

EDIA award 2025

Bianca Vandresen was nominated for the inaugural ISAE EDIA Award in recognition of her exceptional commitment to promoting equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility in applied ethology through research and leadership. Her commitment to EDIA is deeply embedded in her research and professional service. She is a passionate and empathetic leader who is unafraid to speak up, thoughtfully evaluate complex issues, and take action to improve the status quo.

Bianca has demonstrated a strong and sustained dedication to EDIA through both academic and service roles. Most notably, she led a collaborative research project that culminated in the publication “Navigating challenges in applied animal behaviour and welfare research: A focus group study” in *Applied Animal Behaviour Science*. This project, conducted alongside her doctoral work, sought to understand and elevate the diverse experiences of animal welfare researchers globally. Drawing on her own experience as a Brazilian international student, Bianca collaborated with peers to explore how institutional, personal, and regional inequities affect access to and the development of animal welfare and behaviour research. The resulting publication is the first of its kind to empirically identify barriers to inclusion within the applied ethology community, making a significant contribution to the field.

In her doctoral research, Bianca is working to enhance the visibility of underrepresented voices by examining the perspectives of female dairy farmers regarding animal welfare. In a predominantly male-driven field, her work emphasizes the significance of gendered experiences in influencing animal care practices and ethical viewpoints. Her research aims to challenge established norms and fosters a more inclusive understanding of animal welfare that recognizes and values female insights. Professionally, Bianca is the Board Coordinator for the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada (AWFC). Established in 1965, the AWFC is a non-profit organization that allocates grants for research, educational programs, and outreach initiatives dedicated to advancing animal welfare across Canada. Noteworthy beneficiaries of projects funded by the AWFC include Indigenous communities and youth experiencing homelessness with their pets.

As ISAE Student Representative from 2022 to 2024, Bianca actively contributed to EDIA initiatives and was instrumental in the development and implementation of the ISAE Allyship Program. Her leadership was especially impactful at the 2023 ISAE Congress, where she played a crucial role as part of the ally program. When a student needed assistance, Bianca offered a safe environment, coordinated with others to ensure the student felt supported, and promptly alerted the ISAE council. After the incident, Bianca offered clear, constructive feedback to the EDIA committee and council, aiming to enhance future allyship initiatives, raise awareness of anti-harassment policies, and create a safer atmosphere for all participants. The Allyship Program has since become standard practice at ISAE's annual meetings.

