

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF PHYSICAL ANTHROPOLOGISTS

President

Lorena Madrigal
Dept. of Anthropology
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL 33620-8100
(813) 974-0817
FAX: (813) 974-2668
madrigal@usf.edu

Past President

Dennis H. O'Rourke
Dept. of Anthropology
University of Utah
270 S 1400 E, Room 102
Salt Lake City, UT 84112
(801) 581-7454
FAX: (801) 581-6252
orourke@anthro.utah.edu

Vice President

Karen Rosenberg
Dept. of Anthropology
135 John Munroe Hall
University of Delaware
Newark, DE 19716
(302) 831-1855
FAX: (302) 831-4002
krr@udel.edu

Secretary-Treasurer

Lyle W. Konigsberg
Dept. of Anthropology
109 Davenport Hall
607 S. Mathews Ave. MC-148
University of Illinois
Urbana, IL 61801
(217) 333-3616
FAX: (217) 244-3490
lylek@illinois.edu

Wednesday, December 07, 2011
Dr. Steven Gabbe, M.D
Chair of the MR5 Advisory Committee

Dear Dr. Gabbe:

We are writing in response to the recently-resleased recommendations for the next version of the MCAT. We are happy to see that Behavioral and Social Sciences Principles are going to be included in the test. However, we are dismayed to see that anthropology and human biology are not included as relevant disciplines. Indeed, including questions relating directly to human evolution would seem more than appropriate for the new version of MCAT. The evolutionary perspective as it applies to humans is an increasingly important one for modern medical practitioners and researchers to have. The natural history of several human diseases and their evolved resistance to many (most?) current antibiotics is one example of this perspective. The nature of future developments in individualized medicine that is rooted in the uniqueness of each person's genetic makeup is another.

Biological anthropologists have been in the forefront of research in these areas and many others. Be it in their study of human physiological, anatomical and genetic variation and adaptation or the comparative study of non-human primate behavior and biology, biological anthropologists are the best possible professionals to be teaching pre-med students about human evolution and biology. What could be more relevant for the next generation of doctors than a realization and understanding of the evolutionary history of the biological origins and nature of their patients?

Since the focus of medicine is on humans and the preparation for physicians is rooted in the study of human biology, then it seems clear that the study of human evolutionary biology should be an integral part of every student's pre-medicine preparation. Moreover, the study of human evolution should not be only a partial or tangential inclusion in the occasional biology course that references it. There should be direct study of it in those biological anthropology courses that focus on the subject. Human evolutionary biology is the focal core of what biological anthropologists study and it is the core of the courses that they teach. They are the best possible courses for pre-med students to take to learn the latest research in many aspects of human evolutionary biology.

We strongly recommend that biological anthropology be included in the revised MCAT examination for 2015. Sincerely,

Lorena Madrigal, PhD.

Lorena Madrigal, PhD.
President, AAPA.
Department of Anthropology.
University of South Florida.
Tampa, FL. 33620.

Martin Nickels

Martin Nickels
Emeritus Chair, Education Committee, AAPA
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
Illinois State University
Normal, IL 61790-2200

Christopher Ruff

Editor, AJPA
Center for Functional
Anatomy & Evolution
Johns Hopkins Univ.
1830 E. Monument St.
Baltimore, MD 21205
(410) 955- 7126
FAX: (410) 614-9030
cbruff@jhmi.edu

Robert Sussman

Editor, Yearbook of
Physical Anthropology
Dept. of Anthropology
Washington University
Campus Box 1114
St. Louis, MO 63130
(314) 935-5252
FAX: (314) 935-8535
rwsussma@wustl.edu

Andrea B. Taylor

Executive Committee
DPT Program
Duke University
School of Medicine
& Dept. of Evol. Anth.
Durham, NC 27708
(919) 668-3016
FAX: (919) 668-3024
andrea.taylor@duke.edu

Debbie Guatelli-Steinberg

Executive Committee
Dept. of Anthropology
The Ohio State University
4006 Smith Laboratory
174 W. 18th Avenue
Columbus, OH 43210
(614) 292-9768
FAX: (614) 292-4155
Guatelli-Steinbe.1@osu.edu

Agustín Fuentes

Executive Committee
Dept. of Anthropology
Univ. of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, IN 46556
(574) 631-5421
FAX: (574) 631-5760
afuentes@nd.edu

Susan Antón

Executive Committee
Dept. of Anthropology
Center for the Study of
Human Origins
25 Waverly Place
New York University
New York, NY 10003
(212) 992-9786
FAX: (212) 995-4014
susan.anton@nyu.edu