

Education Committee 2023-2024 Activities Report

Submitted by Drs. Kate McGrath and Rob O'Malley, co-chairs

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2023-2024 Activities

Local Engagement. As part of the AABA 2023 Annual Meeting, six members of the Education committee staffed an engagement table at [The Discovery](#) (Reno's local science center) on the afternoon and evening of Wednesday April 19th. After the AABA meeting, the committee's cast collection was left with the AABA local arrangements committee for use by local educators who may wish to use it in classrooms or other science learning activities. We interacted with ~100 museum visitors (some of whom came specifically to meet us), and received very positive feedback from attendees and our hosts.

AABA Meeting Programming and Activities. In response to AABA leadership's call for funding requests at the 2022 AABA business meeting, we made a formal request for 3k to support the committee's engagement activities. In 2023, we used this support to expand our traveling cast collection (including primate models and an adult male gorilla skull), and cover light catering for two workshops proposed or co-proposed by committee members and aligned with the education committee's mandate: 'Up Goer Five: Using Simple Language to Communicate Your Research to the Public' and 'Improv for Anthropologists.' The committee also wishes to gratefully acknowledge the Leakey Foundation for providing honoraria for AABA members who are taking time out of the meeting to participate in outreach activities, and supporting printing and signage costs associated with our engagement. In addition to the Discovery outreach day, the committee piloted a small outreach effort at the AABA meeting venue itself (Peppermill Resort), exploring whether venue guests and staff might be an audience for public engagement at this and future AABA meetings. This was very well received, with many AABA attendees learning of the Education committee's existence for the first time, and expressing interest in the website and associated resources. Finally, the Education Committee breakfast meeting held at AABA was used as an opportunity to share about the committee's work, connect with broader membership, and help to identify priorities for the committee in the months and years ahead.

AABA Member survey. In March of 2023 the Committee launched a survey for AABA membership to help identify needs, challenges, and opportunities for education and engagement on biological anthropology, to better guide the Committee's work. The survey has ~40 responses as of February 2024 and will remain open through the 2024 meeting in the hopes of garnering more responses (<https://forms.gle/xsnuX3ughsV8Kbxu9>).

AABA Webinar. Committee leadership organized a January 2024 webinar on "Towards and Engaged Biological Anthropology," encompassing practices in fieldwork, education, and public writing. The webinar was recorded and will be posted on the [AABA YouTube channel](#) in the near future.

Ongoing Activities. The committee has hosted three virtual meetings since the 2023 AABA meeting. Meeting conversations have focused on ideas for workshops and other activities at the AABA meeting and website content. In particular we hope to see an array of new lesson plans for biological

anthropology content added soon, and additional examples of great public science communication and engagement by AABA members. The committee wishes to thank Dr. Katrina Yezzi-Woodley in particular for her work on the website. We have chosen to leave the survey instrument we launched in 2023 open, to capture additional responses at the 2024 AABA meeting about what members would like to see from the Education Committee.

2024 Meeting Activities

Local Engagement. The Education committee will host an exhibitor table as part of the Los Angeles County Natural History Museum's Homeschooler's Day (theme: Plants and People) on Wednesday March 20th. We will be part of an existing community program and anticipate engaging with 100s or 1000s of visitors.

Exhibitor booth. In light of the strong response to our pilot engagement at last year's AABA meeting, the Committee will staff an exhibitor booth this year to highlight the committee's work.

Art, Culture, and Science Engagement Exhibition. As a follow up to the extremely popular "un-symposium" session at the 2023 AABA meeting, the Education Committee sponsored an exhibition at this year's AABA (in collaboration with Dr. Michelle Bezanson) to highlight science-themed art, engagement and informal science learning activities by AABA members.

Workshops. Though not formally sponsored by the Education Committee, several members organized or co-organized excellent workshops on engagement and education (including follow-up sessions from last year on 'Improv for Anthropologists' and the 'Up-Goer 5' challenge).

Networking breakfast. In lieu of hosting a formal Committee meeting at the AABA, we have chosen to host an education and engagement networking breakfast on Saturday morning to facilitate sharing and learning among AABA members (whether members of the committee or not). All AABA meeting attendees are welcome.

Future Plans

Our goals for the coming year include creating a more streamlined process for website content for the committee website, formalizing a process to develop Education committee-sponsored workshops and activities at future AABA meetings, identifying ways for the Education Committee to support and promote AABA members in their independent teaching and engagement work, and exploring the possibility of virtual or in-person programming year-round. In particular, conversations at the 2023 AABA meeting highlighted a need for us to engage more intentionally with members and communities in the global South and marginalized and minoritized members of AABA. Anyone interested in the Education Committee should contact us at educcommchairaaba@gmail.com to be added to our email list.

Committee website: <https://bioanth.org/about/committees/education-committee-page/>

Active committee members as of February 2024

(we count 'active committee members' as people who have attended at least one meeting or activity of the AABA Education Committee since the 2023 AABA meeting.)

Kate McGrath
Rob O'Malley
John Mitani
Amanda Owings
Jacqueline Garnett
Amanda Ellwanger
Amanda Townley
Seth Chagi
Katrina Yezzi-Woodley
Caitlin Schrein
Arielle Johnson
Kimberly Congdon
Kinley Russell
Briana Pobiner
Laura Newman
Natalia Reagan
Karol Chandler-Ezell
Kristin Crouse
Christopher Schmitt
Malorie Albee
Natalia Reagan
Jessica Brinkworth
Kim Foecke
Ryan McRae