

2025-2026 Vice President's Report
Business Meeting (March 20, 2026, Submitted March 18, 2026)
95th Annual Meeting of American Association of Biological Anthropologists
Denver, CO
Amy L. Rector, Vice President

Introduction

The Vice President chairs the Program Committee and coordinates AABA programming throughout the year. In 2025-2026, this centered on organizing the 95th Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado. This is the second time in recent years that the AABA meeting has been held in Denver as part of our fulfilling our contract with the hotel that was affected by COVID disruptions.

Tasks related to organizing the annual conference included program committee formation, symposium proposal review, abstract submission review and notification, workshop proposal review, scheduling the conference events, publication of the annual abstract volume, and publication of the conference program.

The 2026 conference is in-person with select virtual components. Online presenters have the opportunity to present in an asynchronous online format. Several of the Invited Podium Symposia, Business Meeting, Presidential Plenary, and select special presentations will be livestreamed and recorded. This year we will be continuing the Presidential Plenary on Thursday morning and the Late Breaking Science poster session on Saturday afternoon.

Program Committee

A call for program committee volunteers was distributed to AABA members in April 2025 via an email from the VP sent through X-CD. The deadline to apply was late June, 2025. New this year, eligible regular members applied using a reviewer pool application form directly in X-CD that resulted in reviewer pool that could be automatically assigned according to topics of expertise. Applications for the program committee far outnumbered previous years. As a result, the program committee includes 143 members, a mix of returning and new members. The committee includes members from a range of career stages and international institutions. Thirty-three members of the Program Committee took on the task of organizing the contributed sessions, and 46 reviewers volunteered to review for the Late Breaking Science session. Kate Fish served as the assistant to the Vice President. Program committee roster for 2025-2026:

Abigail Asangba	Marianne Cooper	Sudipta Ghosh
Karen Baab	Maria Ana Correia	Rebecca Gibson
Christiane Baigent	Miguel Delgado	Halszka Glowacka
Eric Bartelink	Anthony Di Fiore	Lauren Gonzales
Rose Basom	Jenna Dittmar	David Green
Jared Beatrice	Nathaniel Dominy	Francisco Gurri
Elizabeth Berger	Rhian Dunn	Sharon Gursky
Rafael Bisso-Machado	Tyler Dunn	Lauren Halenar-Price
Michele Bleuze	Holly Dunsworth	Angela Harden
Derek Boyd	Wren Edwards	Ryan Harrod
Laura Brubaker-Wittman	Andrea Eller	Jane Holmstrom
Nicole Burt	Krista Fish	Genevieve Housman
Costantino Buzi	Raquel Fleskes	Susan Howell
Steven Byers	Cesar Fortes-Lima	Tábita Hünemeier
Vanessa Campanacho	Christine France	Adrian Jaeggi
Stephanie Canington	George Francis	Tina Jakob
Janine Chalk-Wilayto	Hanna Friedlander	Kent Johnson
Colleen Cheverko	Stephen Frost	Kelsey Jorgensen
Esther Choo	Ian George	Saige Kelmelis
Siobhan Cooke	Nicole Geske	Addison Kemp

Andrew Kim
Claire Kirchhoff
Katharine Kolpan
Krystiana Krupa
Chrisandra Kufeldt
Sarah Lacy
Steven Lautzenheiser
Christine Lee
Katharine Lee
Sang-Hee Lee
Lydia Light
Ellis Locke
Angelina Locker
Ellison McNutt
Elizabeth Miller
Steven Miller
Alison Murray
Heather Norton
Robert O'Malley
Sofia Pacheco-Fores
Evelyn Pain
Christina Papageorgopoulou
Alex Piel
Marin Pilloud
Erin Pinkston

J. Michael Plavcan
Stephanie Poindexter
Taylor Polvadore
Sean Prall
Kaye Reed
Kathryn Reusch
Terry Ritzman
Chris Robinson
Alan Rogers
Amanda Rowe
Caroline Rowe
Julienne Rutherford
Monica Sans
Amy Schreier
Alexandra Schuh
Jeremiah Scott
Melissa Seaboch
Timothy Sefczek
Chalachew Seyoum
Kistrina Shuler
Nandini Singh
Irene Smail
Maria Smith
Susan Smith
Nicole Smith-Guzmán

Dawnie Steadman
Samar Syeda
Nathan Thompson
Zachary Throckmorton
Christina Torres
Sheila Nicole Torres Tamayo
Taylor van Doren
Ines Varela-Silva
Tauras Vilgalys
Catalina I. Villamil
Cara Wall-Scheffler
Qian Wang
Katherine Weisensee
Frido Welker
Julie Wieczkowski
Cathy Willermet
Amanda Williams
Frank Williams
Taiye Winful
AN-DI YIM
Alexandra Zachwieja
Sarah Zaleski
Xinjun Zhang

Webinars

There were two AABA webinars in 2025, facilitated by Webinar Chair Thierra Nalley and Burk and Associates.

