

PROGRAM OF THE
**95TH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
 AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF BIOLOGICAL
 ANTHROPOLOGISTS**
 MARCH 18-21, 2026

To be held at the
Sheraton Downtown Denver
 1550 Court Place, Denver, Colorado 80202

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MESSAGE FROM THE VP & PROGRAM CHAIR

Welcome!

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 2026 meeting of the American Association of Biological Anthropologists. This year we are convening in Denver, Colorado for our 95th annual meeting. We are so pleased you can join us!

The full AABA 2026 program includes 879 peer-reviewed scientific presentations by authors from all over the world. Of these, 21 are part of the Late Breaking Science session on Saturday, and 30 presentations will be presented online only. The abstracts illustrate the remarkable breadth and importance of our discipline. A total of 18 invited symposia (243 abstracts) are included in this year's program: 10 podium symposia will take place in Denver with six of them live-streamed, seven poster symposia will be presented in Denver, and one symposium will be completely asynchronous.

There are 636 contributed abstracts, including those in the Late Breaking Science session on Saturday. By subfield, these include Bioarchaeology (n=125, ~20%), Dental Anthropology (n=22; ~3%), Education in Biological Anthropology (n=16; ~3%), Forensic Anthropology (n=44; ~7%), Functional Anatomy & Tissue Biology (n=67, ~11%), Genetics & Genomics (n=70; ~11%), Human Behavior (n=14; ~2%), Human Biology (n=74; ~12%), Paleoanthropology (n=80; ~13%), and Primatology (n=124; ~19%).

This Program provides an overview of the activities planned for the Denver meeting. More details are available on AABA's annual meeting website. The conference hotel is the Sheraton Denver Downtown. Thanks to the Denver Local Arrangements Committee members Jamie Hodgkins, Steve Leigh, and Todd Yokley for helping AABA articulate with the local community. We are excited for you to enjoy all the wonderful food and activities in Denver!

The Scientific Program

We are pleased to be joined in Denver by our partner organizations: the **American Association for Anthropological Genetics (AAAG)**, the **Dental Anthropology Association (DAA)**, the **Human Biology Association (HBA)**, the **Paleoanthropology Society (PAS)**, and the **Paleopathology Association (PPA)**.

AABA 2026 programming in Denver begins on Wednesday, March 18 with the **Committee on Diversity Undergraduate Research Symposium** (open to everyone from 6:00-8:00pm) and the **Opening Reception** (8:00-10:00pm). On Thursday, March 19, scientific sessions begin. This portion of the program includes 10 invited podium symposia, seven invited poster symposia, and 51 contributed sessions (28 poster, 22 podium sessions, and one virtual session). Six of the invited podium symposia, the Business Meeting, and the President's Plenary will be live-streamed and recorded so that attendees can participate in these events either in-person or online, synchronously or asynchronously.

Overview of Session Schedule and Presenter Information

Thursday morning will start with the **Presidential Plenary Lecture** at 8:00am followed by podium sessions beginning at 9:30am. The rest of the week, morning podium sessions begin at 8:00am and end by 12:00pm. Afternoon podium sessions begin at 1:30pm and end by 5:30pm (with a few exceptions). We have a few quarter-day podium sessions (half-morning or half-afternoon); be sure to check the Program for start times. Posters will be available for viewing all day, and authors will be at their posters for discussion between 5:00pm and 7:00pm.

As in previous years, podium presentations need to be uploaded onto a central secure server in the Speaker Ready Room no later than a half day before the presentation. This server will then "push" presentations to the appropriate meeting room and will be available for the session. To ensure accessibility of presentations, we will be using voice-to-text subtitles in Powerpoint and ask all presenters to follow accessibility guidelines posted on the AABA website. Please note that all Invited Podium Symposia held in Plaza F will be live-streamed. Contributed poster sessions and exhibitors booths will all be held in the Plaza Exhibits space. Poster set-up will begin at 7:00am and should be completed by 8:00am. Posters should be taken down by 7:30pm. **Even-numbered poster presenters will stand by their posters from 5:00pm – 6:00pm, with odd-numbered presenters attending from 6:00pm – 7:00pm.** Invited Poster Symposia are held in Plaza D and are assigned to a morning or afternoon time.

