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Cue the AABA Jokes:
The American Association of Physical Anthropologists as a Case Study for the Changing Culture of Higher Academia

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Abstract: This thesis examines how higher academia is moving to becoming more diverse and inclusive through a case study of the institutional changes of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA). As higher academia reacts to and with the greater social climate of the culture it exists in, an association like this can give insight into how groups can progress and be more supportive of their current members while bringing in people from different backgrounds to better themselves and their science. After the preliminary vote of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists to change its name, I began looking into the greater issues at hand within the association. As the AAPA studies humans, it is understandable that they are more aware of the concerns in the field of biological anthropology, but what does that mean in the greater context of higher academia? In my thesis, I explore the central reasons for the name change and how they relate to the country’s social climate. I different sources of literature over the importance of the word biological versus physical and work to answer the question, “what’s in a name?”. I also conducted interviews with current biological anthropology graduate students in order to get a feel for the direction the AAPA could be moving towards. At the heart of the thesis is my time at the 88th Annual AAPA Conference in Cleveland where I got a better understanding of the culture of biological anthropology. From there, I analyze the importance of mentorship and provide suggestions through three different lenses. These lenses are mentorship for undergraduate students, mentorship for graduate students, and mentorship and allies in cases of sexual harassment and assault. Finally, I look at the next steps that will be taken towards the final name change vote in 2020 where the association will hopefully become the American Association of Biological Anthropologists.

I. Introduction

No, I am not missing a “B” in the acronym AABA in my title as I am not referring to the Swedish band, but rather the association made up of the STEM sub-field of anthropology. The American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA) has preliminarily voted to change their name to the American Association of Biological Anthropologists (AABA). The name change is based on various factors primarily focused around trying to progress the culture of biological anthropology in order to acknowledge, but move away from the history of racism and eugenics surrounding the physical anthropology of the early 20th century. The AABA would also encompass the more interdisciplinary nature of the field today as biological is a word that holds more weight in the social and hard sciences. The public would also be able to grasp onto this new name as they are familiar with the word “biology” so they
could connect with it more and be more willing to look to biological anthropologists for expert advice.

Before I dive deeper into the specifics, a little history on the AAPA. The AAPA was formed in 1930 by eight anthropologists from the American Association for the Advancement of Sciences who wanted to form a formal organization for the continuation of the growth and development of the field of physical anthropology. Their original twelve principles from their “Declaration of Principles” can be found below (Alfonso & Little 2005, 164).

1. To promote the interaction, cooperation, and assistance, in this country and abroad, within all the sub-fields of anthropology, as well as with anatomists, physiologists, biologists, physicians, and dentists;

2. To promote, in its broadest sense, research and publications in physical anthropology;

3. To promote the organization of good anthropological education in universities, medical schools, art institutes, and other educational centers in which such training will be beneficial;

4. To prepare adequate textbooks, maps, and other types of materials that would be helpful in teaching anthropology;

5. To cooperate in the systematization of anthropometric techniques, as well as in the standardization and production of anthropometric instruments;

6. To obtain standardized measurements through the introduction and application of methods, using adequate anthropometrical instruments, in all institutions where individuals are measured, such as establishments for abnormal or deficient children, insurance companies, and recruitment centers for the army or navy;

7. To provide help and support, and to disseminate these methods, instruments, etc., to other countries;

8. To develop physical anthropology as a well-organized science, so that its practical value and educational benefit will be ensured for future generations;

9. To communicate to the public the results of research conducted in physical anthropology;

10. To help and support museums, universities, and schools to achieve the best representation of subjects related to phylogeny, ontogeny, and human variation and differentiation;

11. To help the most distinguished and advanced students so that they can carry out original research and field work; and

12. To create eventually, in the most appropriate place, an American Institute of Physical Anthropology. Such an institute could be used not only as a headquarters and library of the AAPA but
The overall purpose of the association and the Constitution and Bylaws have been edited in the almost one-hundred years of the AAPA’s existence so to clarify, the definition of physical anthropology that I will be using comes from the association’s website. The AAPA defines physical anthropology as “Physical anthropology is a biological science that deals with the adaptations, variability, and evolution of human beings and their living and fossil relatives. Because it studies human biology in the context of human culture and behavior, physical anthropology is also a social science.” (AAPA 2019) The purpose of the AAPA in the current Constitution is “the advancement of the science of physical (biological) anthropology.” (AAPA 2019)

I was originally made aware of this topic by Professor Karen Weinstein. I explained to her that I was interested in looking at the culture of higher academia and she pointed me in the direction of the name change as it was happening now. I think that the relevance of this topic is what I love the most about it. The name change is something that experts in the field of biological anthropology are currently grappling with and I get to be a fly on the wall and explore it from an outsider’s perspective. As an anthropology major interested in studying social and cultural phenomena in Western cultures, this has become a case study that will give insight into how the American higher academia culture is changing and what can be done to make it a more diverse, inclusive, healthier, and overall better environment for the people who choose to go into it.

At the center of the name change is the Agustin Fuentes’ 2010 article “The New Biological Anthropology: Bringing Washburn's New Physical Anthropology Into 2010 and Beyond-The 2008 AAPA Luncheon Lecture.” Fuentes is a primatology and anthropology professor at the University of Notre Dame. He is also the Co-Chair and Steering Liaison for
the AAPA’s Committee on Diversity (COD) sub-committee Increasing Diversity in Evolutionary and Anthropological Sciences (IDEAS). In his article, he focuses in on three main points in support of the name change from physical to biological anthropology. The word emphasizes a more interdisciplinary field which reflects what anthropologists are doing today. The word “biological” is also more accessible to the public. Finally, physical anthropology has a history of racism and eugenics which is not what people who join the field are doing today as they are actively combatting the idea of race being a biological concept. Fuentes asks “Are we biological anthropologists yet?” From my research I argue, yes, they are (Fuentes 2010, 3).

Before the 88th Annual AAPA Conference in Cleveland at the end of March, there were also two preliminary votes to get a general sense of what members were thinking and feeling about the name change. From an email vote in Fall 2018, 50% of almost 2,500 members voted with 82% of that number voting in favor of a name change. There were a variety of different names that were considered and listed for members to vote on. The main two words in the association’s name that were in question was “American” and “Physical”. In the end, 59% voted to change the name to the American Association of Biological Anthropologists (AABA). The first vote to change the name at the conference in Cleveland did pass and the second vote will take place in Los Angeles next year to make it official. I will discuss this in more detail later in the paper.

From this launching point, I developed several different research questions.

| What does the name change of the AAPA reveal about the changing culture of academia? |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • What’s in a name?             | What can be done to make higher academia more inclusive and diverse? |
| Why is this happening now in 2019? | Why do current graduate and PhD students think about the field’s direction? |
| What did they decide to pursue research in biological anthropology? |
So here we are. Standing on the precipice of a historical moment of the AAPA. I hope that this case study will reveal some information about the direction in which higher academia is moving and what we, those who are in it, can do to help to be aware of and work together to make biological anthropology a more diverse and inclusive field. This name change is greater than just the swapping out of physical for biological, but instead about recognizing the past, present and future of the AAPA and how higher academia interacts with the world around it. The social climate of the United States continues to be on edge and pushing cultural boundaries with the goals of bringing more understanding between each other. These issues range from topics to race and gender to the socio-economic gap and taxes. There is no easy way to create conversations that span all of these issues across people of all different backgrounds in the United States. People argue sometimes to the point of physical violence when groups of people do not understand the other. However, in one small population, all joined together based on the same interest in the human experience, it is possible to see hope that can bring about real change through the things they can agree on and work to improve.

The AAPA is a microcosm of the world especially as the association grows in number and diversity. These conversations about social issues that are had in the bubbles of higher academia influence students who attain their knowledge and understanding from their professors and take it into the “real world”. This case study shows the beginning of a movement in higher academia that could influence the greater social climate of the United States as college students take their lessons outside of the classroom and into the public sphere. If the teachers and professors are working to better themselves and create more conversation, so can the students that then are sent into the work place. While change is slow,
it starts with people who are aware and want to change. The main question is “why now?”.

My respondents pointed again to the current social climate as well as how slow the institution of higher education can move which is why the name change is finally happening almost a decade since the Fuentes article was published.

i. Significance of Research

The significance of this research is that it is happening right now. As higher academia tends to reflect the social climate of the United States, it is important to look at the culture of learning and education. Not only will we be able to create a better environment for students of all levels by doing this, but also get a better understanding of the American culture. By studying ourselves and our cultures, we stand a better chance of avoiding “othering” and correcting human rights issues in our own country.

ii. The Road Map

I will first explain my findings in my two literature reviews based on the word biological versus physical and public anthropology. From there, I share my goals for my research through the methods of conducting interviews as well as attending the AAPA conference as a participant observer. I will then provide my results from the interviews and discuss my time at the conference through my fieldnotes. Finally, I will provide next steps and suggestions I have formed based on my research which is focused in mentorship. The importance of mentorship and how it comes to fruition in biological anthropology was seen in both my readings and conversations with participants. Through this lens, I explore how mentorship can be improved in the field through the perspective of students and professors. Mentorship in sexual harassment and assault in the field is also a part of this as the discussion of the #MeToo Movement grows within biological anthropology. Finally, I briefly discuss
the 89th AAPA conference in 2020 where the final name change vote will take place as well as the future of the association and where it hopes to go in both the eyes of Ph.D. students as well as current regular members.

