

MANDE HOLFORD

2004–05 AAAS Fellow at the National Science Foundation

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Catching up on her reading during a day of jury duty, Mande Holford came across an advertisement in *Science* for the AAAS Fellowships. “The ad said ‘science, education, and policy,’ and that was everything I was interested in for my career,” she says. At the time, Mande, who holds a PhD in synthetic protein chemistry, was managing a high school science research program at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City.

Mande applied to the National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation (NSF) and Diplomacy programs in January 2003, and one month later she attended the AAAS Annual Meeting. There, she met Kerri-Ann Jones, a former AAAS Fellow who was then director of the NSF Office of International Science and Engineering. Mande and Kerri-Ann kept in contact, and after Mande was named an NSF finalist, she met Kerri-Ann during the interview process. Never having had a AAAS Fellow in that office before, Kerri-Ann was excited to welcome Mande.

Mande’s fellowship at NSF focused on both programmatic and policy objectives of the agency. For her programmatic efforts, she managed research proposals for the Nordic region and Austria. In the policy realm, she collaborated with scientists in Nordic countries and the Americas. One of these initiatives culminated in a workshop on biodiversity and emerging computer technology in Panama in January 2006, which featured representatives from the U.S., Colombia, Peru, and several Central American countries. Besides traveling around the world during her fellowship year — to countries including Peru, Morocco and Finland — Mande says the best part of her experience was the mentoring she received from her colleagues at NSF. “They’re still involved in my career,” she says.

“The fellowship showed me there were several options for someone with a PhD — you don’t need to be chained to a desk. I learned that I can make a contribution to the world,” she says. Mande is currently a postdoctoral fellow in chemical biology at the University of Utah. Her long-term goal is to return to the field of museum science.

