

The American Association of Immunologists

Press Release



Lauren G. Gross Named Chief Program and Policy Officer of The American Association of Immunologists

Public Affairs staff members Schumacher and Kansler also elevated; Gross, Schumacher, and Kansler began new positions on July 1

ROCKVILLE, MD (July 17, 2023) — The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) is pleased to announce the appointment of Lauren G. Gross, J.D., as its new chief program and policy officer. With her deep knowledge of AAI and extensive experience in science policy and federal advocacy, Gross is exceptionally well qualified to lead and strengthen AAI’s excellent programs, including its educational offerings, scientific journals, policy efforts, and legislative activities.

In her new position, Gross will apply her extensive knowledge and nuanced understanding of AAI, its members, and the needs of the immunology community broadly across her areas of responsibility, helping to integrate AAI’s programmatic functions and enhance the association’s educational and career offerings. She also will serve as an integral member of the newly established staff senior leadership team, working with her peers to advise AAI’s CEO Dr. Loretta Doan and to guide and implement strategic priorities to be established by the AAI Council.

Gross has served AAI as director of public policy and government affairs for nearly 23 years. In that role, she led AAI activities on Capitol Hill and worked with officials from four presidential administrations. Gross has worked closely with numerous AAI presidents and the AAI Council, and in 2022 was appointed by then-AAI President Gary Koretzky, M.D., Ph.D., to head the interim leadership team that managed the association as it searched, successfully, for a new CEO.

Prior to joining AAI, Gross was the director of health and economic policy for the American Nurses Association, where she led initiatives related to health care reform, access to care, and Medicare reform. She previously served as counsel to the Senate Labor and Human Resources Committee (now, the “Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee”) and legislative assistant to the late Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) for health and human services, civil rights, and judiciary. Gross is a former litigation attorney with the Boston law firm Nutter, McClennen & Fish.

“I am beyond excited that Lauren has agreed to step into this role,” Doan said. “Her long history with the organization and deep understanding of members and their needs, coupled with her analytical yet empathetic approach to problem-solving, uniquely qualify her to help guide AAI through this pivotal moment. We will all benefit greatly from having Lauren’s insights as AAI moves with intention into its future. It will be essential to have the right staff leadership team in place so that we can bring to life the Council’s vision for the association; Lauren is an integral member of that team.”

“I am thrilled to be able to serve AAI in a new way and to advise and support Dr. Doan in her efforts to address the needs and concerns of AAI members and the broader immunology community,” Gross said. “I look forward to continuing to work with the many wonderful AAI members I have come to know over the years and to working with the many more I have yet to meet.”

Gross earned her J.D. from New York University School of Law and holds a bachelor’s degree from Yale University. She is a member of the bar of the District of Columbia and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

Public Affairs Staff Promoted

AAI is also pleased to announce the appointment of Jacob (Jake) Schumacher as director, government affairs, and of Emily Kansler, Ph.D., as senior science policy analyst.

Schumacher has served AAI in various public affairs roles since 2009, most recently as senior manager of science policy and legislative affairs. Having worked closely with many AAI leaders and members over the years, and with extensive experience working with federal agency officials and Capitol Hill staff, Schumacher is uniquely qualified to seamlessly assume the position of director, leading the organization’s robust public affairs program and bringing a fresh take on efforts to advance AAI policy and legislative initiatives in an increasingly complex and challenging political environment. Prior to joining AAI, he served on Capitol Hill as a legislative correspondent to then-Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR). Schumacher is a graduate of the University of Oregon.

Kansler joined AAI in 2021 as a science policy analyst, quickly establishing herself as an expert on federal scientific policies, particularly those issued by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), that affect immunologists and the broader biomedical research community. She closely analyzes and recommends action regarding relevant science policy issues, including those related to data management and sharing, public access to scholarly publication, peer review, and the trainee and postdoc ecosystem, enabling the Committee on Public Affairs to provide feedback to NIH on these and other topics. Kansler received her Ph.D. from the Louis V. Gerstner Jr. Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in the field of tumor immunology and her master’s degree of science in molecular microbiology and immunology, with a certificate in vaccine policy, from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Kansler’s scientific expertise has been critically important during the COVID-19 pandemic as AAI addressed issues related to vaccines and therapeutics.

“With AAI’s increased focus on elevating the understanding of immunology across lay audiences, Jake and Emily are exactly the right team to guide us into new, impactful, externally facing policy issues, while also preserving the important work this team has always done on behalf of AAI members, immunology, and the greater biomedical research enterprise,” Doan said. “I am excited to embark on this new era for AAI public affairs and to see where this stellar team takes us.”

About The American Association of Immunologists

Founded in 1913, The American Association of Immunologists (AAI) (www.aai.org) is an association of professionally trained scientists from all over the world dedicated to advancing the knowledge of immunology and its related disciplines. AAI members have been responsible for some of the most significant immunological discoveries of the past century, including the development of cancer immunotherapies, monoclonal antibodies, transplant technologies, and dozens of life-saving vaccines. The organization counts [27 Nobel Laureates](#) among its members. AAI owns and publishes [The Journal of Immunology](#), the oldest and most established journal in the field, as well as [ImmunoHorizons](#), an open-access, peer-reviewed journal dedicated to the science of immunology.

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