II. Biological vs. Physical

The American Association of Physical Anthropologists has officially voted to change its name in the first round of votes at the past 88th Annual Conference that took place at the end of March. The new name that they have chosen is the American Association of Biological Anthropologists (AABA), as many anthropologists believe that most of their work is rooted in biology. I agree with the name change to the AABA as it helps to account for the history of racialized science of the physical anthropology of the early 20th century while helping to bring anthropology more into the public sphere as it is more accessible of a term compared to physical anthropology. Also, the word biological encompasses a greater meaning as the word “biology” invokes ideas of more sub-fields. I focus this argument within a historical context where anthropologists were already pushing the field to look at physical anthropology outside of the study from the early 1900s based in the classification and labeling of primarily bones. I emphasize how biological anthropology is not a new idea as it has been around for decades and is finally being recognized as a better term for the work of anthropologists. From there, I analyze how current anthropologists are addressing questions about human variation and what suggestions they propose to move the anthropological community forward. Finally, as physical anthropology does have the association with racism and eugenics, I look at how biological anthropologists look at race and human variation today while recognizing that the field needs to be more inclusive. Groups that are not currently well represented in anthropology could help to bring a more
well-rounded and in-depth look into different social and biological issues may be more attracted to a discipline that is being aware of their past while looking to the future. This could improve the science overall.

In the past sixty years, anthropologists have called for a more interdisciplinary approach to the study as human variation and evolution. Professor Sherwood Washburn was one of the first to call for a “new physical anthropology” in 1951 as he advised for more “collaboration across both the social and natural sciences.” (Mikels-Carrasco 2012, 79) Washburn was the first person to graduate from Harvard University with a doctorate in physical anthropology in 1940 and is considered to be a pioneer of the field of primatology. In his proposal for “a new physical anthropology” he called for a “move from measurement and classification to the processes and mechanisms of evolutionary change.” (Fuentes 2010, 2) His argument for this new focus was based on the idea that sorting and measuring bones would not lead to any solid conclusions on human evolution as when methods change, facts change as well (Mikels-Carrasco 2012, 83). This holds true today as when new methods and technology is revealed, the sciences have the ability to reassess previous findings or to look at them in a new light and discover a deeper meaning or analysis that was not available to them before. I provide a couple of examples of how these methods and technology allow for a more interdisciplinary approach to anthropology below.

Agustín Fuentes is a part of the second generation of Washburn’s academic genealogy. In his 2010 article on Washburn’s new physical anthropology, he expands on his 2008 AAPA Luncheon Lecture where he lays out his reasoning for advocating for the AAPA to change its name. As Washburn looked at new methodologies to be a force to change the ways of thinking in physical anthropology, Fuentes also recognizes today how new ways of
research have expanded the possibilities for the connections between biological and cultural anthropology. For example, he points to the use of genomics in biological anthropology as a way to better understand epigenetic inheritance and developmental plasticity as well as how ethnographic research can help to understand different medical issues within populations and therefore expand the field of biocultural anthropology (Fuentes 2010, 8-9). This is important because some anthropologists are calling for a more connected four field discipline. There are universities where the departments of cultural anthropology, biological anthropology, archaeology and linguistics want to work separately from each other. However, this hurts anthropology departments more than helps as anthropologists who say that it is important to use a four field approach explain that this gives a more well-rounded and holistic view of the human experience and will enhance the research.

Outside of research possibilities within a more interdisciplinary field, Fuentes emphasizes that a name is very important to an association because it is the first thing that the public is presented with. Biological anthropology is a more accessible term to a public audience because “it denotes an integration of themes, perspectives, methodologies, and a dynamism, that is absent from the image and content evoked by a ‘physical anthropology’” (Fuentes 2010, 5). Fuentes also explains that the people that are brought in by news sources to discuss issues surrounding evolution and human variation are not the experts that are a part of the AAPA, but rather from other fields that are more in the public’s eye based on their name and work. The AAPA’s new name would then bring more validity to the field of biological anthropology and allow the public to get a better understanding of what anthropologists do. They do not dig up dinosaur bones, but are rather focused on issues of the human biological and cultural experience that are relevant today and have a wealth of
knowledge to share. Anthropologists cannot share this information if it is only being published in academic journals outside of the public sphere. Being in the public eye will also bring more diverse voices to the field as it will no longer be about who knows about biological anthropology based on their privilege or where they went to school as some universities and colleges only have certain sub-fields of anthropology.

At the root of the physical anthropology in the early 20th century was racism. The measuring and classification of humans both living and their remains led to scientists declaring that race was biological and there was also a racial hierarchy under the name of anthropology. Biological anthropologists are still working today to show how this is false and no longer what anthropologists do as well as to give clear consistent answers on the issue of race as it pertains to biological and cultural anthropology. Anthropologists tend to agree in the denunciation of biological determinism meaning a person’s genetics determine their status in life. There is an understanding that there are many social and cultural or epigenetic factors that affect every human’s life. So how are anthropologists working to develop a clear stance on race? In 2009, Heather J.H. Edgar and Keith L. Hunley led a discussion at a symposium called “Race Reconciled?: How Biological Anthropologists View Human Variation” about the way anthropologists view human variation as they had struggled themselves to come to an agreement on how to talk about race in an academic context. The main concern they disagreed on was “the precise nature of geographic patterning of human biological variation”, not whether or not race is biological reality. Some of the common ground they found was based in the agreement that there is more variation within groups than between groups, “race is not an accurate or productive way to describe human biological
variation, human variation research has important social, biomedical, and forensic implications.” (Edgar & Hunley 2009, 2)

The social implications that human variation research has is the most critical point when looking at the name change of the AAPA. How anthropologists discuss race is a public issue just like how every other field is watched carefully when dealing with issues inclusivity and diversity. As anthropologists teach that race does not exist in a biological sense, but continues to be embedded in all cultures, Edgar and Hunley recognized that anthropologists have not “offered a clear and satisfactory explanation (to race) that meshes with students’ lived experience.” (Edgar & Hunley 2009, 3) The AAPA has been working to address this as they recently revised their statement on race that was from 1996. There is a whole page on the website dedicated to the statement, but one section that stood out to me was titled “The Dilemma of Race and Racism.” Part of the two paragraphs under this section read as follows: “While ‘race’ is not biology, racism does affect our biology, especially our health and well-being. Racism is prejudice against someone because of their race in the context of a belief in the inherent superiority and inferiority of different racial groups, which is reinforced by institutional and historical structures.” (AAPA 2019) I believe that the AAPA’s new name along with a revised vision, such as this new statement, will help to bring more clarity. This is a dynamic issue that continues to change and needs to constantly be in reevaluated as more voices are brought to the table.

Since 2006, the AAPA has been looking more closely into the issues of inclusivity within their own association with the creation of the Committee on Diversity (COD). As one of the chairs of the COD, Fuentes has worked with Susan C. Antón and Ripan S. Malhi to identify ways that biological anthropology can be a more inclusive field. Like other
disciplines in higher academia, biological anthropology has been historically white. This is based on many factors including lack of access to higher education, socioeconomic status, racism, etcetera. 87% of the AAPA members are white because of these societal issues. The association and the COD, specifically, are working to combat this and provide support and programs for underrepresented minorities (URM) in the association. Antón, Ripan, and Malhi write that “Diversity is not simply about social justice and equal opportunity—although it serves these ends—but about building the best possible programs, doing the best possible research, and training the best students. Inclusivity matters.” (Antón et al. 2018, 158) This has been a constant within the anthropological community. Washburn also recognized how those with the greatest opportunities in life would be further ahead than those with less which is embedded in the United States’ racialized education system and was a supporter of affirmative action (Mikels-Carrasco 2012, 88). The new suggested name, the AABA, would help to push the biological anthropology forward and to become a more inclusive field.

Biological anthropology is not a new concept. It has taken decades to grow and develop, but has always been in the works. Fuentes said it best when he asked, “Are we biological anthropologists yet?” (Fuentes 2010, 3) Present day biological anthropologists focus their research in the interdisciplinary methods and multiple fields of study. It is now time to not be stuck in the past, but rather recognize it, but push to be better anthropologists for the future. As these ideas and people continue to have the platforms they need to grow and develop, biological anthropology will be able to continue moving forward in the 21st century.

