

## **REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Submitted by Anne L. Grauer

I begin this report under unusual and difficult circumstances. The spread of SARS-CoV2 has created a global pandemic, leaving us concerned about the health and well-being of all. I write today in the hope that members and supporters of the AAPA, along with their loved ones, colleagues, and friends, are safe and healthy.

For 88 years, the President's Report has opened the AAPA Annual Business Meeting. This report will not. As national and international concerns grew over the unprecedented spread of Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), the Executive Board of the AAPA, along with Brett Burk and Lori Strong from Burk and Associates Inc., and Wes Kennedy, serving as AAPA legal counsel, held a virtual meeting on March 12, 2020 to discuss the impending need for and ramifications of cancelling the annual meeting scheduled for April 15-18 in Los Angeles, CA. It was decided unanimously that the meeting must be cancelled and a letter of termination of our hotel contract would be sent to the JW Marriott LA Live the following day. The letter was posted shortly after the U.S President's Proclamation on Declaring a National Emergency Concerning the Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) Outbreak was issued on Friday, March 13, 2020.

Cancelling our meeting was warranted but devastating. AAPA members and at least 1,296 pre-registrants had been preparing for the meeting for months, with airline tickets and travel arrangements paid for by most. Exhibitors were readying their materials and our AV team was managing details. An extraordinary amount of time had been spent coordinating every aspect of the meeting by Steve Leigh, our Vice-President and his assistant, Kathleen McGuire, Ed Hagen, the AAPA Webmaster, the Program Committee (see the Vice President's report, Appendix C, for Committee member names), the AAPA Advance Planning Team composed of Graciela Cabana, Steve Leigh, Leslea Hlusko, Chris Kuzawa, Kristi Lewton, Scott McGraw, Stephanie Meredith, Amy Rector, and myself, along with the extraordinary Burk and Associates team of Lori Strong and Heide Rohland. The cancellation represented the loss of over a thousand hours of work on all our parts. Subsequently, moving symposia, workshops, and presentations to online platforms was a herculean task for which the AAPA owes Steve Leigh and Ed Hagen immeasurable gratitude.

Of equal concern was the financial impact that the cancellation would have on the AAPA. As conveyed to all members by email and posted on our website for the public, irrecoverable costs of the meetings, as well as potential penalty fees for the hotel contract termination, could have cost the association well-over a million dollars. We are in debt to Lori Strong and Brett Burk from Burk and Associates, along with the JW Marriott LA Live, for their willingness to negotiate a resolution: Without penalty or loss of down payments, the AAPA Annual Meeting will be held at the JW Marriott LA Live in 2024.

Despite the tumultuous events leading up to the cancellation of the 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, the AAPA had an extremely productive year. Three individuals were recognized for their exceptional contributions to our field. Fatimah Jackson received the Charles R. Darwin Lifetime Achievement Award, Karen Rosenberg received the Gabriel W. Lasker Service Award, and Agustín Fuentes received the inaugural Communication & Outreach Award. All recipients and their work will be celebrated in full at the 2021 Annual Business Meeting on April 9<sup>th</sup> in Baltimore, MD.

The Career Development Committee, chaired by Nate Dominy, awarded Cobb Professional Grants to five early career members: Elaine Guevara, Duke University, for *Molecular underpinnings of folivory: patterns of convergence and differentiation across a clade*; Ameline Bardo, University of Kent for *A helping hand: investigating 3D motion of human hand bones during Palaeolithic tool behaviors*; Cassandra Turcotte, New York University, for *Identifying sources of trabecular architecture variation in the rhesus macaques of Cayo Santiago*; Nandini Singh, California State University Sacramento for *Experimental animal models for domestication*; and Tom Kraft, University of California, Santa Barbara for *Evaluating the drivers of lifestyle change and health among transitioning indigenous communities in Peninsular Malaysia*. The Student Program Committee, chaired by Christina Torres-Rouff, selected eleven outstanding student presentations for AAPA awards and five honorable mentions immediately following the 2019 meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, and fifty Pollitzer Travel Awards were conferred this year to students who now, due to the cancellation of the annual meeting, will be able to use the funds to defray irrecoverable travel expenses (please visit the Student Program Committee report, Appendix C, for the names of awardees, Appendix B).

The Committee on Diversity, chaired by Susan Antón, undertook a number of important initiatives, including creating an updated AAPA Statement on Race and Diversity (<https://physanth.org/about/position-statements/aapa-statement-race-and-racism-2019>), drafting a best practices statement on student evaluations of teaching, and spearheading the changing of named student presentation awards to *AAPA Outstanding Student Presentation Awards*. The Education Committee, chaired by Briana Pobiner, coordinated an extremely successful Museum Outreach Program and Workshop at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, while the Repatriation Committee, chaired by Ben Auerbach, worked to develop best practices to manage legacy sharing and archiving for data acquired from sources associated from indigenous, marginalized, or unrepresented populations. The AAPA supported the committee's nominations of Drs. Heather Edgar and Ellen Lofaro to serve on the National NAGPRA Review Committee. The Ethics Committee, chaired by Rob Anemone, and the Data Access Committee, chaired by Trudy Turner and Connie Mulligan, developed workshops for the 2020 meeting in LA. We hope that these can be offered next year in Baltimore. Please visit all AAPA standing and *ad hoc* committee reports for a full accounting of their year (Appendix C).