AABA | Write It So They'll Read It: Engaging the Public Through Op-Eds

Nov 19, 2025 at 1:00 pm ET

Want your research to reach beyond biological anthropology? This virtual workshop offers practical strategies for turning complex scholarship into clear, compelling op-eds—less jargon, more juice. We'll explore how to identify what makes your work timely, craft a strong argument, and write in a voice that connects with readers and editors.

Hosted by the AABA Science Advocacy Committee

AABA | Tracing Forgotten Histories: Identifying Unprovenienced Human Skeletal Remains and Establishing Best Practices for their Ethical Treatment

Dec 11, 2025 at 12:00 pm ET

Many teaching and museum collections house human remains with little or no provenience, creating major challenges for ethical stewardship. This webinar, inspired by last year's AABA workshop, brings together experts who have successfully reconstructed documentation for unprovenienced remains. Panelists will share practical methods—archival research, handwriting analysis, osteology, taphonomy, and more—and discuss collaborative strategies for navigating these complex cases. Join us to connect, learn, and build community around this critical work.

Collaborating closely, Irene Hochgraf-Cameron, Alyson Caine, and Karen Weinstein are advancing new frameworks for transparency and accountability in collections stewardship. Together, they have organized a workshop at the AABA meetings and are co-chairing an upcoming symposium on tracing unprovenanced remains and establishing best practices for ethical curation. Their efforts aim to cultivate a broader professional culture of collaboration, creativity, and restorative ethics within biological anthropology and allied fields.

Invited Symposia

Proposals for invited symposia were due on August 15, 2026. The Program Committee received 25 invited symposium proposals, which were reviewed by both the Program Committee and the Executive Committee; 17 proposals were accepted. This is a higher number than we usually accept. Accepted proposals include 10 podium and 7 poster symposia. One of the symposia is completely online.

Invited Symposia	Subfield	Organizers	Format
After Hours: Ecological and Evolutionary Insights from Nocturnal Primates	Primatology	Adam McLain and Amanda Rowe	Podium
A sense of structure: Sensory systems and primate evolution	Dental Anthropology	Marianne Cooper	Poster
Climatic Adaptation and Beyond: Investigations into the Thermoregulatory Imperative	Human Biology	Libby Cowgill and Elizabeth Cho	Podium
Dental Anthropology: A Collaborative Discourse on Its Past, Present, and Future	Dental Anthropology	Christina L Nicholas, Erin Corinne Blankenship-Sefczek, Donovan M Adams, Rebecca L George, and Kathleen S Paul, Marin A Pilloud	Poster
Emerging Chemical, Molecular, and Micro Approaches in Analysis of Human Skeletal Remains and Depositional Environments	Forensic Anthropology	Katie Zejdlik, Matthieu Baudelet, and Nicholas V Passalacqua	Podium
Empowering Diversity, Enriching Science: IDEAS in Action	Education in Bio Anthropology	Graciela S. Cabana, Susan Antón, Agustin Fuentes, Ripan S Malhi, Zaneta M Thayer, Jada P Benn Torres	Podium
From past to future: advancing skeletal research across East and Southeast Asia	Forensic Anthropology	Michael Rivera, Patara Rattanachet, and Alexa P. Kelly	Hybrid poster
AAAG/AABA Symposium: Human-Associated Genomes in Anthropological Genetics	Genetics & Genomics	Adam Kitchen	Podium
Paranthropus postcranial anatomy and its paleobiological implications	Paleoanthropology	Caley Orr and Carrie Mongle	Podium
Post-Contact Evolution: Selection, Admixture, and Health in American Populations	Genetics & Genomics	Eduardo Guerra Amorim and Tábita Hünemeir	Podium
HBA/AABA Symposium: Resilience as a Framework for Cross-Species Perspectives on Biological Organizations	Human Biology	Ruizhe Liu and Karen Kramer	Podium
Sharing Forgotten Histories: Stories and Methods of Identifying Unprovenienced Human Skeletal Remains and Establishing Best Practices for their Ethical Treatment	Forensic Anthropology	Irene Hochgraf Cameron, Alyson Caine, and Karen Weinstein	Poster