III. Public Anthropology

One of the main concepts that has stuck with me since taking Theory in Cultural Anthropology has been the theory of public anthropology. Angelique Haugerud explains that
“Public anthropology encompass(es) knowledge production by professional anthropologists that is intended to reach beyond disciplinary specialists, and usually beyond the academy, in ways that differ from engaged, applied, or practicing anthropology.” (Haugerud 2016, 586)

The name change of the AAPA is linked to public anthropology as one of the main reasons for the change is based on the goal to reach a wider audience including those who are not familiar with the field of biological anthropology. Some people have argued that public anthropology may not be the way to go for the discipline since it requires anthropologists to take a stance on more public issues that could then produce less objectivity in research. I believe that public anthropology helps to defend the AAPA name change and that anthropologists have the right to take stances on these important political and social issues, such as race, gender and human rights violations, as they tend to be the focus of academic questions as well. Public anthropology also helps present day American anthropologists look inward and examine our own culture and how they can help change it or understand each other. While objectivity is a concern, when dealing with questions of human rights, it is important that anthropologists use their knowledge to help make the world a better place especially when turning in and looking at their own culture within the association. In this section, I will be looking at both cultural and biological anthropology as I want to show the importance of a holistic approach to the discipline.

So why is it important to look inward at the meaning, people involved with, and the perception of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists? It starts with recognizing that not every group of people is perfect. Public anthropology helps to analyze this as it works to “encompasses… multiple ‘public means of human coping, problem solving, relating and affiliating, teaching and learning’” (Benson 2014, 380).” (Haugerud
In Johnnetta B. Cole’s opening address of the 1994 American Anthropological Association meeting, she recognized that anthropologists had begun to conduct research outside of just studying “others”. Cole pushed anthropologists to challenge their own culture as human rights violations occur across all types of nations (Cole 1995, 446). This is particularly related to the AAPA as physical anthropology early stages were based in cultural prejudices. While most biological anthropologists who go into the field now go in because of the discipline’s denial of biological race and focus on human evolution as not being based in biological determinism, it is important to be aware of the history in order to advance the association. Cole called on anthropologists to continue to challenge the poor treatment of people of color in the United States. Again, biological anthropology is not a new concept, but the name change of the AAPA will help to continue to push biological anthropologists to look inward to see what they can do better as a group in order to address different issues of diversity and inclusion.

One of the main concerns of public anthropology is how information is released and presented in a way that the public can understand it. In 2010, the journal *American Anthropologist* introduced a section that would be in each issue dedicated to a review of public anthropology. This section includes reviews of other anthropologists work in the subsection from blogs about paleoanthropology that help to reach the general public to how anthropology has been used to analyze a variety of current political issues. In the second issue of the 2013 *American Anthropologist*, Ruth Gomberg-Muñoz, an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Loyola University Chicago, writes about the public anthropology of 2012. She points to a couple of issues where anthropologists were influential in the public sphere including the KONY 2012 video. KONY 2012 is particularly interesting to me because the
orchestra at my high school for about three years put on an “Invisible Children” concert where they raised money for this cause. In the Gomberg-Muñoz’s article “2012 Public Anthropology Year in Review: Actually, Rick, Florida Could Use a Few More Anthropologists”, she looks at how anthropology was used to investigate the original KONY 2012 video and the actual events that were occurring in Uganda.

Outside of the money that was donated to the KONY 2012 campaign and then misused, the video received major criticism from anthropologists. Many denounced the validity of the video as it was based around a black-white stereotype aimed at portraying Americans as the heroes without actual knowledge of the situation. Ugandans were upset because they were making strides towards peace in the country and any added military action would just put strain between the groups and cause more deaths. Also, the side that the video was promoting, the Ugandan army, was known for committing crimes against its citizens. Anthropologists brought all of these issues into the public eye to quickly turn the narrative that was originally produced. In this scenario, anthropologists had the ability to share their knowledge in the mainstream media. Theories that anthropologists use on a regular basis such as the white savior complex were then brought to the public through an issue that they could easily digest as it was a topic of debate at the time. Having the ability to talk about these national political concerns is key in bringing anthropology into the public sphere. Anthropologists get called on during these major issues so anything having to do with race, evolution, biological determinism and a myriad of other topics would ideally be brought to biological anthropologists more in the future with the name change (Fuentes 2010).

Another public event that Gomberg-Muñoz discusses in her article is how in 2012 Florida governor Rick Scott said he was going to take money away from fields in higher
education that do not produce jobs and put it towards STEM disciplines. The president of the AAPA at the time fired back at Scott for not accounting for biological anthropologists’ contributions to the hard sciences (Gomberg-Muñoz 2013, 286-287). The ironic part was that Scott’s daughter received a degree in anthropology and while she went into another field, it displays the multidisciplinary nature of the study. I believe that Fuentes’ point that I also discussed in the previous section would help the public to get a better understanding of what anthropologists do and bring more validity to the field. As the term physical anthropology has no real authority in the sciences, the American Association of Biological Anthropologists would give the public something to grasp onto and again news sources would be more inclined to ask for biological anthropologists’ expert opinions on matters that cross over in the STEM realm (Fuentes 2010). A new name would put biological anthropology in a positive light, and while it would still have its critics, it would less likely to be called out as being irrelevant.

Besides studying and reporting on public issues, public anthropology also includes anthropologists taking stands and participating in social justice movements. During the 2014 AAA, American Anthropological Association which includes all four main subsections of anthropology, the members staged a “Die In” in the Washington D.C. hotel it was being held at in remembrance of Michael Brown who was unlawfully killed by a police officer four months earlier. Do anthropologists have the right to have an opinion about this highly debated issues? I would argue yes, of course they do. As experts who study humans through multiple different lenses, anthropologists may have the most qualifications to speak to achieving a more equal culture when looking inward at the United States. Johnnetta B. Cole would also agree as in her 1994 speech she said “one of the great lessons of cultural
anthropology is that through human empathy, it is possible to know and even feel the plight of others” (Cole 1995, 447). From this she emphasized the need for anthropologists to continue to be human activists in order to better the human condition (Cole 1995, 448).

The major push back in all of these examples of anthropologists using their knowledge in the public sphere is this fear that as anthropologists interject their own opinions, they will become less and less objective. My question is, are anthropologists simply supposed to put out the information through an objective lens and let the public decide for themselves what is right? How are biological anthropologists supposed to prove biological race does not exist and that all humans descended from one common ancestor without explaining it and engaging with the public? The simple answer is no. Anthropologists have a duty to report their findings to the public. It is obviously up to the individual to decide whether or not they want to take place in a social justice movement or go on television to discuss a major political issue and share their perspective, but anthropologists should have the right to be human and have opinions just as any other private citizen does. Anthropologists are trained to give their expert and knowledgeable opinion and answer to questions of the human experience that they study.

Anthropology in the public sphere is important. The AAPA now has the ability to become a more publically recognized academic association that works towards the betterment and understanding of the human condition through a biological and anthropological context. The AAPA name change is the association taking a stand and this watershed moment as it seeks to continue to ask biological and anthropological questions in union while also making a clear public statement that the interdisciplinary field of biological anthropology is more representative of what they do today. As the AAPA continues to study
itself, it is important that they continue to bring in a diverse mix of people in order to ensure a holistic look at the association. Also, the name change cannot be the association’s only attempt in recognizing the field as it is today which is more diverse and inclusive than it was when the AAPA came into being in 1930.

IV. Goals of the Research

From my preliminary research, I began to contemplate my original research questions as well as to form new ones knowing that I would be talking with current biological anthropology graduate students who are the future of the AAPA. I also was able to go into the 88th AAPA Conference with a greater understanding of where the field stands today and what they are currently working to improve for its members and the association as a whole. The goal of conducting interviews and attending the AAPA conference was to get the perspective of the younger biological anthropologists on the name change as they are the future of the association. They might not yet have the ability to publish their opinions or research so it is hard to find their opinion outside of what they might have supported in the original email vote. As it is the more established anthropologists who are in charge of the AAPA right now and have the ability to make the most change through the credibility they have gained through the years, we are able to see which direction they hope to see the association move in. However, the 20-30 year-olds will soon be the ones with the reigns, so talking with them through interviews and informal conversations at the conference would allow me to get a sense of what they hope to accomplish in the future and what they would like to see done to improve the AAPA. I expected that they would have opinions on higher academia as well as that diversity would be one of their main concerns. I was also curious as to why they thought the name change was happening now and hypothesized that some of
them would say it reflected the greater social climate of the United States. From these initial thoughts, I began my interviews which led me to the AAPA conference in Cleveland.