The AAPA Executive Committee embarked upon a number of initiatives this year. The first was to evaluate and strengthen the AAPA's efforts to ensure that our meetings and our scientific field are welcoming and safe for everyone. Toward that end, the AAPA became an Inaugural Member of the Societies Consortium on Sexual Harassment in STEMM, which met in person in September 2019, and continues intensive work on virtual platforms throughout the year to promote the recognition of and seek an end to harassment. We also participated in and contributed to the Inter-Societies Sexual Harassment Summit coordinated to build communication and offer collaboration between allied organizations, such as the Society for Historical Archaeology and the Society for American Archaeology. The AAPA also took internal steps towards tackling harassment. First, Sherry Marts from S\*Marts Inc., an organization dedicated to training and educating professionals on issues of harassment, was scheduled to provide a harassment prevention workshop to train safety allies and to speak at the plenary Presidential Panel. She has graciously agreed to postpone her visit until next year's annual meeting. Second, an *ad hoc* committee was formed: The Harassment Committee for Awareness, Response and Equity (HCARE). The charge of this committee is to draft harassment report protocols and to assist with measures to improve and maintain meeting safety, to receive and respond to incoming reports of

harassment and misconduct, and to suggest improvements to protocols, measures, and responses. Committee members include Jessica Brinkworth, Agustín Fuentes, Stephanie Meredith, and Robin Nelson, with Andrea Taylor serving as chair.

Two new *ad hoc* committees were formed during 2019-2020 to meet the needs of the AAPA. To strengthen the AAPA's communications and media presence, the *ad hoc* Committee on Media and Communication (CoMaC) was formed with the missives to develop advisory guidelines to the Executive Committee on best practices and protocols for internal and external communications, and to develop processes for accountability, archiving, and messaging. Members included Adam Van Arsdale, chair, Donovan Adams, Graciela Cabana, Melanie Beasley, Kristina Killgrove, Rose Perash, Jennifer Raff, Austin Reynolds, Michael Rivera, and Jill Scott.

Lastly, with the AAPA's current publishing contract with Wiley ending in December 2020, an *ad hoc* Publications Committee was formed to develop an RFP to explore alternative publishing options for the AAPA and to assist with negotiating a new contract with Wiley. Members of the Publications Committee included Leslie Aiello, Peter Ellison, Clark Larsen, Chris Ruff, Fred Smith, and Lyle Konigsberg as chair. The publications survey sent to all members in January 2020 yielded 335 responses: 274 from regular members and 51 from student members. The results indicated that for both regular and student members, views on double-blind manuscript reviewing, open-access publishing, and ownership of the *AJPA* were extremely variable, often with as many respondents indicating that an issue was "extremely" or "very important," as those indicating that they were "somewhat" or "not important." These responses help guide the Publication Committee as we move forward.

Clearly, it has been an extremely busy year for the AAPA. I urge you to take a moment and read the reports offered by all the AAPA officers, editors, and committees (Appendices A-C), as you'll be impressed by the ingenuity and dedication of your colleagues, as well as the wonderful new directions that the association is taking. This coming year, along with building on our new initiatives, we will continue where we left off in our process to change the name of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists to the American Association of Biological Anthropologists. This change requires a formal vote by regular members at an annual business meeting. We will also be reviewing the AAPA Constitution and Bylaws in an effort to define the term "member in good standing" and to introduce electronic voting. Lastly, please take a moment to remember those whom we have lost this year—each significantly contributed to our field (Appendix D). They will be missed.

I end this report with deep gratitude to the members of the Executive Committee and all standing and *ad hoc* committees. I am especially grateful to Leslie Aiello, our out-going Past-President. Her wisdom and dedication to the association has moved us far, and her personal mentorship over the past year has been truly invaluable. Many thanks go to Steve Leigh, who moves out of the Vice President position and into the role of President-Elect. The responsibility of organizing our annual meeting is an exceptionally heavy one. He has streamlined, clarified, and reorganized many of the tasks, ensuring that every abstract submission is carefully assessed and that the needs of many before, during, and after the meeting, are met. We warmly welcome Leslea Hlusko as our new Vice President. Graciela Cabana, serving as Secretary, rotates off the Executive Committee this year. Her extraordinary attention to detail yielded a well-organized online archive of AAPA documents and an assurance that all AAPA business was completed thoroughly and with exceptional accuracy. We welcome Sheela Athreya as our new Secretary. Nate Dominy will step down as chair of the Career Development Committee. He oversaw the

Cobb Professional Development awards, ensuring that every application was thoroughly and respectfully reviewed. We welcome Shara Bailey to this position on the Executive Committee. Our two liaisons also rotate off the Executive Committee. Keven Hatala, the Early Career Liaison and Donovan Adams, the Student Liaison, have provided perspectives that unequivocally informed all decisions made by the Executive Committee. We welcome Melanie Beasley as the new Early Career Liaison and Alyson Caine as the new Student Liaison. We look forward to hearing their voices.

Last, but not least, I extend my gratitude to all members and supporters of the AAPA whose commitment and generosity have kept the AAPA strong amidst uncertainty and change. We face an uncharted year ahead--one likely shaped by requirements for social distancing. I am certain, however, that these challenges will be met with ways that bring us closer.