recognition Committee of the U.S. Council of the International Association of Emergency Managers (IAEM-USA) has selected Brittany Giles-Jones as the IAEM Student of the Year. The award will be presented at the President’s Banquet and Awards Ceremony on Nov. 20 at the 72nd IAEM Annual Conference & EMEX in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Brittany Giles-Jones, CEM 2024 IAEM-USA Student of the Year Recipient

Ms. Giles-Jones has used her many platforms to elevate and promote IAEM membership while working to expand emergency management knowledge and education to underrepresented groups. She supports IAEM through volunteer work at conferences and serving on multiple committees. Ms. Giles-Jones forged a path connecting faculty and staff from across the county. She saw an educational gap in emergency management and created a new path that closed the gap and benefited all current and future students. She excelled academically and built new relationships and partnerships, a cornerstone of emergency management. She did so in an environment where most students would have either transferred or chosen a different path. Ms. Giles-Jones completed her CEM while still in school.

Throughout her graduate school journey at Metropolitan College of New York (MCNY) while pursuing a Master of Public Administration in Emergency and Disaster Management and currently as a Doctoral student at Clark Atlanta University, Brittany has made it a point to work in capacities that help alleviate the gaps between practitioners and academics. She proudly identifies as a pracademic for her simultaneous work as an emergency management consultant and Ph.D. student focused on disaster research.

As an emergency management consultant, Brittany has developed a strong understanding of the foundations and principles of effective emergency management, serving in roles across preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. Part of her responsibilities have included providing Quality Assurance and Quality Control (QA/QC) support for over 25 FEMA Field Operations Directorate (FOD),

Workforce, Development Division, and FEMA Qualification System (FQS) courses. These contributions helped to create standardization across courses and ultimately increase FEMA employee knowledge. Her work in QA/QC fueled her interest in understanding other ways of elevating professionalism within deliverables. She routinely completes 508 Compliance reviews to ensure accessibility for all readers or viewers. She is voluntarily pursuing the 508 Trusted Tester Certification.

Brittany has participated in fellowships that allow her to connect with other emergency management, disaster-focused, and other discipline doctoral students worldwide. One of these includes the William Averette Anderson (Bill Anderson Fund – BAF) Fellowship, where she coordinated with other students of color to help expand the footprint of the emergency management industry, produce publications and projects that go beyond the regular scope of the fellowship and aim to serve socially vulnerable, faith-based, economically disadvantaged rural, and underrepresented communities.

As a result of being a BAF fellow, Brittany started engaging with the Mennonite Disaster Services (MDS) to conduct on-site research in Southwest Louisiana and Selma, Alabama, which focuses on understanding historical inequities in disaster planning and response through understanding the perspectives and experiences of Tribes, Tribal Nations, and other Socially Vulnerable communities related to hurricane preparedness and response between 2000-2023. This research and collaboration directly benefit her research as a Mercatus Center Fellow, where she is co-authoring a book set to be published this year.

The consistent combination of industry engagement and contribution highlights Brittany's commitment to the future of IAEM and the emergency management industry as a whole, particularly regarding student advancement and opportunity. Her accomplishments as a student are nothing short of phenomenal, making her the clear choice for the Student of the Year award.

The IAEM Student of the Year Award recognizes a student who has made significant contributions to promoting IAEM and the field of emergency management through public awareness, increasing membership, showing leadership and initiative in education, and increasing the professionalism of emergency and disaster management. This can be done through volunteer work, promotion of the field, and contribution to the student's community. High academic achievement, both formal and/or continuing education, is also required.

IAEM-USA, the nation's largest emergency management professional association, is a non-profit organization representing more than 5,800 emergency management and homeland security professionals for local communities, state and federal disaster officials, the private sector, non-governmental organizations, and others involved in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from all types of disasters, including acts of terrorism. IAEM provides access to the largest network of emergency management experts who can provide advice and assistance, the Certified Emergency Manager program, annual scholarships, a comprehensive monthly newsletter, and more.

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