V. Methodology

Outside of doing multiple literature reviews, I conducted semi-structured interviews with current or recently graduated graduate students who are studying biological anthropology. All of my participants received their undergraduate education at Dickinson College and had Professor Weinstein as a professor during their time at Dickinson. I conducted five semi-structured interviews that went between twenty-five to fifty minutes long as well as had two participants fill out a questionnaire sheet. All of them were phone interviews which were conducted in my room with the phone call on speaker. I then recorded the interviews with a hand held recorder provided by the Dickinson College Media Center. After the interview was complete, I would download the file onto my personal computer and then delete it from the recorder. I am the only one who has access to the recordings and only parts of the transcripts will be put into my paper. My questions had four main themes including demographics, general questions about their start in the field, their opinions on the name change, and finally mentorship in biological anthropology. My interest in mentorship came from my research on diversity and inclusion in the field. Mentorship was a topic that was heavily discussed in general higher education articles including the Chronicle of Higher Education and also eventually became a large part of the interviews. Below is the protocol of the questions that were asked:
Interview Protocol

Demographic questions:
How would you identify yourself in terms of:
Gender-
Age-
Race-
Ethnicity-

General questions:
How did you decide to go into biological anthropology?
What is the area of research you are specializing in? Why did you decide to pursue that specific area?
Do you have a personal connection with it?

Name Change:
What is your opinion about the proposed name change of the AAPA?
If you are for it, what specific reasons are the most compelling to you?
Do you agree with it becoming the AABA? Why or why not?
One of the reasons for the proposed name change is that biological anthropology stands for the more interdisciplinary nature of the field. Do you have any examples of when you used multiple disciplines in your graduate research?
Does the name change address the history of physical anthropology? Is there more that can be done? If so, what other steps can be taken to improve the field and the association?
Why do you think the name change is happening at this particular moment in time?

Mentorship within Biological Anthropology:
Were there specific people that affected your decision to study biological anthropology?
What was it about them that inspired you to go into it?
What makes a good mentor?
The demographics of my participants were as followed:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Current Position</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Phone</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Phone</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black/African American</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Phone</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Phone</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Phone</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Researcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Email Questionnaire</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 Email Questionnaire</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Ph.D. Student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I will be looking specifically at my respondents reasoning for pursuing high degrees in biological anthropology and their opinions on the name change and what can be done to better the field in the first part of my analysis. I connect their responses on mentorship in my discussion of next steps.

Outside of interviews, I also attended the 88th Annual AAPA Conference in Cleveland, Ohio at the Hilton Cleveland Downtown from March 28-29, 2019. I acted as an observer and focused on more informal conversations with attendees about their opinions and perceptions on the name change. This allowed me to give my thesis more grounding in the actual event and helped me to synthesize my ideas. Before going to the conference there were multiple topics that I was wanting to cover. After having conversations with people I met, my participants in person, as well as listening to the discussions at the panels and meetings, I discovered that my findings were more centered around mentorship which influenced my discussion and results.
VI. Results

i. Trends in the Interviews

a. Degrees in Biological Anthropology

The reasons people had for pursuing a degree in biological anthropology were fairly different. They all mentioned their classes at Dickinson as being a starting point from which they wanted to continue studying and learning about human variation and evolution. Some of them cited the TV shows that were on at the time as influencing their decision since forensic anthropology was in the limelight in the mid-2000s.

P2: Ok, so I was thinking about this. I guess I decided to do bio. anth. in high school and it probably had a lot to do with the TV shows that were coming out at the time, so that was around 2010, 2009 something like that. They were all very exciting and new to me and I saw what they were doing and I kind of wanted to be involved in that. So I think that was my original impetus for wanting to get into the field of anthropology and that was never really the only thing. So at the time I knew I wanted to study people and I didn’t exactly know how to go about doing that so when I learned about anthropology I thought that this might be the perfect fit and I think one of the things that was so interesting to me was just looking at diversity and seeing how diversity plays out in such a visible way, so almost as a celebration of diversity which is why I chose to take the route as far as the biological side of it.

I was particularly interested in the last part of this quote as Participant #2 as she saw biological anthropology as a “celebration of diversity”. This supported what Fuentes and other anthropologists have pointed to as the current state of biological anthropology. All of my participants denounced those ideas and were on the opposite side of the spectrum and explained that their love biological anthropology was in part due to how it helped to reverse some of the cultural stereotypes present in American society.
Six out of seven of my participants also thought that their current or past research was multidisciplinary in some way. Some of them pointed to using biocultural, bioarchaeological or qualitative and quantitative methods to get a more holistic view of what they are studying.

P1: So right now I’m working with biocultural anthropology and modern human bio. and modern human variation. Hopefully what my dissertation project will be on is how gender lived experiences so experiences related to one’s gender identity are biologically embodied over time. Hopefully doing a biocultural methodology where I’m using qualitative and quantitative methods and collecting biomarker data like cortisol and like c-reactive proteins and doing qualitative interviews learning about the lived experiences of a variety of different gender identities and seeing how the biomarker data and the qualitative relate to each other.

These descriptions of their current research supported Fuentes’ point of how the field continues to be more interdisciplinary as not only are the four sub-fields of anthropology being used in tandem with each other, but also working with other scientists. Participant #4 pointed to how she is working with rodents to look at teeth as a comparison with non-human primates through a biology lab outside of the anthropology department. From these accounts as well as from poster presentations and informal conversations at the AAPA conference, it is clear that biological anthropology is much more complicated and diverse in terms of methods of study.

b. Opinion on the Name Change

Overall all of my participants supported the name change. Two of them were okay with it remaining the AAPA, but understood the reasoning behind it especially when wanting to address the association’s past.

P7: I don’t have an issue with the historic name “physical anthropology,” however, I do think that the word biological is more appropriate to call our field in its current state. So, I support the name change.
For those who did support the name change fully, their main reason for supporting the AABA was because the word biological is more encompassing of what they do in their own work. One of the main concerns about the name change is the continuation of these tough conversations about the issues of diversity and inclusion if the name is permanently changed. Many of the participants thought that the association was not trying to hide or erase physical anthropology’s history of eugenics or racism, but rather to address it and move the field forward. This was the same in my informal conversations with poster presenters at the AAPA conference.

There was some concern over whether the name change would reproduce this culture of not talking about the past. Participant #4 pointed to her own experiences in her Ph.D. program as
she is teaching undergraduates about human osteology and the skeletal collection at her university originally being used for eugenics.

I found her experience to be particularly telling of what some anthropologists may have to deal with when they talk about their profession in the public sphere. The name change could be a start in trying to correct these false assumptions about anthropology in the public, but there definitely needs to be more done. Continuing the conversation about the problems with the past can help propel the field into the future. This is also where Fuentes’ point of being called upon my news sources to be the experts in cases having to do with evolution and human variation is important. Having anthropologists in the public eye outside of crime TV shows will allow these changes to take place so that the public starts to gain a better understanding of what anthropologists do today.
ii. 2019 AAPA Conference

The following section consists mostly of my fieldnotes with some analysis taking place at the time and then again at a later date.

I arrived at the conference at about 1:30 on Thursday, March 28th. After checking in, I sat down and got my bearings. I felt like I belonged, I was not under dressed or anything, but I still felt out of place. I think it was mostly because I am used to a much smaller community at Dickinson of about twenty Anthropology students and only four other majors in my year. I was not overwhelmed or intimidated. Overwhelmed might be closer to what I was feeling though because I felt like I needed to jump right in. It is also important to recognize for myself that I have only been to trumpet and theatre conference so nothing in the social sciences before with poster sessions. Especially since I consider myself to be more leaning towards cultural anthropology, it was very different. The majority of people that I have seen or interacted with have been female-identifying. I cannot get a real feel on diversity in terms of people of color, but I have noticed a lot of non-binary identifying people, but that is also purely based on how they present themselves in terms of their style.

After gathering my thoughts, I decided to explore the poster sessions. I talked to three female-identifying presenters in total. I would first listen to their research all of which seemed to be more interdisciplinary in nature. One Ph.D. student talked about pressure on bones in relation to aboreality, or the ability to swing from trees, and had worked with the Sports and Exercise Sciences department at her school to have the custom built bar that would be able to measure pressure.

Another Ph.D. student’s poster was entitled “Embodied Cultural Identity in Late Bronze Age Central Greece”. When looking at the program, this title immediately stuck out
to me as it was part of the session entitled “Bioarchaeology: Diet, Migration, and Identity” and the presenter’s poster was related to cultural identity specifically, which seemed very interdisciplinary from the title. Her research was primarily looking at whether the osteological data from a burial ground in Greece reflected the cultural data that had been gathered from the area. Her main three cultural points she was looking at was that this is thought to be a male dominant society, with a warrior mentality and therefore trauma would be able to be seen in the osteological record. Her hypothesis was based on if all of the three were true, then the male’s would be assumed to be the healthiest, the bones would have signs of clear muscle attachment meaning the men would have larger muscles which would leave common marks and grooves in the bones, and then head trauma would be the most common type of trauma to be observed. From her study, she concluded that she could see that men were healthier, but there were not as many signs of large muscles or head trauma as to be expected.

