

American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA) Ethics Fellows Program

Introduction and Purpose

The AAPA Ethics Fellows Program is intended to serve two central purposes. The first purpose is to raise the level of ethical literacy among the AAPA membership by providing meaningful resources on topics relevant for biological anthropologists. The hope is that these materials will assist members in (1) identifying and addressing the ethical, legal, and social issues and (2) anticipating implications of their research. The second purpose is to provide interested members—particularly those early in their careers—an opportunity to engage actively with the Ethics Committee and gain experience with ethics educational and research projects.

Program Description

Each year the Ethics Committee may select up to two (2) scholars to serve as Fellows. The role of an AAPA Ethics Fellow is anticipated to vary from year to year to accommodate ongoing and emerging needs and priorities of the Ethics Committee and, to the extent possible, to allow the individual to explore his/her own interests in ethics. The following are examples of how an individual might serve as an Ethics Fellow:

- An individual with broad interests in ethics might advise the Ethics Committee with the development of a collection of case studies to help AAPA members better understand or teach others about issues relevant to their research or scholarship.
- An individual with specific interest in ethics of information access might advise the Ethics Committee by conducting a discrete research project (such as a survey of the publication policies for relevant journals, research funding agencies, or data repositories) and preparing a preliminary report for the Ethics Committee that could be further developed and shared with AAPA members.
- An individual might advise the Ethics Committee in the organization of a workshop, symposium, panel, or other event to be held during the annual meeting.

The AAPA Ethics Fellows Program is designed to coincide with a year of service beginning and ending at the AAPA annual meeting. The term duration and dates are subject to change and subject to negotiation for exceptional circumstances as the Ethics Committee determines is appropriate. The Ethics Committee has the discretion to offer current fellows the option to extend the fellowship for a second year of service.

Each AAPA Ethics Fellow will have a member of the Ethics Committee designated as his/her mentor for the fellowship. The AAPA Ethics Fellows Program is non-residential. Fellows will be expected to fulfill their responsibilities remotely and will interact with members of the Ethics Committee primarily through email, phone calls, and online meetings. Fellows will be included in Ethics Committee events and meetings.

Fellowship Benefits

The primary benefit of the AAPA Ethics Fellows Program is its educational and professional development opportunities. Fellows are not provided a salary or stipend.

Eligibility

To be considered for the AAPA Ethics Fellows Program, the interested individual must:

- Be a member of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists in good standing;
- Hold at least a bachelor's degree;
- Have a well-articulated interest in ethics issues relevant to the field of biological anthropology;
- Be willing to perform tasks at the direction and under the supervision of the Ethics Committee for 12 months; and
- Submit a letter of interest, two-page CV, and three references before the applicable deadline.

Selection Process*

The deadline for consideration as an AAPA Ethics Fellow for 2017-2018 is **November 1, 2016**.

Applicants must provide the following materials:

- A letter of interest (2-page maximum length) explaining the applicant's interest in ethics issues and answering the question posed for the upcoming fellowship year;
- A two-page abbreviated CV summarizing the applicant's education, experience, and relevant skills and activities;
- Three letters of reference from current members of the AAPA (as a signed pdf document; 2-page maximum length per letter).

The question for all applicants for 2017-2018 is as follows:

Achieving research participation through voluntary, informed consent can be difficult in many communities with whom anthropologists engage in research. For example, community characteristics (such as extreme poverty or limited education) and circumstances (such as resource disparities) create challenges for the design of research projects that, on the one hand, provide adequate recruitment incentives and anticipated benefits of participation and, on the other, avoid undue influence or coercion.

Imagine this scenario:

An early career investigator wants to conduct a longitudinal study of diabetes in a community that has very limited access to healthcare. The research will involve collaboration with a local health professional who will help with collection of blood, urine, and saliva samples for the research. The community proposed for the study is located in a geographic region where there has been a recent spread or outbreak of Zika,¹ Chikungunya,² and West Nile³ viruses. The investigator has enough funding for the project to provide mosquito nets, insect repellent, condoms, and even over-the-counter acetaminophen (Tylenol®) for the targeted sample of research participants but not for the entire community. The investigator plans to be in the community to conduct the research six weeks each year, for the next five years. Additionally, the project timeline allows for the investigator and the research team to be in the geographic area for two weeks before and two weeks after the project itself, during which time they could travel, interact with community members, or engage in humanitarian efforts. The research team is planning a site visit to finalize project plans.

The head of the investigator's institution has requested a meeting with the investigator to understand the study's potential scientific impact and societal implications. She further asked the investigator to advise her on any important ethical aspects as she evaluates the investigator's project for potential consideration in upcoming budget talks with governmental representatives.

