

**Committee on Diversity of the AABA  
2021-22 Activities Report**

**Submitted by Susan Antón (Chair, AABA COD)**

The aim of the AABA Committee on Diversity (COD) is to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion within the field of biological anthropology. Established in 2006 and incorporated into the (then) AAPA bylaws as a standing committee in 2011, the COD is a consortium of member-developed subgroups overseen by an appointed chair and a steering committee. Currently, there are seven active interest groups<sup>1</sup> and we encourage AABA members to join these and/or develop missing groups.

We are delighted to note that while the COD is the formalized committee for equity and inclusion in the AABA, the association and its members are committed to these goals and we have seen this commitment grow more evident in the past decade. We applaud the important equity and inclusion initiatives taking place outside of the COD. This work includes AABA initiatives such as HCARE and ad hoc committees such as that currently convened around standards for the ethical treatment of human remains, as well as member work in partnership with the AABA, such as the hosting of Black in BioAnth (BIBA) week events on the AABA webinar platform and YouTube channel. And much more. Equity, inclusion and community building are truly everyone's work. Although we report here on the formal work of the COD only, we do not mean to diminish the important work done across the AABA by many constituencies.

***COD Events at the 2022 AABA Conference***

COD will host a number of activities at the 2022 meeting. Many are open to all attendees, a few are by invitation. Event details may be found in the subcommittee reports that follow.

**Wed March 23<sup>rd</sup>** – 2-4pm *COD WIN Workshop: Mentoring for Mental Health* (open to all)

**Wed March 23<sup>rd</sup>** – 5-7 pm *COD URS Undergraduate Research Symposium* (open to all)

**Thurs March 24<sup>th</sup>** – 7-9 am *COD IDEAS Faculty Working Group* (Working group members)

**Thurs March 24<sup>th</sup>** – 6:30-7:30 pm *COD IDEAS & COD International Mixer* (open to all)

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<sup>1</sup> Committee on Diversity Increasing Diversity in Evolutionary Anthropological Sciences (COD-IDEAS); COD Women's Initiative (COD-WIN); COD Undergraduate Research Symposium (COD-UGRS); COD LGBTQQIAA interest group; COD Anthropologists Outside of Anthropology Departments, Contingent, and Teaching Focused Faculty (COD-AACT) Task Force; COD International (COD-I); COD Transforming Anthropological & Scientific Knowledge (COD-TASK)

**Fri March 25th** – 12-1pm *COD AACT Open Discussion* (open to all)

**Fri March 25th** – 12-1pm *COD LGBTQQIAA Business Meeting* (open to all)

**Fri March 25th** – 12-2pm *COD IDEAS Alumni Event* (IDEAS Alumni)

**Sat March 26th** – 7-9am *COD Steering Group* - (COD Subcommittee Liaisons)

**Sat March 26th** – 12-1pm *COD International Committee Meeting* (open to all)

### ***COD Works with the AABA Executive Committee***

The COD regularly brings initiatives to the AABA executive committee and likewise serves in an advisory capacity when the President and board seek our input. The 2021-2022, in order to facilitate lines of communication and share expertise, the COD chair (along with the chair of the Ethics committee) served as ex-officio liaison to the executive committee and attends those board meetings.

### ***Highlights of 2021-22 activities of each COD group:***

COD-IDEAS (co-chairs Jada Benn Torres, Agustín Fuentes, Ripan Malhi, & Susan Antón): The pandemic scuppered plans for in-person fall regional meetings, so COD-IDEAS pivoted and held a one day virtual workshop that took place October 1, 2021. Twenty new IDEAS scholars (UG and G) and 13 IDEAS faculty/mentors and NSF program director Rebecca Ferrell joined the meeting. Student scholars included both U.S. and international voices. The workshop covered introductions and histories, presentations about breaking into Science, session for G-UG interactions, and speed mentoring mini-workshops on Speed mentoring “Navigating unfamiliar landscapes (cultural/ethnic/etc),” “Collaborating (team projects; conflict management; sharing research),” “When bad things happen,” “Professional presentation (pitching yourself or your work),” and “Funding – from fellowships to research grants.”

The IDEAS co-chairs also coordinated a set of virtual conversations on the future of IDEAS and planned for three events at the AABA 2022 Meetings in Denver (see above). Work is ongoing in developing a grant submission to continue funding the IDEAS program.

