2017-18 Report from the AAPA Committee on Ethics
Submitted by Graciela Cabana and Jennifer Wagner (Co-Chairs)

The 2017-18 Ethics Committee was co-chaired by Jennifer Wagner and Graciela Cabana and consisted of the following additional members (in alphabetical order): Robert Anemone, Michele Goldsmith, Nina Jablonski, Ann M. Kakaliouras, Robin Nelson, Christina Torres-Rouff, and Trudy Turner. We also had three Ethics Fellows joining our committee for the past year: Jennifer Eyre (New York University), Tisa Loewen (New York University), and Kristina Zarenko, University of South Carolina.

Over the course of the 2017-18 programmatic year, the Ethics Committee worked on various items, including:

1. Development of discipline-specific case studies of ethical issues. In Spring 2016, the committee placed a call to the AAPA membership for real cases of ethical issues. Two of our Ethics Fellows, Jenny Eyre and Kristina Zarenko, have been developing two of these case study suggestions into useful case studies as part of the Committee’s ongoing effort to develop educational resources for Biological Anthropologists.
2. Development of an interview project with Ethics Fellow Tisa Loewen, with the purpose of gathering key information on ethical concerns within biological anthropology.
3. Organization of a workshop on Professional Ethics (“Professional ethics in biological anthropology: How to approach an ethical dilemma”) at the 2018 AAPAs through a subcommittee, consisting of the following members: Eyre, Goldsmith, Loewen, and Zarenko. The subcommittee also includes former student member Angela Mallard, who was approved to sit on the subcommittee by ExComm.

Additionally, the Ethics Committee is continuing its Ethics Fellow Program. The purposes of the program are (1) 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 and (2) to help raise ethics literacy across the association. For 2018-19, we solicited applications and selected two Fellows: Cara Hirst, doctoral student at University College London (UCL), and Alyssa Bader, doctoral student at University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign. Inaugural Fellows Eyre and Zarenko will be ending their fellowship terms. Loewen will be continuing for a second fellowship year. The newly-appointed Fellows will be working closely with mentors within the Ethics Committee on the development of case studies or checklists of ethical concerns.

This was the second year that the Ethics committee was a standing committee. Four members’ terms are ending: Graciela Cabana, Ann Kakaliouras, Robin Nelson, and Jennifer Wagner. The AAPA President established the composition and scope of the Ethics Committee for the 2018-19 programmatic year: Robert Anemone (University of North Carolina, Greensboro) will chair the committee for a three-year term. Returning members and term years are as follows: Michele Goldsmith (2 years), Nina Jablonski (2 years), Christina Torres-Rouff (1 year), Trudy Turner (1 year), and Jennifer Wagner (3 years). Heather Norton (University of Cincinnati), Julienne Rutherford (University of Illinois), David Strait (Washington University in St. Louis) will newly join the Committee, each for a 3-year term.

As part of its usual duties, the Committee will be available as a non-adjudicative body to promote ethics literacy among AAPA members and to serve as a resource for AAPA members to discuss ethical challenges. Information about ethics consultations for AAPA members is available on the AAPA website.