I continued to talk with this Ph.D. student, who was from a large research university in the south, after she explained her research. I told her why I was attending the conference and she said that she had voted in favor of a name change, but did understand people’s concern of ignoring the history. She said that as long as we keep talking in and out of the classroom about the past, we will still be able to continue to move forward. I went on to ask her about mentorship and she said that she had a lot of opinions about this (seems like a lot of Ph.D. students do) and she explained that mentorship is hard to find and you do not know exactly what you’re getting until you get there. She explained that getting your Ph.D. is incredibly stressful and can be a lot. I asked her access to therapy and she said that the university she attends gives students who are offered an assistantship twelve therapy sessions.
a semester. She said that is really great and not every school offers that, but if you need more than like once a week, you’re “screwed”. I found this to be interesting because in my interviews, one participant pointed out the issues of socio-economic status in relation to being able to afford therapy. It sounds like therapy is needed as graduate and Ph.D. student as mentors are not always there, but mostly because it is needed to talk outside of the field.

After the poster session and meeting up with Professor Weinstein, I went to a panel entitled “Navigating the Intercultural Landscape of Gender-Based Harassment and Assault in Fieldwork”. This panel was a result of a couple of different factors including the #MeToo Movement within the field as well as papers that have worked to bridge this topic such as the Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE) Study (Clancy et al. 2014 & 2017). The aim of the SAFE Study was to shine light on the issue of sexual harassment and assault in fieldwork. The quantitative results were published in 2014 while the qualitative follow up study, “Signaling Safety: Characterizing Fieldwork Experiences and Their Implications for Career Trajectories,” was published in December 2017 (Clancy et al. 2017). The study was interestingly enough published before the #MeToo Movement caught fire in 2017 with the release of the Harvey Weinstein allegations. This shows how these issues have long been recognized in the field of biological anthropology and how there is this reflection of the social climate and cultural concerns of the United States within the AAPA. While the panel was not directly about the study as it had come out a couple of years earlier, I still expected that the panelists would reference the SAFE Study in their discussion with each other and the rest of the room.

I stood in the back as the first presenter finished and almost all of the people in the room were seemingly female-identifying with about three males and a few more gender non-
binary. Having just come from the first fifteen minutes of the session “The Missing Dead: Underrepresented Groups in Bioarchaeology and Forensic Anthropology,” I was shocked at the size of the room and the number of attendees as I would have expected it to be much larger as the session I was originally at was located in a larger and more filled room. I am obviously self-selecting these poster presentations and panels as they are central in my thesis, but was still surprised considering this seems to be a hot topic. Also, looking round age wise, there was a pretty even split between younger (20s-30s), middle age (40s-50s) and older (60s-70s) anthropologists. A little less maybe of the older demographic. There was only one woman on the panel who was seemingly older as she mentioned that she started in the field in the 1980s.

There were a total of nine people on the panel that had all been gathered together based on “whispered conversations” about experiences and questions of how they had handled certain situations by two other women. Each brought a different angle to the table. There was one male on the panel who when he introduced himself, said that he was gay. There was only one woman who represented the international perspective and was coming from Cape Town, South Africa. There was also only one woman of color on the panel, Robin Nelson, who was one of the authors of the SAFE study. Below are some of the main ideas that were brought to the table. I will then discuss the pieces that seemed to stick with me the most.

- Concern about how to deal with our own beliefs and morals with that of the population we are studying… Situation where her site manager was known for abusing his wife and children, but she could not fire him because that would be
placing her culture and beliefs above his and the local culture as this was considered normal. How do we think about and talk about this?

  o No real solutions were given… she was audibly shaken up by the situation

• Large east coast university professor created a behavior contract that was developed by her and her Indonesian equal in response to an American and Indonesian student being caught in the act and the whole area finding out because it is a Muslim area where pre-marital sex is forbidden. Discredited the camp and had to come up with a zero tolerance policy

• International professor explained that we have to be aware that we cannot only be talking about the safety of the researchers as that perpetuates colonialism as it protects the westerners when they can be just as guilty

  o Make sure that we are not othering through these discussions

• Male professor from a large city university Gay, how do we think about sexuality in the context of being a researcher and sometimes not being safe or welcomed in the community. Honest and trusting base is not made if you lie about yourself in that context from the beginning. Maleness is a gender in a local context

  o There may be legal protection, but not social protection in certain situations

• Mid-sized mid-west professor discussed how she was raped in the field in the 1980s during political unrest

  o Gave ways to be prepared

• Robin Nelson, professor at Santa Clara University- black woman who studied in Jamaica and Peruvian immigrants in Canada
Discussed that while she was West Indian, the Jamaicans she interacted with made it clear that she was not one of them based on her growing up in the US and the place of power she was coming from to study them (social capital).

- There isn’t a list that can be given students to prepare because each student is going to face different challenges in the field based on their identity.
  - Cannot blame the students for being “underprepared”

- Queerness in the field- can we decide for the student’s that it is unsafe for them to go to a specific place?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Solutions offered:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Truly equal partners- academics from the location being studied</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creating a behavior contract together with the location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sexual harassment and assault training in the country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need to be open to how we mentor students from backgrounds other than our own</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ask if field site has Code of Conduct before sending students to it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Training of allies and advocates that are available at the sites that aren’t mandatory reporters</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

While these solutions were suggested, they were not concrete or developed and most answers given by the panelists tended to end with some variation of “but ultimately, I don’t know”. There was a lot of discussion about knowing that when you “have the power” or are “in a position of power” at your university, you need to take advantage of it and make change then. This was definitely aimed at more established anthropology professors rather than younger ones as in higher academia there is this idea that you need to “wait your turn” and try not to press too many buttons until your job is secured. However, this has a wait curve because then no real change happens under the supervision of these people who do care until they feel like they are able to talk about the issues while knowing that their position at the university is safe.
After the panel, I went back to my hotel to grab some food and relax for a bit. I ended up sitting next to another undergraduate student at the bar who I recognized from the panel as she had asked a couple of questions. We introduced ourselves after seeing the AAPA lanyards and nametags around our necks and I switched chairs to sit next to her. She said that she was a junior at Washington State University and was at the conference to help her decide whether she wanted to go to graduate school or not. I explained why I was at the conference for my thesis. Turns out she did not even know about the name change, but she did find it very interesting and appreciated my cultural perspective when looking at how the panel went. She explained how she was frustrated that the panelists seemed to be talking in circles rather than trying to reach real solutions. It is interesting that from my interviews and my talk with this fellow undergraduate that the “younger” generation seems to be audibly frustrated and annoyed with the more established anthropologists who talk about these issues, but are not looking for real change. I asked the student what she thought could be done and she mentioned the need to not wait for permission or the power to do something, but going ahead and taking it. I explained that my one concern was how that could put less experienced professors at risk for being singled out and possibly ostracized by older/more experienced professors. She understood that and we both agreed that a lot of things tend to be on a case by case basis and nothing seems to be black and white.

Later that evening I attended the Live Auction that Professor Weinstein suggested I go to, which I was very happy she did because it was very interesting to watch. All of the money from the auction goes to supporting student scholarships towards research as well as travel to and from the conference. A lot of the “big wigs”, including current and former executive committee members, were there and bidding a lot of money, which showed me the
support of the older, more established anthropologists towards the younger generation. They are not only concerned with themselves or their research, but for the association’s continuation and the future of biological anthropology. Alcohol was readily available at the cash bar outside and it seemed that if the item that was up for bidding was academic or a piece of art, it was alcohol related. I will include some of my favorites below.
Bone Booze
Featuring KAH Day of The Dead Tequila and Crystal Head Vodka

Crystal Head Vodka

KAH - Day of the Dead Tequila

Every KAH bottle is an individual, hand-crafted work of art, no two bottles are the same.

Vintage Anthro Comics - 1968
iii. The 88th Annual Business Meeting of the AAPA (March 29, 2019 from 6:30-9 pm.)

I was incredibly excited for the meeting as one of the main points of the meeting was to do the first official vote to change the name of the AAPA. I was also just curious to see what a business meeting for an academic organization would look like. It did not disappoint. The general theme for meeting was a reminder that at the core, the AAPA is a business and its members just happen to be more aware of social and human issues because they study humans. This makes them more willing to support each other, but there is still a hierarchy in terms of what type of member you are within the association. There were plenty of jokes about the AAPA becoming the AABA, so they were not skating around that topic, but fully embracing it.

