

Harassment Committee for Awareness, Response and Equity (HCARE) of the AABA
2023-2024 Annual Report

Submitted by Agustín Fuentes (Chair, AABA HCARE)

The HCARE was established by AABA Executive Committee leadership in February of 2020 as an ad hoc committee. The committee members serve by appointment of the AABA President. The committee is overseen by a chair, who is appointed for a four-year term by the AABA President.

Committee members: Jessica Brinkworth, Agustín Fuentes, Stephanie Meredith, and Robin Nelson

The HCARE was charged with the following responsibilities:

1. Assisting the Executive Committee officers in creating, implementing, and revising harassment, bullying, intimidation, retaliation, and/or assault reporting policies and procedures.
2. Receiving and responding to incoming reports of harassment, bullying, intimidation, retaliation, and/or assault.
3. Deliberating and determining appropriate responses.
4. Making recommendations to the AABA President and Executive Committee.

The HCARE met four times and had a number of email interactions between March 2024 and the submission of this report. The chair of the HCARE was contacted multiple times by the President and Program coordinators for the 2025 AABA meetings to inquire whether any individuals nominated for AABA positions or proposed to chair session at the annual meetings appeared as the focus in complaints documented by HCARE.

Complaints

The HCARE received and assessed one complaint regarding concerning behaviors in the time period covered by this report. The one complaint was communicated via email and did not involve the annual meeting of the AABA. The one complaint was assessed and officially closed.

Activities

The Committee has been exploring ways of increasing awareness of the HCARE. Beginning at the 2024 annual meeting, HCARE 'business' cards were made available that provided QR codes, the HCARE gmail address, and a phone number, to both improve awareness of HCARE and to facilitate reporting of harassment and other concerning behaviors. We are unsure of their impact and considering what methods of raising awareness of HCARE might be best for the 2025 meeting. Options for future consideration include workshops and/or panel discussions regarding the committee.

At the suggestion of the AABA President and Incoming-President, the HCARE chair reached out to two private investigator firms to initiate discussion about the possibility of hiring them on an as needed basis as outside investigations as complaints warrant them. One did not seem to be a good fit for the AABA and discussion are incomplete with the second. The Chair will continue these explorations in consultation with the committee.

New Committee Members

At the close of the 2025 AABA business meeting, Jessica Brinkworth, Stephanie Meredith, and Robin Nelson will rotate off the committee and four new members, Lee Gettler, Catherine Llera Martin, Caroline van Sickle, and Chris Schmitt will join.