

2021 Vice President's Report
Business Meeting (Submitted 4/2/2021)
American Association of Physical Anthropologists
Online, The Pathable Platform
Leslea J. Hlusko, Vice President and Program Chair

Introduction

The duties of the Vice President primarily revolve around effectuating our programming for the year. This past year, this endeavor divided into two major programming efforts: developing a new AAPA Webinar series and the 90th annual meeting. These are discussed in detail below.

The Webinar Program

In March 2020, the vast majority of AAPA members entered some form of shelter-in-place, unable to travel or to, in many instances, leave their homes. Everything changed. Careers were upset and made much more difficult. By May, it was becoming evident that this situation would extend into the summer and fall, and that the professional impact would be even greater than the cancelled 2020 AAPA meeting.

After a series of conversations with Brett Burk of Burk & Associates about the feasibility of launching an AAPA webinar series, on May 18, 2020, President-elect Steve Leigh and I met with representatives from AAPA's Committee on Diversity, Student Programs, and Biological Anthropology Women's Mentoring Network to develop three webinars specifically aimed at providing professional support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, I formed a Virtual Program Committee (see below) to guide and support this effort. Ultimately, these three webinars were organized and held (details below).

Following the success of these three webinars, the President Anne Grauer and the Executive Committee decided to continue the webinar series as a regular monthly event. Members of the Virtual Program Committee developed and vetted the concepts. All webinar proposals were submitted to the Executive Committee for final approval before they were pursued. Michelle Bezanson stepped in to serve as the AAPA Webinar Coordinator for the late fall and winter events.

The monthly schedule and flexibility of the online format enabled AAPA to use the webinar series as a vehicle to advance our sense of community as well as to share research. In addition to science-oriented webinars, we also held two webinars to update members on planning for the 2021 annual meeting. Additionally, the AAPA webinar platform supported the Black in BioAnth (BiBA) group during their inaugural Black in BioAnth Week in February. Two of the BiBA events were hosted on AAPA's webinar platform.

All of AAPA's webinars have been recorded and posted on the AAPA YouTube channel. In total, AAPA's webinars attracted 2,184 attendees to the live events and had 1,856 YouTube video views as of March 31, 2021. The details for the events are as follows:

Tips & Tricks for Remote Teaching in Biological Anthropology

Monday, June 22, 12-1pm ET

Co-organizers: Eduardo Amorim and Marc Kissel

Presenters:

- Anne Stone (Arizona State University),
- Cara Ocobock (Notre Dame),
- Kathryn Grow Allen (SUNY-Potsdam),
- Sang-Hee Lee (UC-Riverside),
- Kent Johnson (SUNY-Cortland),
- Marc Kissel (Appalachian State University)

Number of registrations: 292

Number of attendees: 238

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/ZhqZ3v3v9ao>

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 547

Shifting Gears With Your Research Due to COVID-19

Monday, July 6, 12-1pm ET

Co-organizers: Caity Placek (Ball State University) and Kelly Ontl (Ball State University)

Topics & Presenters:

- Primatology & Endocrinology: Michelle Rodrigues (University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign & Marquette University),
- Bioarchaeology: Delande Justinvil (American University),
- Paleoanthropology: Charles Musiba (University of Colorado, Denver),
- Primatology & Human Health: Ari Vreedzaam (Tulane University, University of Suriname, Caribbean Consortium for Research in Environmental & Occupational Health),
- Medical Anthropology: James Gibb (University of Toronto) & Luseadra McKerracher (McMaster University)

Number of registrations: 159

Number of attendees: 101

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/xhTmnGPcCxs>

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 135

Career-Thinking: The Multiverse of What People Can Do With a PhD in Biological Anthropology

Monday, July 20, 12-1pm ET

Organizer: Michelle Bezanson

Presenters:

- AnneLinda Mbeki, Assistant Curator at Iziko Museums of South Africa
- Luke Matthews, RAND Center for Applied Network Analysis
- Mary Kelaita, St. Philips College
- Whitney B. Reiner, Data Scientist @ Postie

Number of registrations: 474
Number of attendees: 295
YouTube video: https://youtu.be/3A_wDnJlrHE
Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 238