Thinking broadly about the ethical dimensions of scientific research,⁴ the federal policy on the protection of humans involved in research as set by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (i.e., the Common Rule⁵), the AAPA Code of Ethics,⁶ and other issues (e.g., consideration of what makes potential research populations "vulnerable"⁷; potential duties to provide ancillary care when conducting research; the growing movement to involve "citizen scientists"⁸ and participants as partners in the conduct of research⁹; how research plans could or should optimize resources and research opportunities—including perhaps collaborations with virologists, immunologists, and public health officials; and how the extended time could be spent to further multiple priorities concurrently), identify three lines of ethical inquiry for the institution head and provide guidance on her evaluation of whether this project is a model of research excellence that should be highlighted during upcoming meetings with government representatives.

Applicants should submit all application materials in one email to jennifer.kristin.wagner@gmail.com using the subject "AAPA Ethics Fellows Application."

¹ <http://www.cdc.gov/zika/index.html>

² <http://www.cdc.gov/Chikungunya/index.html>

³ <http://www.cdc.gov/westnile/index.html>

⁴ <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02691720903364282?journalCode=tsep20>

⁵ <http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/regulations/common-rule/index.html>

⁶ <http://www.physanth.org/documents/3/ethics.pdf>

⁷ E.g., <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467->

[8519.00362/abstract;jsessionid=82134682016FED729A39161EC93D68AE.f02t01](http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1467-8519.00362/abstract;jsessionid=82134682016FED729A39161EC93D68AE.f02t01), http://www.huffingtonpost.com/ruth-macklin/research-ethics-and-ebola_b_6037052.html, and <https://medium.com/matter/did-big-pharma-test-your-meds-on-homeless-people-a6d8d3fc7dfe#.n1zfzy4q>

⁸ E.g., <http://scistarter.com/page/Citizen%20Science.html> and <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/citscitoolkit/about/defining-citizen-science>

⁹ E.g., <http://www.pcori.org/research-action>

The Ethics Committee Co-Chairs will review submitted application materials, conduct phone and/or online interviews of candidates, and select up to two (2) individuals for the AAPA Ethics Fellows Program. The Ethics Committee is not required to select fellows, and there may be years when no fellows are selected.

Individual(s) selected for the AAPA Ethics Fellows Program will be notified in January. Those who accept the opportunity will be expected to attend the AAPA annual meeting and will be welcomed as an incoming Fellow at the Ethics Committee business meeting.

Inquiries

Individuals with questions about the AAPA Ethics Fellows Program may contact the Co-Chairs of the AAPA Ethics Committee:

Jennifer K. Wagner, J.D., Ph.D.
AAPA Ethics Committee, Co-Chair
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AAPA Ethics Committee, Co-Chair
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History

The AAPA Ethics Fellows Program was launched in 2016 by AAPA Ethics Committee Co-Chairs Jennifer Wagner and Graciela Cabana. Two Fellows were selected for the inaugural 2016-2017 programmatic year: Jennifer Eyre and Kristina Zarenko. The following is the past essay question used for the inaugural application process (2016-2017):

Significant changes to chimpanzee research have occurred in recent years. In 2011 the Institute of Medicine issued a report on biomedical and behavioral research involving chimpanzees indicating that, despite their important contributions to science, most chimpanzee research projects are not necessary.¹⁰ In 2012 the National Institutes of Health (NIH) stopped breeding chimpanzees.¹¹ In 2013 President Obama signed into law amendments to the Chimpanzee Health Improvement, Maintenance, and Protection Act passed by Congress (the CHIMP Act Amendments of 2013) to enable most chimpanzees used for research to be retired to a federal sanctuary system.¹² Chimp Haven, Inc. is the first and only authorized sanctuary.¹³ In June 2015 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service announced a final rule changing the threat level for captive chimpanzees from “threatened” to “endangered,” thereby elevating their protected status to the same level as wild chimpanzees.¹⁴ In November 2015 NIH Director Francis Collins informed agency administrators in a leaked internal email of the decision to send its remaining “reserve” colony of 50 NIH-owned chimpanzees to a sanctuary and its plans to phase out NIH support for other chimpanzee research.¹⁵ These policy decisions to wind down invasive research on chimpanzees and attempt to improve the quality of life for chimpanzees bring their own ethical challenges. What are the main ethical challenges posed by these developments and what action (if any) should the AAPA Ethics Committee take to address this topic?

¹⁰ <http://iom.nationalacademies.org/Reports/2011/Chimpanzees-in-Biomedical-and-Behavioral-Research-Assessing-the-Necessity.aspx>

¹¹ See, e.g., <http://www.wired.com/2013/06/nih-research-chimps/>

¹² See, e.g., <http://www.nih.gov/about-nih/who-we-are/nih-director/statements/statement-presidents-signing-bill-enables-nih-retire-research-chimps> and www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-reduce-significantly-use-chimpanzees-research

¹³ See, e.g., <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2014/09/140912-chimpanzee-haven-retired-research-animals/> and http://dpcpsi.nih.gov/orip/cm/chimpanzee_management_program

¹⁴ <http://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ID=E81DA137-BAF2-9619-3492A2972E9854D9>

¹⁵ See <http://www.nature.com/news/nih-to-retire-all-research-chimpanzees-1.18817>