I am going to focus on the main points within the meeting that are relevant to the actual culture of the AAPA. The four main points of business that I found to be particularly interesting were, in chronological order, the President’s, Leslie Aiello, discussion of the new diversity initiatives that the association was making including a working group for the new statement on race, the discussion of the budget report and the raising of membership dues, the speeches given by the award winners this year, and the NAME CHANGE!

I got to the meeting about ten minutes before it started to get a seat. They were clear to make sure that only voting members took up the first ten rows so that their voting cards could easily be seen. So I sat in the eleventh row on the edge of the right hand side. The room started to fill in and continued to as President Leslie Aiello began to informally talk to the crowd. One of my interview participants sat next to me as it turned out I was sitting next to his friends, which allowed me to ask questions during the meeting about the reactions of the members. I was particularly interested in sitting next to this participant as he had told me that
the business meetings are incredibly boring, but he wanted to be there this year in order to make his vote count.

President Leslie Aiello, who is an evolutionary anthropologist who focusing on human adaptation, called the business meeting to order and then went through her points. She emphasized the points on diversity that the association was working on, but I would also say they are trying to be more inclusive as well as the initiatives she pointed to were with the goal of bringing more people to the conference. These initiatives included free childcare and more workshops on teaching and mentorship that occurred before the conference started. She also explained that the Committee on Diversity (COD) was in the process of writing a new statement on race for the members to vote on next year. The current statement is from 1996 and Aiello thought that the AAPA could do better. Since the conference the statement has been finalized and a part of it can again be found on page 11-12 of my thesis.
The part of the meeting that took the most time was the discussion of the budget. The treasurer, Rachel Caspari, an anthropology professor at Central Michigan University, took over at this point. She explained that the last fiscal year was very expensive especially the 2018 conference in Austin, Texas. While the current operating budget looked scary, she said that the association was very healthy overall with the continued growing number of new members. From this bullet, she pointed out that membership dues have not been raised since 2004 and that increasing the cost of membership would help to offset other financial burdens. Caspari explained that most of the money from dues goes to paying Wiley which is the publisher for the American Journal of Physical Anthropology (AJPA). From the $130 for a regular member’s dues, $99 of that goes to Wiley. Participant #3 next to me scoffed at this number saying that that was “crazy”. I was surrounded by many undergraduate and Ph.D. students it seemed as they all started to mumble about how that was “insane”.

After putting forward the figures, Caspari motioned for the AAPA to raise dues 23% for all membership categories. The two main questions that followed were how students or professors who are adjunct or contingent rather than full time should not have their dues raised as those $15-$20 can be a financial burden. Aiello made the point that this was a couple of Starbucks run for students so it should not be too much of a burden. The woman who brought the contingent faculty piece to the floor explained that they are not everyone is going to Starbucks with that money. This was a much longer drawn out process that included Roberts Rules and a Parliamentarian. It reminded me of a Student Senate meeting, just more eloquent and way more important people all gathered in one room. There was then a move to have retired members pay more by a retired professor, which was received by a loud applause. The point was then brought to everyone’s attention that maybe only regular
member’s dues should be increased. Agustín Fuentes then went to the microphone and made a motion to increase the dues of regular members to 30% which would hopefully keep all other member’s dues at the current price. Aiello and Caspari looked at each other and agreed so the motion was passed to raise the cost of a regular membership to the AAPA 30% and it froze the other amounts for at least a year and it will be addressed at a future business meeting.

After the budget discussion came the presentation of the two main awards that the AAPA gives out every year. First was the Charles Darwin Lifetime Achievement Award which was presented to Dr. Matt Cartmill, a biological anthropology professor at Boston University. Overall, his speech was beautiful and ended on, and this is paraphrased, “Did you know that this is the last Darwin Award given out by the AAPA? Yeah, the next one will be given out by the AABA”. A round of applause, many laughs and cheering followed. This showed me that the general feeling of the audience towards the proposed name change was positive overall. This comment coming from a white, male professor who was also retiring showed that the all of the “old guard” is also not necessarily against the idea of the AABA. After the Darwin Award came the Gabriel W. Lasker Distinguished Service Award which was presented to Susan Antón who also is another important figure in all of my literature reviews. Two of her friends, Fuentes and Graciela S. Cabana, gave the preceding speech, both of which discussed how Antón was constantly trying to make the field better and who worked to move the association forward as its former president. Antón in her acceptance speech also mentioned the new AABA as well as how it is important to continue having civil dialogues in order to see real change.
Then came the first vote on the name change. Before the vote, Leslie Aiello came up to the podium again and explained the findings from the first two preliminary votes that took place via email and with some members in person. All of the points she mentioned can be found at the beginning of my thesis on page 4. Then they gave some time for questions. Only one was asked by a former treasurer who wanted to know how much the name change would cost. The President Elect, Anne L. Grauer, said that nothing besides a lot of time and hassle for the individual person who has to change the one word multiple times in documents and the website. The vote was then put into motion and the Parliamentarian asked the President Elect to read the motion and took the two separate votes to change the Articles of Incorporation as well as the Constitution and Bylaws that were needed in order to get the ball rolling. The name change to the American Association of Biological Anthropologists passed with flying colors with almost all yellow (in favor) cards with only about four or five blue (against) cards were raised from what I could see from my seat. I was surprised that there were some blue cards held up as no one went up to the microphone to voice their concerns. Maybe there was this assumption that their opinion had already been made and there was nothing they could do about it. I did notice that members who voted in favor of the name change feverishly scanned the room to see who was holding up a blue card. One regular member who I had also seen and heard ask a question at the Sexual Assault and Harassment panel raised her eyebrows in what looked like surprise at someone she had seen on her right holding up a blue, against card. However, the Parliamentarian explained that the first vote to change the name from the AAPA to the AABA passed and the audience interrupted in applause and as soon as that was completed, many members started to leave as it seemed that
was the main reason they had come. My participant next to me then left with his friends and I sat to watch the rest of the presentations from the association’s sponsors.

VII. Next Steps

It was pretty exciting to be at the first vote of the AAPA name change especially having spent months studying the preliminary votes and the discussions and debates surrounding it. It can be difficult to point to one direction the association should start moving in or the next issue they should be tackling. One thing that I believe I can do is “reveal the multiple truths” of this case study while providing suggestions based upon what I have observed and listened to (Emerson et al. 2011, 2). The “truth” that seemed to evoke the most passionate responses was the concern about mentorship in higher education.
Diversity and Inclusion in Higher Education through the Lens of Mentorship

Fuentes wrote that “We need to incorporate more diverse voices and perspectives in our teaching and research” (Fuentes 2010, 10). He based this in the need to reach out to the public in order to show the value of the field, but I also believe it is needed in order to support the people and progress the internal workings of the AAPA and biological anthropology overall. Also from my discussion on the word biological versus physical, I knew that diversity and inclusion were at the center of this name change based on the emphasis on “Inclusivity matters” (Antón et al. 2018, 158). As buzz words that hold a lot of weight in American higher education system, it was important for me to address these, but I did not know how to do so at first. I was swirling around wanting to cover every hot topic that deals with diversity and inclusion knowing that I would not be able to do each of them justice.

I decided to pull out of anthropology and broaden my research see how conversations around diversity and inclusion were happening in other areas of higher academia. Through my readings, specifically in the Chronicle of Higher Education, I was able to make more sense of the issue and was able to decipher one specific topic that I wanted to address, which is mentorship. Mentorship is a theme that continues to be in question as current Ph.D. students write about their concerns with their current mentors and also being future mentors as well as current professors reflect on some of the problematic things they experienced from their mentors as students in the field of anthropology. I chose mentorship also because there seem to be more issues here that could have concrete solutions rather than concerns continuously being shared and floating aimlessly in the open. Diversity and inclusion are key
aspects in mentorship as mentors come in all shapes and sizes and all types are need to be valued in order to guarantee all shapes and sizes of anthropology students.

Mentorship is also a term that encompasses many topics on its own and could go down a number of different paths. I will specifically be looking at mentorship within graduate and Ph.D. programs, this will be aided by some of the accounts from my participants about their own experiences with their mentors. I have great suggestions about mentorship from both my female and male respondents and while there are concerns with mentors for both male and female students, my female respondents were clear to discuss mentorship in terms of their particular life trajectories such as getting married and having children that are assumed with being female. As I had five female participants, two males and only one woman of color, I cannot make any larger conclusions from a view point of intersectionality. In order to get a well-rounded look into experiences of both men and women in the field, future studies should look more into the male experience, race, and sexuality in order to provide a more intersectional view point.