The evolution and history of human diseases: from the archaic hominins to the Black Death and Sars-Cov-2

Monday, August 24, 2020

Organizer: Eduardo Amorim (University of Lausanne)

Panelists:

- A New History of the Black Death (and Why It Matters for the History of Pandemics: Monica H. Green (Independent Scholar)
- The impact of infectious diseases on human evolution: Lluís Quintana-Murci (Institute Pasteur and Collège de France)
- Patterns of genomic diversity in SARS-CoV-2: Lucy van Dorp (University College London)

Number of registrations: 746

Number of attendees: 440

YouTube video:

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 462

Community Discussion on AAPA's 2021 Annual Meeting

Tuesday, September 15, 2020

Organizer: Anne Grauer, AAPA President

Panelists:

- Steve Leigh, AAPA President-elect
- Leslea Hlusko, AAPA Vice President & Program Chair
- Brett Burk and Lori Strong, Burk Associates

Number of registrations: 163

Number of attendees: 107

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/wEKZ3MIXdel>

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 138

Voices from Down Under: Biological Anthropology in Australia and New Zealand

Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Organizer: Tanya Smith, Griffith University

Panelists:

- Rebecca Kinaston, University of Otago, *Recent bioarchaeological research from Indonesia*
- Cyril Grueter, University of Western Australia, *Secondary sexual traits and complex sociality in primates*
- Clare McFadden, Australian National University, *Situating bioarchaeology in multidisciplinary approaches to palaeodemography and palaeoepidemiology*
- Andy Herries, La Trobe University, *New hominin fossil discoveries from Drimolen Cave, South Africa, and their relevance to the evolution of Paranthropus and Homo erectus*

- Co-sponsored by The Australasian Society for Human Biology (ASHB) www.australasianhumanbiology.com

Number of registrations: 157

Number of attendees: 84

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/eo38vKwPxco>

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 127

The Ups, Downs, Ins & Outs of Computational Genomics in Anthropology

Monday, November 23rd, 2020

Many thanks to our sponsor for this webinar, [The Royal Society](#). Follow them on twitter [@theroyalsociety](#)

Organizer: Xinjun Zhang (postdoc, anthropological geneticist at UCLA)

Description: Over the last decade, computational genomics has brought a whirlwind of new insights to human evolution. We have so far witnessed a rapid emergence of genomics data and quantitative methods. This month, AAPA brings you a panel of four experts to talk about their fascinating research in human demographic history, with a particular focus on the start-of-the-art analytical methods used in anthropological genomics nowadays, including their assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses.

Panelists:

- Dr. Katherine Korunes, postdoc at Duke University
- Dr. Shyamalika Gopalan, postdoc at University of Southern California
- Dr. Torsten Günther, group leader at Uppsala University
- Dr. Melinda Yang, assistant professor at University of Richmond

Number of registrations: 310

Number of attendees: 188

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/93AbF8q3eTY>

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 60

Black in BioAnthropology: Kick-off Keynote by Dr. Stephanie Poindexter

Monday, February 1, 2021

Organizer: Megan Henriquez (City University of New York)

Description: This keynote address by primatologist and conservation biologist Dr. Stephanie Poindexter (University of Buffalo) was part of the #BlackinBioAnth week (February 1-7, 2021) created and organized by Black in BioAnthropology (BiBA). This live event was co-hosted by the AAPA.

Number of registrations: 407

Number of attendees: 283

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/1GutDJAfREA>

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 119

Black in BioAnthropology: Journeys, Belonging and Legacy

Thursday, February 4, 2021

Organizer: Dag Abebe (City University of New York)

Description: This panel discussion explored Black scholars' experiences in biological anthropology as part of the #BlackinBioAnth week (February 1-7, 2021) created and

organized by Black in BioAnthropology (BiBA). This live event was co-hosted by the AAPA.

