

Report to the AAPA Annual Business Meeting, 2017

Ad Hoc Committee on the Implications/Ramifications of an Association Name Change

At the 2016 Annual Business Meeting of the Association of Physical Anthropologists, the members present voted to direct the AAPA President to appoint an ad-hoc committee to consider the implications/ramifications of a potential name change to the association and/or journal. The vote included a mission to report back at the 2017 Business Meeting. Following this directive, an Ad-Hoc committee consisting of executive committee, publication committee, editors, and AAPA members was charged to consider the legal, logistical, financial and other implications of a potential name change to the association and to report back to the membership with recommendations for future action.

Committee Fact Finding

The committee met virtually twice during 2016 to discuss the issues involved. The committee identified several areas for further consideration including:

- Legal issues and potential real costs of a change in name.
- Intertwined issues of the association and journal names.
- Opportunity costs of changing a historical association or journal name.

Legal issues and potential real costs of a change in name: The committee consulted AAPA attorney, Wes Kennedy, as to the logistical and legal options involved in a name change. Kennedy provided an evaluation of: The legal implications of a change in association name, recognizing that we are incorporated under this name and are a tax entity with this name. And the various options of undertaking a name change.

Having reviewed our constitution and bylaws it was his opinion that legally a name change could be implemented in two ways – either by a full name change via a bylaws change, or via a d/b/a (doing business as) name change. Both have downstream legal and ministerial consequences, but both seem feasible given our constitution and bylaws. Both would incur some legal and other costs to effect.

Intertwined issues of the association and journal names: Attorney Kennedy also weighed in on contractual issues with respect to journal names and the association. As Wiley owns the name of the American Journal of Physical Anthropology – any name change discussions pertaining to that issue would require their agreement. The Yearbook, being owned by the association itself could change its name without agreement by Wiley; nonetheless it seems advisable to consult with Wiley on any name change. There is a non-compete clause in our contract with Wiley, as well as a right of first refusal on any new journals the association might entertain during the contract. As such, a second journal with a new name that is not Wiley owned is not currently an option.

Opportunity costs of changing a historical association or journal name: The AAPA is a well-recognized and respected organization that has been in existence since 1930; the

AJPA has been in existence longer yet, since 1918. While difficult to value, the historical precedent, the heft of historical reputation etc are non-trivial considerations in any association decisions with respect to changing or not changing its name. It is the case that other entities that support the science that we do – for example, the National Science Foundation program, which is now Biological Anthropology – have changed their names. But it is also the case that they do not have the long term products (e.g., our professional association and journal) that we do. There are also cases in which other long term associations, such as the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) have chosen not to change their names (although favoring their acronym over their full name) – despite the language embedded in their names having become antiquated.

Other Name Related Activities in 2016-17

As part of the exploration of the question of ramifications and implications of a name change, the Pollitzer Student Travel Award essay prompt asked students to discuss whether the association should change its name and if so to what. Student essays ran in favor (but not unanimously) toward name change, raising issues from the narrowness of the ‘physical’ moniker and its racist applications historically to the more international (rather than solely American) scope of the organization. Among the top 10 ranked essays in the group, there was no consensus on what a new name should be. Names offered included American Association of Biological Anthropologists, Association of Biological Anthropologists, International Association of Biological Anthropologists, American Association of Anthropological Sciences, International Conference for Biological Anthropologists, as well as no name change.

Committee Recommendations

The committee reports that it is logistically and legally feasible, if somewhat cumbersome, for the association to change its name. And it recognizes there are a diversity of opinions both for and against such a proposition. There are also a series of detailed decisions that may well influence whether members are supportive of a name change, not least of which is what that new name might be.

We believe that a decision about the name of the association is one that requires the opportunity for discussion and input from all the members of the association and a detailed and nuanced discussion of the pros and cons. We imagine this process is one that will benefit by not being rushed and for having as fulsome a debate as possible.

We therefore recommend the following:

- Over 2017-18, the AAPA should organize a series of online meetings to 'discuss' the potential of a name change.
- Online discussion might include (if permissions are granted) posting the best essays in response to the Pollitzer prompt.
- Online discussion should further include both discussion boards and webinar listening sessions.

- Online intervention should also include the solicitation of ideas for new names, as well as a discussion of these.
- At the 2018 annual meeting (Austin, 2018), the AAPA should hold a face-to-face discussion forum separate from the Business Meeting. This may occur as part of a Presidential Panel or during some other midday or evening session.
- Depending on the outcomes of these discussions, additional discussion and consideration may be deemed necessary.
- If at some point in the future there seems to be general support of a name change, an online poll of the ENTIRE membership should ensue to determine if a name change should occur.
- A separate ballot (or ballot question) should relate to the specific name to which to change.
- While we recognize that the process of an official name change could be started at a business meeting, we strongly suggest that a vote at a business meeting attended by 200-300 members of a 2000 member association is a non-ideal means by which to make a change to the historical name of an association. We believe such a vote, given its historical significance, is one that the entire membership should rightly weigh in upon.

Committee Members: Susan Antón (chair), Anthony Di Fiore, Peter Ellison, Sarah Elton, Agustín Fuentes, Anne Grauer, Connie Mulligan, Trudy Turner, Fred Smith.

Student Affairs Chair (who wrote the Pollitzer prompt): Leslea Hlusko