I will also look at mentorship from the side of the professor to students at undergrad institutions and finally mentorship and being an ally in cases of sexual harassment and assault. This last topic is a crucial part of the Survey of Academia Field Experiences (SAFE) study written by Clancy et al. and from the Sexual Harassment and Assault panel I attended at the AAPA conference. My respondents also discussed some of the things they have had to deal with in the field and did have some suggestions on what can be done to make it better for anthropologists in all environments from the lab to the field. From here maybe some of the things they suggested we can create more concrete answers to.
ii. Mentorship to Graduate and Ph.D. Students

As the majority of my participants were female-identifying, I was interested in connecting their experiences to that of other current, more experienced biological anthropologists. There is a wealth of information out there, but the article that stuck out to me was “Participation, Representation, and Shared Experiences of Women Scholars in Biological Anthropology” by Turner et al. In the article, Turner et al. analyze the surveys of membership in the AAPA in terms of numbers of female-identifying members and their experiences. They share fourteen stories from women about their paths into the field of biological anthropology and the challenges they faced throughout (Turner et al. 2017, 126). They explain that there is “a longstanding and pervasive culture of tolerance that is only now beginning to erode” in terms of the behavior of peers, mentors, respondents and those involved in lab and fieldwork (Turner et al. 2017, 128). This is evident from the stories that continue to arise in more articles analyzing the culture of the AAPA and biological anthropology as a whole. Mentorship was a real concern of my respondents as well. As they are Ph.D. students or were just graduate students, they were very aware of the affect that a mentor can have on their students whether it be positive or negative.

I had three questions about mentorship that I asked my participants which were as follows: “Were there specific people that affected your decision to study biological anthropology”, “What was it about them that inspired you to go into it”, and “What makes a good mentor”. For some of my interviews, this section my participants spent the most time on.

There were some themes in answers to the question “What makes a good mentor?”. Common paraphrased responses included “supportive, but not always holding my hand”,

Snyder 45
“someone who makes themselves available and does not just disappear”, “respectful”,
“someone who listens to you” and “treats me like a person” A couple of them also
recognized that because of their experiences, both good and bad, they had already thought of
what type of mentor they wanted to be in the future.

P5: I’m very happy with what I’m doing now, but I’m actually strongly thinking about
going back to get my Ph.D. for a few reasons, but one of which is I kind of want, like
someone’s gotta start and make and help sustain this change and I would definitely, I
think I could be good mentor and advisor and I think that for all the reasons I outlined I
can keep those in mind and I could be that kind of responsive advisor that students need to
help get more people to the field or to help them along the way too.

From his beliefs of what makes a good mentor, Participant #5 is aware that he wants to be an
advisor that can accomplish these things no matter where he ends up teaching.

Another answer that stood out to me from Participant #1 in her response to what
was inspiring about the mentors she was looking to study with.

P1: With my master’s advisor, I actually met her when I was doing my master’s program
and after having a class with her and speaking with her, I was just really impressed with
and also kind of enamored with the type of anthropology she was doing and again it was
very applied anthropology and anthropology that could be used to improve policy, to
impact public health regulations, to help the populations she herself was looking at and
she was also using a biocultural method and I just absolutely adore the bioculture
methodology, so like very biased, but I knew I really loved biocultural anthropology and
she was super young and had a lot of the same experiences I had and was very easy to
relate to and then ______ who I am with now, is even more so an activist. She uses the
research that she does to perform activism and go out and enact very serious change. Last
year she testified in front of Congress about sexual assault research in the sciences. She’s
very engaged with the work that she is doing, not just from a science standpoint, but
engaged with community and engaged with making real change and that’s something that
I really love and really admire about her. That was one of the reasons that she really
cought my eye. We also had very similar research interests which is always a plus.
This participant was actively inspired by her Ph.D. advisor’s work in the public sphere which I think is telling of the up and coming biological anthropologists. They are looking to make a real difference in and outside of the field. This participant also recognized that she was not simply researching a topic simply because it had never been done before, but rather she wanted her research to benefit her participants. She is looking at “how gender lived experiences so experiences related to one’s gender identity are biologically embodied over time” (Interview 1). When asked what led her to pursue this specific area of study this was her response:

P1: One I really wanted my science to be applied, meaning that I wanted it to actually benefit the people that I’m studying and also hopefully benefit society as a whole. Especially the older I get, the more I rage against the ivory tower that is academia and I want to make sure that my science is being open and is being a two-way streak. So I want my research that I do to not only benefit my participants, but I also want my participants to interact with and to influence the types of questions that I ask and have an active role in the types of questions that I’m asking as well. Also as the political climate continues to change, I think that it is more and more important to engage in this type of work and engage in this type of research. There’s like a bunch of different reasons, but right now that’s like my main one, the rage reason. *haha The political situation we are currently in.

This connected with my literature analysis on public anthropology as well as with the aim of applied anthropology which is to apply the theories of anthropology to current issues and problems. This proves Fuentes’ as well as Sherwood Washburn’s point that biological anthropology is no longer only about measuring and cataloging bones or human variation. It takes a multidisciplinary approach with goals that reach beyond the sphere of one sub-field of biological anthropology. If students continue to seek out mentors that can help them bring their own research into this light, Ph.D. advisors will need to be more receptive to these ideas.
I cannot speak a lot about the male experience as only two of my respondents were male-identifying. While they did not express having faced any difficulties in the field based on their gender, they recognized that females do face more challenges in biological anthropology as well as had some strong opinions about mentorship in the field. This was seen the most in my interview with Participant #4 who had very strong opinions on mentorship based on her own experiences.

Participant #4 went on to say that while she had this experience, she was frustrated with the lack of trust in students if they did report an incident such as this. She also expressed that the mentorship during her undergraduate years was very important and influential to her growth as a student. Having to learn a completely different system in graduate school was difficult for her especially when she felt like there were not any allies around her. Most of my participants mentioned their appreciation for the mentorship they received at Dickinson. Their undergraduate experience could have affected their opinions on the importance of mentorship as the student to professor relationship is strongly valued at small liberal arts colleges. However, from my informal conversations with the poster presenters, all of whom
attended large research universities for their undergraduate degree, I believe it is a value of higher education overall as they all thought that mentorship was very important and needed to be reevaluated in the field.

**iii. Mentoring Undergraduate Students**

As these Ph.D. and graduate students may eventually become professors, it is also important to look at the concerns that professors face especially those who are from historically underrepresented groups in higher academia. In the Chronicle of Higher Education’s 2016 Focus Collection entitled “Creating a Diverse Faculty,” they look at how diversity and inclusion play out for undergraduate professors. They ask “How can you hire people who aren’t there?” in relation to trying to bring in more diverse voices (McMurtrie 2016, 5). This is true in biological anthropology as the field continues to be primarily white and while female AAPA membership is on the rise, it is mostly white females. In order to have more diverse options for biological anthropology professors, the field must be open, inclusive and receptive to people who have traditionally not entered biological anthropology. Outside of simply bringing in people from more diverse and intersectional backgrounds, being able to emotional, mentally, and physically support for these people is critical in keeping them and their mentees healthy. Students seek out professors who might have had similar experiences based on their identity. Therefore, the more professors who come from diverse backgrounds means that there would be more mentors whose experiences students could identify with and receive support from. This was also true in my respondents’ case. A couple of them explained that when they were deciding who they wanted to study with, they were aware of having someone who would understand what they were going through whether it be in terms of research interests or gendered life experiences. Participant #1
explained “When I was applying for a Ph.D. program, I very specifically only applied to female advisors for a number of different reasons and that’s not to say that all male advisors are bad. I just wanted to make sure that I had a mentor who had very similar experiences as the experiences that I was going to have within academia.” Students who have the support they need throughout undergraduate school into higher degrees are more likely to continue and succeed.