The first five years of anthropological research using The New Mexico Decedent Image Database	Human Biology	Shamsi Berry and Heather Edgar	Poster
The Lower Awash Valley, Afar, Ethiopia: 2.2 million years of hominin evolution	Paleoanthropology	Kaye Reed and Denise Su	Podium
The rise and fall of a chimpanzee community at Ngogo, Uganda	Primatology	Aaron Sandel, David P. Watts, Jacob D Negrey, and Rachna Reddy	Podium
Tooth Wear: Emerging Techniques, Enduring Questions, and Future Directions	Dental Anthropology	Ian Towle	Poster
Whole-Structure approaches to 3D Shape Analysis: Transforming Functional Morphology	Functional Anatomy	Christine Harper and Deanna Goldstein	Poster
Global Perspectives in Bioarchaeological Ethics	Bioarchaeology	Kerilynn Porter	Online

Abstract Submission and Review

Abstract submission

The abstract submission portal was opened on September 15, 2025. Abstracts for the 2026 annual meeting were due October 15, 2025. A total of 858 abstracts were submitted during the first round of submissions, which is about 100 more than the 2024 annual meetings. However, these metrics still fall behind pre-pandemic counts by ~20% (e.g., there were 1121 abstract submissions in 2019). 21 additional abstracts were submitted for the Late Breaking Science Session for a total of 879 abstracts.

At the time of abstract submission, authors could choose to present in-person or online only. At the time of submission, 30 authors requested for their presentations will be online only.

Abstract review

Abstracts were assigned to five members of the Program Committee for review with a review deadline of October 31, 2025. Abstracts with one or more recommendations to reject received an additional round of review. No abstracts were rejected.

Authors of accepted abstracts were notified on November 4, 2025 of acceptance. Following the advance team visit to Denver, CO, on December 5-6, 2025, authors were notified of the final conference schedule on December 11, 2025.

Workshop Proposals

We received 9 proposals for workshops by the November 15, 2025 deadline. This is about half of what we received for the 2025 meeting. Workshop proposals were evaluated by the chair of the Program Committee and the President. Save one proposal that was not in relevant to our organization, all workshop proposals were accepted and organizers were notified on November 20, 2025, for a total of 8. We had a late proposal from Wenner-Gren to host a grants and opportunities workshop, which was added to the schedule on February 5, 2026.

Date	Workshop/Panel	Organizers
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18-Mar	COD-WIN and BAWMN Workshop: Language in a Time of Uncertainty: Walking the Walk When you Can't Talk the Talk	Stephanie Poindexter, Megan Holmes, Alexandra Kralick, and Sarah Lacy
19-Mar	Workshop: The Wenner-Gren Foundation: Grants and Opportunities	Chris Robinson
19-Mar	Workshop: Building Ethical Pathways: Transforming Stewardship of Legacy Collections Through Institutional Collaboration and the Development of Consented Donor Collections	Sarah Reedy and Ventura Perez
19-Mar	Workshop: Effective Science Communication Strategies in an Age of Willful Disinformation	Kate Clancy and Andrea Taylor with sponsorship from the Professional Development and Science Advisory Committees
19-Mar	Workshop: Biological Anthropology is People: An Art, Culture and Science Engagement Exhibition	Rob O'Malley and Malorie Albee with support from the Leakey Foundation
20-Mar	Workshop: Rethinking Risk: Integrative Approaches to Fieldwork Safety	Katherine Thompson and Amanda Rowe
20-Mar	Workshop: Navigating Academic Landscapes: Innovations, Challenges, and Networks in Biological Anthropology Across Institutional and Modal Contexts	Malorie Albee and Madelyn Green
20-Mar	COD-NAIBA Workshop: NAGPRA and Biological Anthropology 35 Years Later: Continuing the Conversation	Jessica Rothwell and Emma Lagan
21-Mar	Workshop: Biological Anthropology For People: Creative Approaches to Education and Community Engagement	Rob O'Malley, Joe Califf, Frances Forrest, and Florence Aghomo with support from the Education Committee