Panelists:

- Dr. LaShanda Williams (EMD Serono/Merck)
- Delande Justinvil (PhD Student, American University)
- Myeashea Alexander (@TheRockStarAnthropologist, Sci. Communicator)
- Dr. Denné Reed (University of Texas at Austin)
- Dr. Allison Nesbitt (University of Missouri, School of Medicine)

Number of registrations: 371

Number of attendees: 219

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/BRPF6y72Xwk>

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 30

The Insider's Guide to AAPA's 2021 Virtual Conference

Monday, March 8, 2021

Organizer: Anne Grauer, AAPA President

Description: Join us for a demo of the virtual platform AAPA will be using for our annual conference scheduled for April 7-28, 2021. See all the cool features, get a sense of how the events will work, and learn how to upload your presentation. You can also learn more about the meeting on our [90th annual conference webpage](#).

Panelists:

- Steve Leigh, AAPA President-elect
- Leslea Hlusko, AAPA Vice President & Program Chair
- Lori Strong, Burk & Associates

Number of registrations: 299

Number of attendees: 229

YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/mzl3As8ls3g>

Number of video views as of 3/31/2021: 135

The Program Committee

In late May of 2020, I convened by email a Virtual Program committee consisting of 11 members:

Eduardo Amorim	Michael Rivera
Sarah Amugongo Brown	Julienne Rutherford
Ben Auerbach	Tanya Smith
Marc Kissel	Kerryn Warren
Chris Lynn	Xinjun Zhang
Cara Ocobock	

This committee vetted and helped promote the summer Covid-19 Professional Support webinar series. They then developed the topics for the monthly webinar series that began in August 2020. These eleven people then went on to serve in the Program Committee for the 2021 Annual Meeting.

On July 9, 2020, I convened the full Program Committee via email. This committee consists of 44 people:

C. Eduardo Guerra Amorim	Saige Kelmelis	Lauren Schroeder
Ben Auerbach	Kristina Killgrove	Eric Shattuck
Heather Battles	Marc Kissel	Tanya Smith
Jonathan Bethard	Susan Kuzminsky	Katie Starkweather
Michelle Bezanson	Myra Laird	Bethany Usher
Sarah Amugongo Brown	Nathan Lents	Caroline VanSickle
Francisca Alves Cardoso	Christopher Lynn	Catalina Villamil
Susanne Cote	Alison Murray	Cara Wall-Scheffler
Elisabeth Cuerrier-Richer	Cara Ocobock	Kerryn Warren
Victoria M Dominguez	Thomas Rein	Karen Weinstein
Rebecca Gilmour	Terrence Ritzman	Julie Wieczkowski
Jesse Goliath	Michael Rivera	Teresa Wilson
Lauren Halenar-Price	Gwen Robbins Schug	Xinjun Zhang
Jennifer Hotzman	Julienne Rutherford	
Kent Johnson	Krithivasan	
Erin Kane	Sankaranarayanan	

In conjunction with the Executive Committee, the Program Committee reviewed the proposals for Invited Symposia for the 90th annual meeting, completing those reviews by September 7, 2020. This committee was also charged with reviewing all abstracts submitted on October 15, 2020. Two committee members reviewed each abstract. Reviews were completed by November 20, 2020. Some members were asked to re-review a handful of abstracts, as we made a one-time adjustment to policy and invited authors to revise (in consideration of the pandemic).

A subset of the Program Committee developed the contributed sessions. In the past, this task has been done by the advance-planning team. However, given that we did not have an advance-planning team, we had to innovate a new procedure for creating the contributed sessions. This Contributed Sessions Planning subcommittee consisted of 23 members:

C. Eduardo Guerra Amorim	Saige Kelmelis	Eric Shattuck
Heather Battles	Marc Kissel	Bethany Usher
Michelle Bezanson	Susan Kuzminsky	Kerryn Warren
Susanne Cote	Myra Laird	Karen Weinstein
Elisabeth Cuerrier-Richer	Cara Ocobock	Julie Wieczkowski
Rebecca Gilmour	Thomas Rein	Teresa Wilson
Jennifer Hotzman	Michael Rivera	Xinjun Zhang
Erin Kane	Gwen Robbins Schug	

Members of this subcommittee were divided into eight topical areas (Bioarchaeology, Education, Forensics, Functional Anatomy / Tissue Biology, Human Biology, Genetics & Genomics, Paleoanthropology, and Primatology). Within these topical areas, committee members organized the abstracts into groups of 6 to 9 that clustered by a sub-topical theme. These clusters formed the 70 contributed sessions for the 90th annual meeting.