MESSAGE FROM THE VP & PROGRAM CHAIR

Joint sessions

The joint AAAG/AABA invited podium symposium, "*Human-Associated Genomes in Anthropological Genetics*," organized by Andrew Kitchen, will be held on Friday morning.

The joint HBA/AABA invited podium symposium, "*Resilience as a Framework for Cross-Species Perspectives on Biological Organizations*," organized by Ruizhe Liu, will be held on Friday afternoon.

Workshops

This year we have planned nine exciting and innovative workshops throughout the conference that occur in conjunction with our annual meeting. Because of space limitations, some of the workshops and events may require pre-registration (information is available on our meeting website). Most workshops are scheduled for Governor's Square 16. Our workshops provide professional development, science communication, pedagogical strategies, and methodological training that should be of broad interest to our membership. Be sure to check the schedule, as workshops may be in the evening or throughout the day.

Special Events

New this year are our **Thursday morning Presidential Plenary Lecture** (8:00am, Plaza EF) with AABA member **Dr. Herman Pontzer**. On Thursday evening, the members of the COD-IDEA Subcommittee for Community-Engaged Research will host an **AABA Townhall: Navigating the Current Landscape in Biological Anthropology** (7:45-9:30 pm, Plaza F). On Thursday afternoon we are excited to hold our **annual Silent Auction!** Each year the auction raises thousands of dollars to support Pollitzer Student Travel Awards and Cobb Professional Development Grants. Please participate through donations (of items or cash!) and by bidding on our array of tempting auction items (please contact co-organizers Anne Grauer or myself if you are interested in donating or learning more). On Friday, following the conclusion of the scientific sessions, we will hold the **Annual Business Meeting and Awards Presentation** (6:30-8:30pm). This meeting is where the association comes together to review business of the past year (including annual reports from AABA Officers and committee chairs) and make a plan for the future. If you want to have a say in the organization, come to the business meeting! On Saturday evening, join us for the **Student Awards Closing Reception & Hooding Ceremony** from 7:00pm to 9:00pm to celebrate our students and another great meeting.

Acknowledgements and Appreciation

I sincerely thank everyone who helped organize the 2026 program. This meeting would not be happening without the tremendous effort and help from our business partners, Annual Meeting Executive Director Lori Strong and her team from Burk & Associates. This year was our second year using X-CD for registration and abstract review, and I am grateful to the members of our Program Committee who navigated the system and to Burk & Associates for their help and responsiveness. The Program Committee reviewed thoroughly, thoughtfully, and on time, and I am so appreciative of their time. Additional thanks to the members of the Program Committee who volunteered for the Contributed Session Organization Committee and to review Late Breaking Science abstracts. Many thanks to the Advance Team who met in Denver to set the schedule for the scientific program. Thank you to Kristi Lewton, Stephanie Meredith, Kate Fish, and Lori Strong for spearheading that team and keeping us all on schedule. The Program Assistant Kate Fish has been a fantastic partner and I am so grateful we had the chance to work together in this capacity. Please find members of the AABA Executive Committee and officers and thank them for their year-round hard work and dedication to our organization and membership. I have very much enjoyed serving as Vice President and Science Program Chair for AABA, and I thank everyone in AABA for your trust and enthusiasm as we've all developed these great meetings together.

Amy L. Rector

AABA Vice President and Program Chair

ABSTRACTS

in ancient European hunter-gatherer populations to ~33% in modern agricultural populations. These SNPs are associated with reduced *PGA3* expression and rank among the top GWAS hits for cobalamin-binding intrinsic factor (*CBLIF*) levels. Altogether, our results highlight the *PGA* locus as a previously overlooked but highly dynamic genomic region, potentially shaped by human dietary evolution.