Scientific Session Formation and Advance Team Visit

Scientific sessions were assembled by six subcommittees of the Program Committee (Bioarchaeology, Forensics, Dental & Education, Functional Anatomy & Genetics, Human Behavior & Biology, Primatology, and Paleoanthropology). Each subcommittee had 4-5 members (i.e., 33 members of the Program Committee were on subcommittees). Each subcommittee was tasked with grouping contributed abstracts into podium and poster sessions and assigning chairs to each session. The number of podium sessions per subject area was based on the proportion of abstracts in each subject area:

- Bioarchaeology = 3
- Dental Anthropology = 1
- Education in Biological Anthropology = half session
- Forensic Anthropology = 2
- Functional Anatomy/Tissue Biology = 2
- Genetics and Genomics = 2
- Human Behavior = half session
- Human Biology = 2
- Paleoanthropology = 2
- Primatology = 3

Subcommittees were given a month to complete this task, and sessions were formed by December 1.

The AABA Advance Team visited the conference venue in Denver from December 5-6, 2025. The team included Lori Strong (Burk & Associates), Siobhan Cooke, Kristi Lewton, Stephanie Meredith, Kate Fish, Amy L. Rector, and Michelle Singleton. Local members of the Advance Team included Jamie Hodgkins, Lauren Hosek, Steve Leigh, Paul Morse, Todd Yokley, and Fernando Villanea Guevara. Because the sessions were formed prior to the advance visit, the team focused on scheduling sessions (assigning sessions to rooms, days, and times) and entering the sessions into the AABA website on X-CD. The team was larger this year to include disciplinary expertise across all of the topics represented at meetings. Future Advance Team meetings can include fewer participants from out of town.

Late Breaking Science

The Late Breaking Science poster session is scheduled for Saturday afternoon with a limited acceptance of 40 abstracts. The Late Breaking Science submission portal opened on January 12, 2026 with a submission deadline of February 2, 2026. A total of 21 abstracts were submitted for the Late Breaking Science session. A subset of the Program Committee volunteered to review the Late Breaking Science abstracts. Abstracts were assigned to five members of the Program Committee for review with a review deadline of February 9, 2026. Abstracts with one or more recommendations to reject received an additional round of review. No abstracts were rejected.

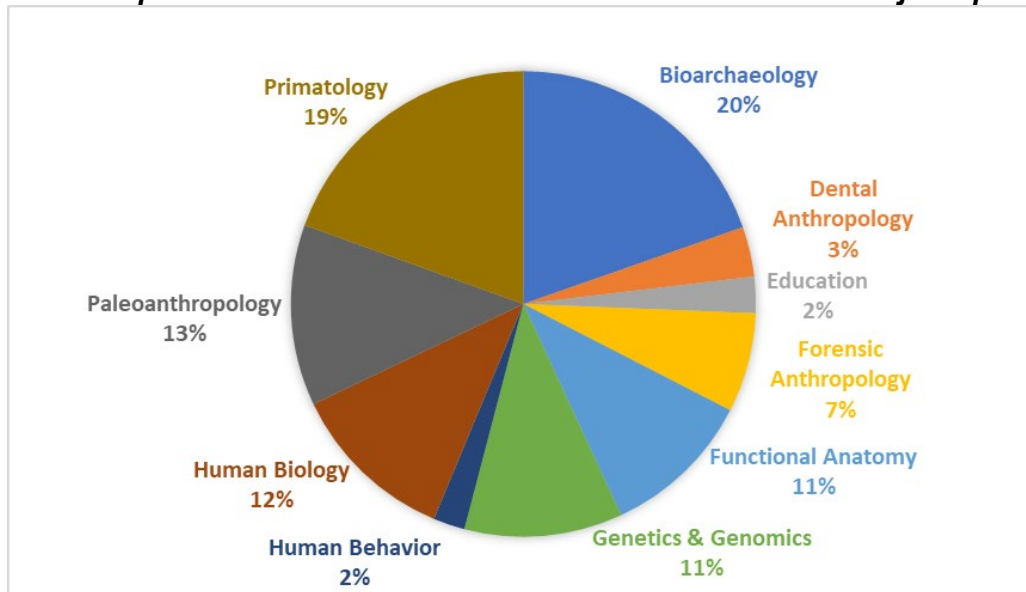
Abstracts

As of March 17, 2026, there are 636 contributed abstracts and 243 invited abstracts for a total of 879 abstracts, including the 21 Late Breaking Science submissions. The proportion of contributed abstracts by subfield are in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1. Number of contributed abstracts in each of the ten major topic areas.