The Program Committee was also called on to help develop the Time Zone Social events, identify abstracts for the press packet, and for a number of other questions that I needed feedback and guidance on.

The 90th Annual Meeting

Through the fall of 2020, we were uncertain as to what format the 90th annual meeting would ultimately take. However, we were committed to hold an annual meeting. Therefore, we followed the usual timeline for the series of submissions required to develop a full-fledged annual meeting.

Invited Symposia

The call for proposals for invited symposia went out on June 17, 2020. Proposals were due on August 17, 2020. We received eight proposals. After review by the Program Committee and Executive Committee, all eight were accepted for the 2021 annual meeting.

Abstract Submission and Review

The call for abstracts was announced on September 24, 2020. Abstract submissions were due on October 15, 2020. In total, 458 abstracts were submitted. After each was reviewed by either two or three members of the Program Committee, all but one was accepted. By the writing of this report, five had been withdrawn.

Throwback Program

As the pandemic began to unfold in 2020, AAPA's 89th annual meeting had to be cancelled. Vice President and Program Committee Chair Steve Leigh and AAPA's website manager Ed Hagen quickly created a site where authors could upload their presentations. However, the pandemic brought with it a wide range of challenges and the majority of presenters for 2020 did not have the opportunity to share their research. Being mindful of this loss felt by many in our community and knowing that the pandemic kept many of us from being able to conduct new research, AAPA's Executive Committee created the Throwback Program. Anyone who had an accepted abstract for 2020 but who did not submit an abstract for 2021 could link their 2021 registration with the presentation of their 2020 abstract.

Invitations were sent out to everyone who qualified (criteria noted above) on November 30, 2020, and again on December 14, 2020. Ultimately, 138 authors took advantage of this program, including subsets of four of the invited symposia.

All of the contributed abstracts resubmitted through the Throwback Program were pooled with the 2021 abstracts for the session planning, so they are intermixed in the 2021 Program. This means that not all of the abstracts included in our 90th annual meeting are published in the 2021 annual meeting supplement of the *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*. The 138 Throwback abstracts are only published in the 2020 annual meeting supplement of *AJPA*.

Workshop Proposals

Given the uncertainty of our meeting format, AAPA leadership decided that we would not host workshops as we have in the past. Instead, once the virtual format was settled, members of the Executive Committee developed professional support workshops that are open to all meeting attendees. We also have some workshops developed by our meeting exhibitors.

Abstract Issue

The 2020 AJPA supplemental meeting issue includes 455 peer-reviewed scientific abstract, which will be presented in either video or poster format at the annual meeting. Once again, our program is truly international, with scientists from all over the world including Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. We are pleased to be joined by our partner organizations in some form or another, the Paleopathology Association (PPA), the Human Biology Association (HBA), the American Association for Anthropological Genetics (AAAG), and the Dental Anthropology Association (DAA). Abstracts are presented alphabetically by the last name of the first author.

The abstracts illustrate the remarkable breadth of our discipline, covering a range of research topics and approaches, and with global reach and incredible time depth. A total of 8 invited symposia included 82 abstracts. Contributed abstract submissions totaled 373. Broken down by subfield, these include

- Bioarchaeology (~23.6%),
- Primatology (~20.6%),
- Paleoanthropology (~12.9%),
- Human Biology (~13.9%),
- Functional Anatomy and Tissue Biology (~10.5%),
- Genetics and Genomics (~9.9%), Forensics (~7%), and
- Education in Biological Anthropology (~2.4%).

Planning Logistics for the Virtual Meeting

It is difficult to adequately convey the amount of effort it took to pull together this entirely new format for our annual meeting. Preparations for the possibility of holding a virtual meeting began almost immediately after the cancelation of the 2020 meeting. AAPA Officers attended as many virtual conferences over the summer and fall of 2020 as possible to gather ideas and experience with the various platform options. We held numerous meetings over this time with

our Meetings Director, Lori Strong, and others from Burk & Associates to strategize and plan throughout all the unknowns, with the hope that we might be able to have an in-person component to the 90th annual meeting. By January 2021, President Anne Grauer made the call that our 2021 meeting would be entirely virtual. Planning for a fully virtual conference went into high gear. We immediately decided on the Pathable platform and detailed planning got underway.

