The American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) administers the program through which AIBS and its cosponsoring member societies offer the congressional fellowship program. Congressional fellows spend one year working on the staffs of members of Congress or congressional committees as special assistants in legislative areas requiring scientific and technical input. Fellows make significant public service contributions through the program, but they also learn by being involved in a wide array of legislative, oversight, and investigative activities.

The response to the program from Congress is overwhelmingly positive. Each July, AAAS contacts congressional offices to solicit their interest in placing a fellow; by August, enthusiastic responses arrive from two to three times as many offices as there are fellows available. Senator Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) has said of the program: "As the Congress is increasingly involved in public policy issues of a scientific and technical nature...it becomes increasingly more important that the scientific and engineering communities become aware of the workings of government in these areas, and that better liaison be developed in the public interest. The congressional science and engineering fellowships are well designed to accomplish these purposes, to the mutual benefit of all concerned."

Since the program's inception in 1973, nearly 700 scientists have served as Congressional Science and Engineering Fellows. At the conclusion of their fellowships, approximately one-third of the fellows return to their previous positions, one-third go on to new positions in different settings, and one-third continue working in the policy arena in Washington or elsewhere; of this last group, some have assumed senior positions in Congress and the Executive Branch.

Rodriguez hopes to join her predecessors in the policy arena. "I see myself in the role of facilitator," she says. She plans to maintain her involvement in the research community but anticipates making a significant impact "in the communication vein—talking to the public, policymakers, and scientists, and helping them talk among themselves."

In addition to the congressional fellowships such as that sponsored by AIBS, the AAAS Science and Engineering Fellowship Program offers fellowships in the Departments of State, Agriculture, and Defense; the US Agency for International Development; the US Environmental Protection Agency; the US Food and Drug Administration; and RAND Critical Technologies Institute. Mass media fellowships (designed for graduate students) and global stewardship fellowships are also offered.

The fellowship program includes the two-week orientation session, placement and support services, and a year-long seminar series. Applicants...
must have received their Ph.D. at the
time of application. Term lengths, sti-
pends, and management arrangements
vary per fellowship and sponsoring
society. Visit www.aaas.org/spp/dspp/
stg/cover.htm or call 202/326-6600
for more information about the AAAS
Science and Engineering Fellowship
Program. For information about the
AIBS Congressional Science Fellow-
ship Program, call 202/628-1500,
extension 253; or e-mail jkolber@aibs.org.

—Jodi F. Kolber

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