Bioarchaeology	125	Genetics & Genomics	70
Dental Anthropology	22	Human Behavior	14
Education	16	Human Biology	74
Forensic Anthropology	44	Paleoanthropology	80
Functional Anatomy	67	Primatology	124

Figure 1. Proportions of contributed abstracts in each of the ten major topic areas.



The abstract volume was submitted to Wiley on February 13, 2026. Concatenating the author names and affiliations for abstracts continues to be a challenge.

Meetings Program, Virtual Platform, and Accessibility

We are continuing to use the X-CD platform for sharing virtual components of the conference, including as a repository for uploaded asynchronous online presentations and recordings of live streamed sessions. These materials will remain viewable in the AABA member profiles.

The meetings program was finalized and went live on the meetings microsite in late December, 2025. The full draft of the program was sent to the printer on March 2, 2026.

Following up on last year's efforts to increase accessibility of the annual AABA conference, we created a survey that accompanied abstract submission to query attendees on accommodation needs (e.g., oral presentation transcription, single level/no stairs). This survey was administered managed directly by Burk and associates.

All podium presentations use voice-to-text transcription using Powerpoint subtitles and presenters have been reminded to use accessible fonts and color schemes. We have a quiet room with low lighting and reduced sensory stimulation, a Family and Lactation Respite Room, and access to a secure refrigerator for medications. The registration desk also has fidget spinners, eye masks, and ear plugs.

Free childcare via Camp AABA is available again this year and runs the entire day Wednesday through end of day Saturday. To increase visibility of the free childcare program as well as the Caregiver Grant program, increased advertisement of these programs may be beneficial in the run-up to next year's meeting.

Meeting Registration

As of March 17, there are a total of 1,478 individuals registered for the 2026 annual meeting. International registrants from 41 countries make up 11% of meeting registrations, which is on par with meetings back to 2019 (Appendix 3).

Special Events at AABA 2026

This year we will have therapy dogs available on Thursday afternoon. There will also be free headshots on Friday afternoon and gamefication in the app encouraging participants to visit the exhibitors.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

I would like to thank the other officers and members of the AABA Executive Committee for all of their assistance as we fully implemented the use of X-CD this year. I also want to acknowledge all of our association members who tirelessly make available their wisdom, ideas, and excitement about their science as they share their results, workshops, and symposium proposals.

This year's program is inspiring and I am immensely grateful to the 143 dedicated members of our Program Committee who conducted and completed symposium and abstract reviews thoughtfully, thoroughly, and expeditiously. Additional thanks go to the members of the Program Committee who took on the task of organizing the contributed sessions, and to the members who were additionally willing to very quickly and generously review the Late Breaking Science abstract submissions.

Many thanks to the Advance Team who met in Denver to set the schedule for the scientific program. Thank you to Lori Strong, Kristi Lewton, Stephanie Meredith, and Kate Fish for the time and effort spent brainstorming new ideas and opportunities for members.

Of course, none of the program organization in our new X-CD system would be possible without the immense efforts of Kristi L. Lewton. The Program Assistant Kate Fish has been a tremendous help and I am very grateful for her attention to detail and flexibility. I also want to thank the AABA Officers and members of the Executive Committee for their year-round hard work that makes our annual meeting possible.

I thank our partners from Burk & Associates, including Annual Meeting Executive Director Lori Strong, Heide Rohland, Mary Lou Scarborough, Brett Burk, Cooky Bysura, Jill Drupa, Amy Sullivan, Sean Sullivan, Raelene Sok, Khuong Mulvaney, and Elizabeth Terry-Humen. This team helped with registrations, organizing student volunteers, sending emails to the membership, producing our printed materials, interfacing with the exhibitors, and assisting with every detail no matter how small. Also thanks to our colleagues at X-CD, Daria Cohen, Jason McDonald, Grant Goldhar, and others, who were always ready and willing to answer questions about how to improve the review process, registration, or program visibility, often with very short notice. This year we also have a new Exhibits and Sponsorship sales person, Susie Prue, who has boosted revenue to more than twice that of 2024.

Thank you to the local arrangements committee members, Jaime Hodgkins, Steve Leigh, and Todd Yokley, and for our dedicated Silent Auction Committee, including chair Anne Grauer and members Madelynne Dudas, Stephanie Meredith, Lexi Martinez, and Josh Snodgrass. It is always inspiring to see how many of our committees and members are so dedicated to the success of our student members.