AAPA relies on a very stable database for our program planning. This was created and is maintained and managed by Ed Hagen. It is well-designed to support an annual meeting that takes place over three days, in one time zone, and with morning and afternoon sessions that are either podium or poster format. An immense amount of effort was invested as we worked out how to meld this database structure with a 3-week long meeting with a range of session start-times and a mix of podium/video and poster presentations in each session.

The Structure of the Virtual Meeting

Aside from being entirely online, the biggest change this year for our annual meeting is in the schedule. All scientific sessions are scheduled during normal business hours Monday through Friday centered on North American time zones and spread out over three weeks. The hope is that this schedule will facilitate the participation of our many meeting attendees who have significant obligations at home, and therefore would be excluded from weekend events. Although it is impossible to schedule live events during business hours for all attendees from around the world, we did make an effort to schedule scientific sessions so that presenters are participating during their daytime hours.

The next big innovation for this year's annual meeting is that all scientific presentations were uploaded to the Pathable platform prior to the start of the conference. Scientific presentations can be as effective when presented in video or poster form as when they are live. Therefore, we shifted to an asynchronous presentation of the individual research projects so that they would reach a wider audience. All presentations are available for two months rather than just a small window of time during one session, on one day of an in-person conference. Attendees at the 90th annual meeting can engage with any and all of the scientific presentations whenever they have the time to do so between April 5th and May 31st, be that 6am, noon, or midnight. This expanded opportunity for engagement increases the benefit of the meeting to the presenters as well as the attendees, given that the longer period of presentation leads to a larger audience for each presentation.

Contributed scientific sessions are much smaller than what AAPA has been able to accommodate previously. A subset of the Program Committee, the Session Planning Committee clustered abstracts into groups of 6 to 9 by scientific theme, forming 70 tailored contributed sessions. Given the virtual platform, and the use of asynchronous individual presentations, the format of each presentation is irrelevant to how the session will unfold. Therefore, sessions are

a mix of podium/video and poster presentations. We hope you enjoy this more tailored experience that is only possible because of our shift to the virtual platform.

One of the most valuable moments during any annual meeting is the question and answer session that follows each presentation, the hallway conversation after a session, or the exchange that occurs in front of a poster. Our aim for the contributed sessions is to bring these conversations front and center and share them with a wider audience. Thanks to the virtual setting we moved these high-value, smaller conversations onto a live webinar format. The webinar format highlights the presenters on video while simultaneously accommodating a large audience through the chat feature. The chair of each contributed session was hand-picked for their ability to facilitate an interesting conversation among the presenters in that session. We hope that these live, highly interactive events will be well worth the effort it took for meeting attendees to rearrange their schedules so that they could attend. These live components of the scientific sessions will be recorded and available to watch through the end of the 90th annual meeting.

The proportions of the contributed scientific sessions by major subject areas are:

Major Topic	Number of Sessions	% of Contributed Sessions
Dental Anthropology	1	1%
Education	2	3%
Forensic Anthropology	5	7%
Functional Anatomy & Tissue Biology	7	10%
Genetics & Genomics	8	11%
Human Biology	8	11%
Paleoanthropology	9	13%
Primateology	13	19%
Bioarchaeology	17	24%

The Schedule for the Virtual Meeting

The Pathable platform opens on April 5th to all meeting attendees, and your engagement with the scientific presentations begins that day. The live events start on April 7th and run through April 28th. Scientific presentations and the informal networking features will be available until the Pathable platform closes on May 31st.

The eight invited symposia for 2021 will run back-to-back on April 8th and 9th. Our seventy contributed sessions begin on Monday, April 12th and run back-to-back through April 28th. Intermixed with the contributed sessions are four of the invited symposia from 2021, reconvened as part of AAPA's Throwback Program.

