

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Welcome to the Fall 2025 edition of the Bill Anderson Fund's quarterly newsletter! As the final issue of the year, this is a special opportunity to celebrate the achievements of the BAF community.

FALL *newsletter*

NOVEMBER 2025

WELCOME

Welcome, New Fellows!

We are happy to introduce **10 promising doctoral students** who have joined the BAF as the **2025 cohort**. This incoming group of fellows represents a range of disciplinary perspectives, from geoscience to public policy. We are proud to have the opportunity to support these emerging scholars as they build their careers. Please join us in giving a warm welcome to:

- **Christopher Alegbelye**, *Civil and Infrastructural Engineering*, University of Delaware
- **Melanie Dickson**, *Civil Engineering*, North Carolina State University
- **Elvis Effah**, *Sociology*, Virginia Tech
- **Guadalupe Guevara**, *Sociology*, Louisiana State University
- **Megan Lacey**, *Public Policy*, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
- **Amina Meselhe**, *Civil Engineering*, Oregon State University
- **Maria Muñoz**, *Public Health/Epidemiology*, Tulane University
- **Temidayo Popoola**, *Geoscience*, Texas Tech University
- **Peyton Smalls**, *Anthropology*, University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill



NEW PROGRAM ALERT

We're thrilled to announce the launch of a new initiative developed in partnership with the [Association of State Floodplain Managers](#) (ASFPM), our 2025-2026 Policy Advocacy Practicum! This initiative will provide a unique, hands-on policy advocacy experience. It represents an expansion of the BAF's offerings to better equip fellows to translate hazards research into effective communication with elected officials and decision-makers.

For this first iteration of the program, up to two fellows will be selected to join ASFPM's Policy Team for a 12-week training practicum throughout spring 2026. The experience will culminate in an engagement visit to Capitol Hill, where the fellows will gain direct experience advocating for floodplain management and hazard mitigation issues alongside members of the Policy Team. This is an unparalleled opportunity to develop the skills needed to bridge the gap between research and policy!

So Much to Say

In closing out the last two months of 2025, we are delighted to kick off the BAF Fellows Blog, a new feature of our newsletter and website! This platform will host original articles written by the BAF's talented doctoral student fellows, providing a fresh perspective from the next generation of hazards and disaster professionals.

Posts will highlight what the fellows are thinking about, inspired by, and exploring as researchers. This outlet will enable them to hone their science communication skills while showcasing the innovative and impactful research they are pursuing across disciplines.

The inaugural posts will feature reflections by two fellows, Yvonne Appiah Dadson and Michelle Ruiz, who both participated in the [2025 Summer Scholars program](#) of the [Coastal Hazards, Economic Prosperity, and Resilience](#) (CHEER) Hub. Their pieces showcase how the summer experience shaped their perspectives as researchers. Click the button below to read Yvonne's post, and be on the lookout for Michelle's post next month!

[READ YVONNE'S POST HERE](#)



GRADUATIONS

The Doctor Is In

Two fellows successfully defended their dissertations this fall and are now transitioning into their careers. They will soon join nearly 70 others as the newest members of the BAF Alumni Network. Please join us in congratulating these emerging professionals:



Joseph Karanja

Arizona State University

Geographic Information Science



Mason Alexander-Hawk

Texas A&M University

Urban and Regional Sciences



A ROUND OF APPLAUSE

AWARDS | ACCOLADES | RECOGNITIONS

Congratulations to our Fellows and Alumni!

BAF Fellows and Alumni received so many awards, accolades, and recognitions in the past few months that an exhaustive list is too long for this newsletter! Believe it or not, the content below is just a selection of highlights:

- BAF Fellow **Lucas Belury** has been selected as a recipient of the 2025 National Academies Gulf Research Program's Science Policy Fellowship. Lucas will be working with the Water Institute, a nonprofit organization that aims to advance actionable research, technology, and planning in support of science-informed decision making.
- In September BAF Fellow **Maribel Sandoval Contreras** received the Eugene Cota-Robles fellowship, the most prestigious fellowship offered at the University of California Irvine. Named after one of the earliest Mexican American professors in the University of California system, the fellowship places students interested in academic teaching and research careers on a fast track towards completing their doctoral degree and increase the number of qualified candidates for University of California faculty positions.
- BAF Alumna **Dr. Asia Downtin** recently received tenure and ascended to the rank of Associate Professor of Urban Forestry at Michigan State University.
- The nonprofit organization Young Gifted & Green recognized BAF Alumnus **Dr. Marccus Hendricks** with its 40 Under 40 award for his contributions to environmental justice through STEM and social justice.
- BAF Fellow **Christopher Ihinegbu** was accepted into the Faculty Mentor Fellowship Program at the University of California Irvine. The fellowship, which includes \$64,000 in tuition and stipend, is awarded to exceptional PhD students and is designed to increase the number of students who complete their PhD degree and successfully secure a faculty appointment.
- In addition to successfully defending his dissertation, BAF Fellow **Joseph Karanja** recently accepted a postdoc position at Princeton University.
- BAF Alumnus **Dr. Hans Louis-Charles** joined the International Journal of Mass Emergencies and Disasters as an Associate Editor.
- BAF Alumna **Natasha Malmin** was one of 14 scientists nationwide awarded an Early Career Research Fellowship from Gulf Research Program of the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine. The fellowship supports emerging scientific leaders as they take risks on research ideas not yet tested, pursue unique collaborations, and build a network of colleagues who share their interest in improving offshore energy system safety and the well-being of coastal communities and ecosystems.
- BAF Fellow **Ibrahim Nureni** received a Commendation Award from the Vladimir Devide Haiku Award Program, which is recognized among the most reputable haiku contests in the world. Additionally, Ibrahim's poem "Refugees" won First Prize in the 21st Annual Voices of Lincoln Poetry Contest (Rise to Life's Challenges Category).
- The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi recognized BAF Fellow **Jessica Nwafor** with its Love of Learning award. Recipients of this award are selected based on academic excellence, service to campus and community, clarity of career goals, and the potential impact of award funding.
- BAF Fellow **Esther Oyedele** recently received the 2025 Graduate Student Research Grant from the Geological Society of America, as well as the SEG/David W. Worthington Scholarship from the Society of Exploration Geophysicists. Additionally, Esther passed her preliminary exams and advanced to PhD candidacy this semester!

As we round out the final quarter of 2025, we are deeply grateful for the accomplishments and joy our community has brought forth this year. Thank you for supporting our efforts to build an inclusive and human-centered disaster research field.

Sincerely,



Nnenia Campbell, Ph.D.
Executive Director
The William Averette Anderson Fund



SUPPORT THE BAF

Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we continue to grow, learn, and create positive change in the nation's efforts to address environmental hazards and extreme events.

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The Bill Anderson Fund

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