COD-WIN (co-chairs Michelle Bezanson & Anne Stone): For 2022-2023, we have invited new committee members: Meghan Holms, Stephanie Poindexter, and Rebecca Rogers-Ackermann to join CODWIN. After the AABA meetings, we will begin planning future workshops, webinars, and mentoring opportunities.

In 2021, the subcommittee held virtual committee planning meetings and hosted an interactive panel discussion at the virtual AABA meetings. The panel was titled: *'When s\*\*t happens: The five things I wish I had known about xxx.'* Four speakers offered their hard-won insights (and what they wish they had known) about: Caretaking; Mental Health; Parenthood; and Navigating Challenging (work) Personnel.

At the 2022 AABA meeting, COD-WIN will hold an in-person workshop on Wednesday, March 23 from 2-4pm. The *Mentoring for Mental Health* workshop will be open for all career stages.

COD-URS (co-chairs Cara Wall-Scheffler & Marcie Myers): In 2021, we held our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Committee on Diversity Undergraduate Research Symposium (COD URS). We had 34 presentations posters from 36 universities and colleges. Thirteen of our presenters were first generation college students. Due to our virtual context, we divided the presentations into 'pods' of students with similar interests so that they could meet and talk with one another during the symposium. Each pod had a graduate mentor who initiated conversations; additionally these mentors had read each presentation in advance so that each undergraduate had a chance to answer some directed research questions. Given the virtual context, we can further report that over 150 people from all over the world attended the symposium.

This year (2022) we will be having both an in-person and a virtual symposium. The in-person COD URS will be held on Wednesday, March 23. We have accepted 32 posters representing 26 programs for the in-person session. (Eleven (34%) of the first-author presenters are first generation college students. Nine of these programs do not have graduate options in anthropology, and three do not offer undergraduate degrees either, so this symposium offers a crucial opportunity for these students to meet and talk with graduate students and potential graduate advisors.) We have a further twelve presenters who will be presenting only at the virtual symposium. Seven of the programs represented at the virtual symposium do not have any participants at the in-person session, representing an important option for departments who might not have undergraduate funding to attend conferences. Across all the presentation options, we are able to support a total of 79 undergraduate students in their biological anthropology research.

COD-LGBTQQIAA (steering committee liaisons Stephanie Meredith & Kristi Lewton): COD-LGBTQQIAA held their business meeting at the 2021AABA meetings, during which time the group agreed that they needed to have meetings of some kind outside of the annual meetings to maintain social connection. Austin Lawrence and Chris Stantis started "Bite-sized Bioanth." The sessions host a graduate student to give a short talk on their research, ask questions and give constructive feedback, and then they hang out on Zoom. Two speakers presented in 2021- Alexandra Kralick and Ben Schäfer. It has been a nice way for us to maintain community and also a decent way for us to contribute positively to the research of our community members. Huge kudos to Chris and Austin!

COD-AACT: COD-AACT is reorganizing. The subcommittee has an open discussion meeting at the AABA (see above). If you identify with or are interested in any part of our acronym, please to discuss ideas for workshops, panels, sessions or anything else for future meetings and the AABA in general. Ideas may also be sent to current chair Jessica Westin.

COD-International (chair Rebecca Ackermann): The International Scholars group developed a virtual decolonization workshop, originally scheduled as an in-person workshop in 2020. During development to move this online, the decision was taken to split it into three workshops/webinars, run in the time-zone of the three geographical regions that each one focusses on.

- 2022 (TBA) “Dialogues in decoloniz(s)ation: Americas.” Committee on Diversity-International online Webinar.
- October 2021 “Dialogues in decoloniz(s)ation: Asia and the Pacific.” Committee on Diversity-International online Webinar. Participants: S. Athreya, (organiser, moderator), R Ackermann (co-organiser), Martin Porr (co-moderator), Amber Aranui, Matthew Go, Kaberi Kar Gupta, David Johnston, Erin Riley
- July 2021 “Dialogues in decoloniz(s)ation: Africa.” Committee on Diversity-International online Webinar. Participants: R Ackermann (organiser, moderator), L Schroeder (co-organiser), W Black, R Humphreys, J Kibii, F Manthi, C Musiba.

In 2021, two of these workshops/webinars took place. The third is scheduled for early 2022. A COD-I coffee hour open to all attendees was also held at the annual meeting in 2021.

Interested in starting another COD subgroup? Please contact Susan Antón the COD Chair.

Interested in joining a subgroup? Please contact the subcommittee Chair or attend their events.