Our live events begin on April 7th with the President's Plenary session *Include is a Verb: Act to Make Inclusion a Reality* by Sherry Marts. The plenary is followed by our Committee on Diversity's Undergraduate Research Symposium organized by Cara Wall-Scheffler. Be sure to chime in for our opening reception that, for the 90th annual meeting, will also be the celebration of AAPA's lifetime achievement award winners. We will be celebrating the 2020 winners as well as those being recognized in 2021. The AAPA Business Meeting will be held on Wednesday, April 14th, when the final vote on renaming the organization will be held. We will celebrate our student prize winners at the closing reception on Wednesday, April 28th.

The virtual format requires that social events be more planned than impromptu. The Program Committee organized a series of Time Zone Socials and an association-wide game night. We have a series of social events that bring together various communities within AAPA, such as the newly formed Black in BioAnthropology (BiBA) group, established sister organizations such as AAAG and HBA, and research themed networking opportunities (The Hair Social, Epidemic and Pandemics, and Dental Anthropology).

Various AAPA committees organized a series of professional development workshops with assistance from the American Journal of Physical Anthropology and Wiley Publishing, National Science Foundation, The Leakey Foundation, The Wenner-Gren Foundation, and National Geographic. There will also be a series of workshops sponsored by our exhibitors that round out a fantastic resource for our meeting attendees.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

I cannot find the words to express adequately my deep appreciation to the incredibly generous and supportive group of 44 colleagues who formed the **Program Committee** and all of its various sub-committees. Time and time again I needed to write with another request as I figured out how to organize a virtual meeting. Their patience, grace, and willingness to step up to help are beyond compare.

A huge amount of gratitude goes out to **Burk & Associates** for guiding us through these unprecedented times as if they had done this before. Their wisdom and willingness to guide us is deeply appreciated. In particular, I want to recognize **Lori Strong, our Meeting Director**. She has worked at a frantic pace throughout the past year to organize numerous association conferences. Her calmness at the center of what often felt like a hurricane of logistics is at the heart of what makes this annual meeting a success. A shout out also needs to go to other members of the Burk & Associates team: Stacey Beckwith for making endless edits to the Pathable site; Amy Sullivan for organizing our sponsors and exhibitors for the annual meeting and the webinars; Sean Sullivan for the meeting logo; Raelene Sok for organizing the graduate student volunteers; Heide Rohland and Ruediger Birenheide for membership and payment support; Cooky Bysura for her editorial and layout talents; the many other Burk & Associate team members who I have inadvertently left out; and last but definitely not least, Brett Burk

and Jill Drupa for their ceaseless support and flexibility with the development of the webinar program and, well, everything.

It has been an honor to work alongside **AAPA President Anne Grauer**. She was laser focused on preserving the AAPA community, supporting all efforts to hold us together in this incredibly challenging time. Without her vision and tireless efforts to make it work, none of this new programming would have been possible. The AAPA community owes a huge debt of gratitude to Anne Grauer for carrying us over the major hurdles this pandemic threw in front of our association.

Many thanks also to President-elect and the former Vice President and Program Chair **Steve Leigh** for his patience with my incessant and very naïve questions, “now, how do I do....?”

Ed Hagen’s patience and good will with my steep learning curve and this wild ride of planning a virtual meeting deserve a double dose of the Lasker Service Award.

The **Vice President’s Assistant, Cat Taylor** was a constant source of support and good cheer. Many thanks also to **AAPA Secretary Sheela Athreya** who learned by my side what we are supposed to do as Secretary and Vice President, at the same time that those roles were very different from the duties of our predecessors.

But most of all, we wouldn’t have an annual meeting at all if it were not for the **meeting attendees**. A huge thank you goes to the organizers who pulled together the eight invited symposia that address urgent issues facing our world today, to the ~600 lead authors who are sharing their most recent research to keep our scientific community inspired and moving forward, to the members who organized workshops, social events, and/or continued to lead their committees and organizations, and to all of our meeting attendees who are figuring out how to participate in a virtual conference despite all the hurdles you face. I tip my hat to all of you with deep respect. I know how much extra effort was required to hold it together this year.