Kristen Petersen of Washington State University Named Winner of AASRO John Tarnai Memorial Scholarship.

Kristen Petersen of the Washington State University Social and Economic Sciences Research Center (SESRC) has been awarded the 2019 John Tarnai Memorial Scholarship by the Association of Academic Survey Research Organizations (AASRO). She is one of two winners this year. The award provides a scholarship in memory of John Tarnai, former AASRO president, and recognizes an outstanding but relatively new Survey Center employee with great promise for pursuing a long-term career in survey research. The scholarship defrays the cost of attending the annual meetings of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR), the umbrella professional organization for academic, government, private sector and non-profit survey researchers) or the International Field Directors and Technology Conference (IFD&TC).

In nominating Petersen for the scholarship, Dr. Rose Krebill-Prather, Assistant Director of SESRC, wrote: "Kristen is committed to advancing the goals, mission, stability, and longevity of our survey organization. Kristen's team spirit has come through on multiple occasions in her willingness to help any SESRC staff and/or on any project."

Petersen first came onboard at the SESRC in 2017 as a data manager. Coming onto the team, she brought significant benefits to the organization such as her computer programing knowledge and statistical analysis experience. In Dr. Krebill-Prather's words, "in many ways it has been a perfect match, Kristen Petersen and the SESRC!"

In her role, Kristen has worked on a number of research projects, including the Gettysburg National Military Park visitor survey, annual surveys for the Washington State Health Care Authority (HCA), and a statewide survey for the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Uniform Reporting System (URS). On the one of the surveys for the HCA project, Dr. Krebill-Prather described their team's admiration for how Kristen puts her skills to work. "Because of her computer programming skills, Kristen efficiently generated the 300 provider level reports within about 45 minutes. The SESRC project team members were utterly amazed! Previously used means for producing multiple provider level reports were cumbersome, inefficient, and much more time consuming."