

To: American Association of Physical Anthropologists Executive Committee
From: Benjamin Auerbach, Chair of Repatriation Committee
Date: 3 April 2020
Re: Annual report

Dear Anne and Members of the AAPA Executive Committee:

The Repatriation Committee for the AAPA has a current membership of five individuals: Drs. Benjamin Auerbach (chair until 2022), Shamsi Berry, Ellen Lofaro, Ripan Malhi, and Charlotte Roberts. Drs. Stephen Ousley and George Milner have rotated off the committee after nine years of service as members of the committee. Herein we report our activities and plans for the upcoming year.

- With the Executive Committee, we have coordinated and put forward two nominees to serve on the National NAGPRA Review Committee, Dr. Ellen Lofaro and Dr. Heather Edgar. Dr. Edgar served previously on the national committee, and so her nomination was to renew her position for a second term. As of the end of March, we have not received official word about whether either individual has been appointed. We will pass along any news we receive to this end to the Executive Committee.
- The main focus of the Repatriation Committee has been to work toward developing best practices or guidance for the AAPA on how best to manage legacy sharing and archiving for data acquired from sources associated from indigenous, marginalized, or unrepresented populations. By data, the committee refers to skeletal metrics, anthropometrics, isotopic data, molecular data, metabolic or physiological data, and histological data, among other types. The populations to which this applies includes but is not limited to groups who have been historically marginalized by colonization, especially by Europeans. Examples include Native Americans, First Nations, Saami, Ainu, Andaman Islanders, and various African populations (such as the Efe or Khoisan). Following the Workshop on Data Sharing held in Milwaukee in February 2019, organized by Drs. Trudy Turner and Connie Mulligan, it became apparent that the sharing of legacy data—data already collected by researchers, often prior to legal or ethical policies—from these populations would require special principles in addition to the best practices and policies put forth by the AAPA for data sharing in general.

To this end, the committee has met and would like to propose the following procedure for tackling the goal of advising new practices for sharing and working with legacy data from these sensitive groups:

- 1) We would like to produce a survey to be sent to the AAPA membership, which would help the committee assess the extent of such data already collected. In addition, the committee would like to survey the membership about their concerns, knowledge of existing practices, and opinions about how best to approach the topic of sharing of data obtained from historically marginalized and unrepresented populations. This survey would be sent by mid-summer of 2020, pending IRB approval and approval by the Executive Committee. (The committee will seek IRB approval for these surveys through the University of Tennessee.)

- 2) The committee would also like to produce a short survey that would be sent to representatives from various indigenous or marginalized communities, which would request information about perceptions, concerns, and relationships with scientists forged by those groups. We also would use this survey to help find potential participants in a workshop following up on these surveys. This survey would likewise be submitted by mid-summer 2020, pending IRB approval and approval of the Executive Committee.
- 3) Following up on these surveys, the committee would analyze the results and make the outcomes available as a report to the AAPA membership. The committee proposes to leverage these data to organize and apply for funding to support a workshop to address data management and sharing from the sources noted above. Dr. Auerbach has already informally discussed the idea of a workshop with Dr. Rebecca Ferrell (NSF). This workshop would seek to bring together both representatives from the scientific community across multiple specialties and representatives from indigenous and other identified communities. This workshop would use the outcomes of the surveys to organize the sessions, and to work toward a goal of setting out a dialogue for best principles and procedures for addressing the sharing of sensitive legacy data. Ideally, this workshop would occur in 2021.

The committee realizes that a single solution will unlikely apply to all groups equally. For this reason, we anticipate that a set of general procedures, as well as best ethical practices, will be the outcome of this first workshop. We hope that the workshop will also result in an ongoing dialogue and opportunity for inclusion of groups that have not commonly been included in the process of scientific inquiry conducted by biological anthropologists.

- In light of the above, the committee is proposing to change its focus to be broader than issues related to NAGPRA, and to instead help develop practices and networks by which to communicate with groups that have not consistently or traditionally been part of our scientific endeavor. We likewise are concerned about including all members of the society who study the ancestors and living members of these groups in a dialogue about how to respectfully and ethically work with data obtained. We therefore would like to ask the AAPA Executive Committee for permission to change the name of our committee to reflect this broader focus. Pending the Executive Committee's approval, we would like to propose a new name at that time.

Thank you all, again, for your continued support of the efforts of our committee. We greatly appreciate the hard work of the members of the Executive Committee.

On Behalf of the Repatriation Committee,
Benjamin Auerbach