Appendix

Appendix 1. 2025-2026 Timelines.

Event/Process	Open Date	Close Date	Reviews Complete	Notification Date
Program Committee Formation	4/29/2025	7/1/2025	NA	7/14/2025
Symposium proposals	7/14/2025	8/15/2025	9/1/2025	9/11/2025
Abstract submission	9/15/2025	10/15/2025 deadline and assigned to reviewers	10/31/2025	11/4/2025 and 12/11/2025 with schedule
Workshop proposals	10/15/2025	11/15/2025	11/19/2025	11/20/2025
Presentation schedule				12/11/2025

Appendix 2. 2025-2026 and historical meetings metrics.

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
	Los Angeles (canceled)	Virtual (Baltimore)	Denver	Reno	Los Angeles	Baltimore	Denver
Registrations	NA	1079	1281	1363	1354	1335	1,478
Abstracts submitted	1247	458	785	775	779	744 (+42 LB)	858 (+21 LB)
Abstracts accepted	1226	457	776	772	771	780	879
Workshops (submitted/accepted/presented)							9/8/9
Symposia (submitted/accepted/presented)	26/25/24	8/8/8?	13/13/13	13/13/13	15/13/13	20/12/11	25/17/17
Podium symposium sessions	6	NA	6	5	6	6	10
Poster symposium sessions	18	NA	5	6	6	5	7
Online symposium sessions	NA	8	2	2	1	0	1
Contributed sessions	46		85	58	46	51	50
Podium sessions	23	NA	18	21	24	21	21
Poster sessions	23	NA	18	20	22	29	28
Evening poster sessions	0	NA	0	0	0	0	0

Online sessions	NA		49	16	1	1	1
Withdrawn submissions (as of 3/18/26)	11	5	17	24	17	2 (many shifted to online)	19 (many shifted to online)

Appendix 3. International AABA registrants by country, 2019-2026.

Country	2019	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Albania	1			1	1	1	
Argentina	1	5	4	3		2	1
Australia	6	7	7	8	6	5	3
Austria	2	4	5	4	8	8	
Belgium	4	2		3		4	
Brazil	16	6	4	3	1	1	2
Canada	74	51	34	53	41	39	23
Chile	1	1		2	1	1	1
China	23	2	1	3	10	4	9
Colombia	2	1		4			
Costa Rica						2	
Côte d'Ivoire						1	
Croatia	3	1		4		1	1
Cyprus	1						
Czech Republic	5	1	2	5	5	2	
Denmark	5	2		2	1		
Ecuador						1	
Egypt, Arab Rep.	1						1
Estonia	1						1
Ethiopia	2					1	
Finland	4					1	1
France	17	4	1	2	9	8	3
Germany	21	14	14	16	14	14	16
Ghana					1		
Greece	1			5		3	4
Haiti						1	

Hong Kong SAR, China	1			1		1	4
Hungary				1			1
Iceland	1						
India	2	3	2	3	4	1	1
Indonesia						1	
Iran, Islamic Rep.	1						
Ireland							1
Israel	2	3		5	5		2
Italy	2	2	2	9	5	11	7
Japan	4	4	2	4	4	1	1
Kazakhstan					4		
Kenya	1					1	1
Korea, Rep.	1	2			2		
Lebanon	1			2		1	
Lithuania					1	1	1
Madagascar					2	1	1
Malaysia				1	1	1	1
Mexico	4	12	4	4	4	3	3
Netherlands	3	1	4		4	4	2
New Zealand	7	5	1	1	5	2	1
Nigeria	2	2	1			1	
Pakistan	1						
Panama	1	1		1			1
Peru	2						
Philippines				1	1	2	1
Poland	3	3	4	2	6	6	1
Portugal	1			1	3	1	1
Qatar					1		
Romania					2		
Russian Federation	2	3					
Senegal					1		
Serbia							1
Singapore	1			1			
South Africa	4	18	12	11	8	11	3
Spain	11	5	8	15	13	7	7
Sweden	1	1	1				
Switzerland	4	8	6	7	11	6	9
Tanzania	1						

Thailand				1	1	1	1
Turkey					3		
Uganda	2						1
United Kingdom	60	27	35	31	39	17	22
Vietnam						1	
Total	317	201	154	220	228	194	141
% of registrants	18%	19%	12%	16%	17%	15%	11%