As colleges and universities work to diversify their student population, so must their faculty and staff otherwise there becomes this sense of “‘cultural taxation’” on professors who are responsible for mentoring students who tend to come from similar backgrounds as themselves (Williams June 2016, 12). Professors whose identities tend to be less represented in higher education, whether it be gender, sexuality or race, tend to have what is known as “invisible work.” (Turner et al. 2017 & Williams June 2016) Turner et al. pointed to women specifically saying that they “are often expected to perform “invisible” work that goes unacknowledged—that of emotional labor (e.g., empathizing, counseling, perceived pressure to always show positivity—Brotheridge & Grandey, 2002; Guy & Newman, 2004; Morris & Feldman, 1996).” (Turner et al. 2017, 128) Audrey Williams June also discusses this in her Chronical Focus article “The Invisible Labor of Minority Professors.” Aside from supporting their students, minority professors are sometimes asked to be on multiple different institutional committees in order to provide their “‘unique perspective.’” (Williams June 2016, 12) This can become tiring and take away from their time with their students or their own research as they continue to be stretched too thin with multiple commitments. Professors recognize that if they were to turn down this opportunities, it could harm their image or occupation at an institutional level, but also when there are only so many people who come
from outside a stereotypical white, male perspective, their voice needs to be heard. It is a double-edged sword. Williams June’s discussion with Janice D. Hamlet, an associate professor of communication at Northern Illinois University, points to how this is a solution. Hamlet explained that while she had experienced cultural taxation in the past, she now “finds her obligations more manageable, in part because her workplace is more diverse.” (June 2016, 13) Having more professors of multiple backgrounds and identities lends itself to an overall healthier educational community.

iv. Mentorship and Allies in Cases of Sexual Harassment and Assault

One of the main concerns with the field of biological anthropology is the number of sexual harassment and assault cases. Some of my respondents as well as many of the conversations within and out of panels at the AAPA conference focused on these issues. These events have happened during field work, within the lab, in the classroom and more. The article that these conversations are primarily swirling around is again the SAFE Study and their qualitative study from 2017. Their study focused on “1) do respondents experience harassment and assault at field sites? If so, 2) who are the targets and perpetrators of harassment and assault? And 3) do field sites have codes of conduct and effective reporting mechanisms available to targets of abuse?” (Clancy et al. 2014, 2) In this study, they look at some of the issues with the field that has led to sexual harassment and assault cases, who they are occurring to, and what can be done to support victims and preventing it from happening again. This issue is also related to that of mentorship to graduate as well as undergraduate students as the authors showed on graphs how of the men and women that responded that they had experienced unwanted comments or physical contact, superiors were more likely to be the perpetrators towards women and peers were more likely to be the perpetrators towards
From these graphs we can see that these offenses can be done vertically or horizontally. Having superiors who are supposed to be mentors as the cause of great trauma can prevent students from reaching their full potential. These students are perceived as being less than their superiors and since this culture of victims being silenced has existed for so
long, the culture has led to no shortage of sexual assault or harassment cases in biological anthropology. As “a hostile work environment is not only harmful to productivity and psychological well-being, but reduces job satisfaction and increases job turnover” which could hurt the number of historically underrepresented groups in the field such as women as they are targeted as they are the ones being targeted (Clancy et al. 2014, 1).

Participant #4 also had had these types of her experience at her graduate institution.

P4: For instance, we were in a workshop in our department last fall and a woman who I think was a graduate student in psychology department, she was working in South Africa and she was sexually assaulted by one of her informants and she wrote this article talking about how she does not know what to do. She cannot stop her clock by taking time off to sort of heal from the trauma and taking time off from her research until she can actually engage with that person’s interviews because then she doesn’t have health insurance to go get the therapy and we were talking about this and one of the professors said, *imitating male voice, deeper than her own* “Well I always tell my female students when they go out into the field to be really careful because you know you’re in Indonesia. This isn’t an office building in New York City” and I just like, in front of everyone was like “Assaults happen in office buildings in New York City! How out of touch are you?” So it’s just like this disconnect that it’s for other people to solve the problem, not for this professor who is well respected in the field, who is an old, white male who could, you know, make some changes rather than just being like “You gotta have a good head on your shoulders”. He was like it’s up to you to solve the problems, it’s not up to the old, you know, regime to solve those problems or you can engage with they are a part of the problem.

P4: Like a few friends and I, we were, one of the people who I thought I saw as a mentor, our lab manager, we were being sexually harassed by a volunteer who was working in the lab. There were four of us who brought it up who had been sexually harassed by this male on numerous occasions, we brought it up to the lab manager and he was a mandatory reporter to the EOAA and he did not report it cause he didn’t think it was bad enough and so it was just kind of like feeling like you don’t have an ally or having people who can understand and can even share your experience to see where you are coming from and why being patted on the small of your back everyday is uncomfortable, having comments made about the shirt you’re wearing is uncomfortable because they have never had to experience.

Another issue Clancy et al. point to is that “faculty, however, are rarely trained in the interpersonal skills of conflict management, negotiation, and resolution that would allow them to informally and formally confront personnel issues as they arise and before they can
escalate.” (Clancy et al. 2014, 1) We see this in Participant #4’s accounts of her time in the lab and a workshop. They did present some solutions at the end of their report including “raising awareness of the presence of hostile work behaviors, discrimination, harassment, and assault (particularly for women); creating guidelines for respectful behavior; and adopting independent reporting and enforcement mechanisms.” (Clancy et al. 2014, 8) This reminded me of the Sexual Harassment and Assault panel at the conference where the professor from Rutgers explained her teamwork with her Indonesian equal and counterpart at her field school to create a “behavior contract” that outlined all of rules of the camp and protected all involved. However, Clancy et al. also explain that while many field sites and schools have a zero tolerance policy, but they rarely have a solid base for victims to come forward and report and receive the help they need (Clancy et al. 2014, 8). During the panel, Ph.D. and graduate students stood up and explained that some of their schools provided ally training to peers that would be at the research sites who would then not be mandated reporters to give victims the opportunity to talk about what happened without having to necessarily relive the trauma and the event if they told one of their superiors that could be mandated reporters. Training mentors to be allies is also important as it helps prevent victim blaming as well as helps them to be more understanding of their mentees experiences.

The #MeToo Movement also has a strong presence in the biological anthropology community. The website metooanthro.org is internationally based and works to document experiences and to provide support and resources to victims and allies with a focus on intersectionality. The website’s page of resources includes lists of articles to read on how to respond and support others as well as podcasts, blogs and scholarly articles that cover a variety of different topics. This is especially connected to public anthropology as
anthropologists are taking a stand on a public issue, but also because they are looking inward at their own culture and recognizing that these issues are embedded in the field just like they are in the social climate outside of higher academia.

v. Conclusion on Mentorship

There could easily be a whole thesis focusing primarily on mentorship as this is a hot topic in not only biological anthropology, but higher academia as a whole. My main conclusion is there needs to be more training for mentors, both new and old in order to accommodate all different types of students. I think of two specific comments in this situation, one from one of my respondents and the other from Robin Nelson, a contributor to the Clancy et al. article as well as a panelist at the Sexual Harassment and Assault panel. When asked what makes a good mentor, Participant #5 touched on his and his peers’ experiences in his response.

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P5: I’ve had friends who have burst into tears in their advisors’ offices because they didn’t want to disappoint them and their advisors didn’t know how to respond to that and that’s definitely a super hard thing and there’s no real training for that, *asterisk* there should be and I hope something like that gets addressed in that workshop (Mentoring the Mentor).
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“Mentoring the Mentor: A Mentor Training Workshop” was one of the workshops that the AAPA was offering on the Wednesday before the conference that President Leslie Aiello expressed pride in, so there is a recognition in this need to support mentors in order to help students and better the association. The younger biological anthropologists seem to be ready and willing to discuss the future of the association as well as the flaws in their own departments at their respective universities. Robin Nelson also pointed out that there needs to be more of an open conversation and discussion about how professors mentor students of different backgrounds and interests than their own (Sexual Harassment and Assault Panel 2019). Besides knowing how to mentor someone who is different than themselves, professor
also need to be mentored in how to listen and trust what their students are saying. From my interviews, graduate students say that a good mentor is someone who respects them and treats them as a person. In the “old guard,” there seems to be a lack of this as my participants witnessed as well as experienced mentors who did not provide this. This may take time to accomplish and get everyone on the same page within biological anthropology, but I know that in the meantime the younger anthropologists will lead by example. I cannot quote Antón et al. enough by saying “Inclusivity matters.” (Antón et al. 2018, 158) Having these discussions on diversity and inclusion will help to create a better biological anthropology overall as diversifying a group of people brings more perspectives and a more well-rounded research. As long as these conversations on mentorship do not happen behind closed doors, the AAPA and biological anthropology will continue to progress. While this is a starting point, openness and transparency is vital to the continued growth of diversity and inclusion in the American Association of Physical (soon to be Biological) Anthropologists.

vi. Looking to the 2020 meeting

As mentioned earlier, this vote was the first of two as the final and official vote will take place at the 89th Annual Business Meeting in Los Angeles, California next year. After the vote, two members came to the stage to make a “pitch” for why people should attend next year’s meeting explaining the exciting activities in the area. Leslie Aiello also explained that there needs to be at least two-thirds of members at the meeting in order for the vote to pass and the name change to be official. As I have resisted making any ABBA jokes until this point, I must say that biological anthropologists should really “Take a Chance” on the AABA.

I look forward to following the AAPA in the next year as I receive more emails from
the association about upcoming events and the conference that will lead to the official name change. While I may not be a biological anthropologist myself, I have thoroughly enjoyed stepping into the culture of the field. Also, while I do not know for certain whether I will go back into academia after this year, I still plan on following anthropology and higher education overall as they navigate the culture and society that they grow out of. I cannot wait to see what is in store for the American Association of Biological Anthropologists.

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Works Cited


