

Education Committee 2022-2023 Activities Report

Submitted by Drs. Kate McGrath and Rob O'Malley, co-chairs

2022 Conference-related activities

As part of the AABA 2022 Annual Meeting the committee hosted a teacher workshop at the Denver Museum of Nature and Science (DMNS) on Saturday March 26 2022. The half-day workshop on “Teaching human and primate evolution in middle and high school classrooms” was attended by 16 educators and included brief presentations and conversations by Dr. Briana Pobiner, Dr. Rob O'Malley, Dr. Kate McGrath, Dr. Kerry Warren, and Rose Leach Basom, with a focus on classroom-ready resources, activities, and approaches. We received very positive feedback from attendees and our DMNS hosts, who shared afterwards that the workshop provided “the perfect blend of theoretical framework and practical tools for the educators.”

Leading up to the 2022 meeting, the committee greatly expanded the website content for our section of the AABA website (<https://bioanth.org/about/committees/education-committee-page/>) to include definitions and frameworks for public engagement with science, a broad array of resources (including funding opportunities and training materials), lesson plans for biological anthropology content aligned with NGSS, and examples of public science communication and engagement by AABA members. Dr. Katrina Yezzi-Woodley presented a poster on the Education Committee's history, ongoing activities and resources, and future plans. Finally, Drs. Kate McGrath and Rob O'Malley were named new co-chairs of the committee, succeeding Dr. Briana Pobiner who chaired the committee since 2016. The entire committee is grateful for Dr. Pobiner's outstanding leadership for so many years!

2023 Conference-related activities (planned or underway)

Internal and external funding support. In response to AABA leadership's call for funding requests at the 2022 AABA business meeting, we made a formal request for 3k to support the committee's engagement activities. We have used or will use this support for covering printing costs associated with engagement work, expanding our cast collection, covering AABA meeting catering, and travel related to local outreach activities. We are very grateful for AABA's support! The committee also wishes to gratefully acknowledge the Leakey Foundation for providing small honoraria for AABA members who are taking time out of the meeting to participate in outreach activities.

Public engagement training. Dr. Briana Pobiner will provide a virtual training session on science engagement fundamentals for committee members on April 4th, sponsored by the Leakey Foundation.

Workshop support. We are using AABA funding support to provide light catering for two workshops proposed or co-proposed by committee members and aligned with the education committee's mandate – Up Goer Five: Using Simple Language to Communicate Your Research to the Public (Wednesday April 19th, 1-4pm) and Improv for Anthropologists (Thursday April 20th, 6-8pm). Committee members are also individually boosting the workshops within their networks and on social media.

Outreach. The Education Committee will host an engagement table at [The Discovery](#) (Reno's local science center) on the afternoon and evening of Wednesday April 19th. Participants will make use of the cast collection, video clips, and print resources in short activities to share with and learn from visitors

about biological anthropology. After the AABA meeting, the committee's (newly expanded) cast collection will be left with the AABA local arrangements committee for use by local educators who may wish to use it in classrooms or other science learning activities.

On-site engagement. We will pilot a small outreach effort at the Peppermill Resort itself, exploring whether venue guests and staff might be an audience for public engagement at this and future AABA meetings. We will have a small table, posters, casts, and AABA education committee members set up near the registration desk on Thursday April 20th from 12-1:30pm.

Committee meeting. An in-person/virtual committee meeting will be held on Saturday April 22nd from 8-9:30am. We hope to plot out some specific, actionable goals for the coming year and recruit new members from AABA into the committee.

Other committee efforts

The committee has hosted four virtual meetings since the 2022 AABA meeting. Committee efforts underway or planned for the next year include:

Formalizing committee roles. To recognize and incentivize work on behalf of AABA, we are formalizing committee roles beyond the committee co-chair roles (e.g., "website coordinator", "resource developer"). This will provide committee members a more specific title they can list on their CV's, tenure documents, grant proposals, etc. beyond "committee member."

Refinement of website content and lesson plans. The committee is working to streamline the process for updating/revising workshop content. At the AABA meeting we plan to advocate for a more prominent link from the AABA landing page to highlight committee content. We are updating some lesson plans that are already online to align with changing vocabularies and frameworks.

Survey of AABA membership. The committee has requested permission from AABA leadership to release a survey to AABA members during the 2023 meeting, to gauge current awareness of committee activities and materials, and to hear from AABA members about what they would like to see from the committee over the next few years.

Explore the feasibility and structure of a public engagement/education awards or small grant program to recognize, incentivize and support such work by AABA members (and particularly early career members). This is envisioned as a complement to the existing AABA and Leakey Foundation Communication & Outreach Award in Honor of Camilla Smith.

Expand public outreach efforts in collaboration with the Leakey Foundation. We will continue to organize and conduct outreach in K-12 school or museum settings at future meetings. We will also explore how we (or AABA members at large) can participate in or organize virtual engagement opportunities in collaboration with the Leakey Foundation.

Active committee members as of March 2023

Active committee members have attended at least one meeting or activity of the AABA Education Committee since April 2022.

Kate McGrath
Rob O'Malley
Karol Chandler-Ezell
Briana Pobiner
Samantha Porter
Kinley Russell
Caitlin Schrein
Katrina Yezzi-Woodley
Malorie Albee
Amanda Owings
Marin Pilloud
Jacqueline Garnett
Kristin Crouse
Kaitlin East
Arielle Johnson
Seth Chagi
Amanda Ellwanger