Patterning Dental Microwear Texture Among Levantine Early and Late Natufian Groups

Christopher Schmidt¹, Patrick Mahoney², Reganne O'Connor¹

¹University of Indianapolis, ²University of Kent

Previous dental microwear texture analysis (DMTA) of Levantine Natufian and Neolithic groups determined both had, on average, similar microwear patterns indicating relatively soft, homogenous diets. The current study seeks nuances within the Natufian, targeting the transition from the Early to Late periods (14,500 – 13,000 and 13,000 – 11,600 YBP, respectively). Both periods had sickles, grinding stones, and phytoliths indicating exploitation of grasses and some cereal grains. Compared to the Late Natufian, the Early Natufian was more sedentary and collected more woodland resources including acorns and pistachios. The current study seeks DMTA indications of harder food consumption among the Early Natufian ($n = 12$) compared to the Late Natufian ($n = 8$). DMTA followed standard procedures including collecting data at 100X and generating data clouds with a white-light confocal profiler; variables included: complexity, anisotropy, textural fill volume, scale of maximum complexity, and heterogeneity. For complexity, 50% of the Early and 12.5% of the Late group had values over 1.5. For anisotropy 75% of the Early and 87.5% of the Late had anisotropy values over 0.0030, and for heterogeneity, Early had 41.6% and Late had 12.5% with values over 0.4. Naïve Bayes classification successfully sorted 95% of the Early and Late Natufian individuals; complexity and heterogeneity contributed the most to the classification. The Early to Late Natufian transition included a meaningful change in the mechanical properties of the foods consumed consistent with a decline in dietary hardness.

Genomic Diversity in the Dominican Republic: A Complex Legacy of Taíno, African and European Ancestries

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Center, ⁴Academia Dominicana de Historia, ⁵University of Maryland

The Dominican Republic (DR) has long been considered genetically diverse due to its history, which began with resident indigenous groups and then admixture with Europeans and Africans through colonization and slavery in the New World. Later admixture with immigrant populations from Near and South-East Asian populations added to this diversity. Yet, the exact contributions of these populations to the genetic make-up of Dominicans are not yet fully understood. Thus, we aimed to characterize the genomic diversity of Dominicans, determine the ancestral contributions to their genetic diversity, and relate these genetic data to the population history of Hispaniola, the island on which the DR is located. We enrolled a total of 1015 individuals, including 665 males and 350 females, from 25 study sites around the country. DNA samples and genealogical data were obtained with informed consent for all participants, with their DNA samples being surveyed for genomic variation using the GenoChip 2.0+ microarray. Data for haploid genetic markers indicated Dominican mitochondrial DNAs were 78.8% African, 12.1% Native American, and 9.1% West Eurasian in ancestry, whereas their Y-chromosomes were 71% West Eurasian, 28% African, and 1% Native American in ancestry. Dominicans' autosomal DNA ancestry was 50.3% African, 41.2% European, 3.8% Native American, 2.3% Middle East/Jewish, and 1.8% Central-South-East Asian in origin. The pattern of genetic diversity also evinces sex-biased gene flow, primarily through European males. These data will serve as a reference for future studies exploring Dominican genetic diversity, population history and health.

Historic Demography of Bluff View Cemetery, Vermillion, South Dakota

Ellie Schwartz¹, Saige Kelmelis²

¹Yankton County Jail, ²University of South Dakota

While cemetery demography has been a useful tool for understanding past population trends in urban coastal populations in the United States, there have been relatively few applications in rural Midwestern settlements. For this study, we use demographic techniques to reconstruct the population dynamics of a rural population from Vermillion, South Dakota from the mid-19th-early 21st century to examine whether the community experienced similar demographic and epidemiological transitions as the broader United States. Head stone data on date of birth, death, and sex/gender (n =add total headstones you collected data on) were sourced from the historic Bluffs View Cemetery (add the date of founding here). Life table analyses were conducted to track changes in survival and life expectancy for males and females across the entire period of study. Crude death rates (CDR) were calculated for all

individuals and by sex for four historically determined periods (post-Civil War period: 1848-1877, Progressive Era: 1878-1914, War and Flu Period: 1915-1945, Post-War America: 1946-1981, and Contemporary: 1982-2023). Kaplan-Meier survival and Cox regression analyses tested for comparative differences in survival and mortality hazards across each period for all individuals, males, and females. Results showed significant differences in period survivorship and mortality ($p < 0.0001$) overall and by sexes with differences for males and females reflecting major shifts in mortality consistent with factors of emerging diseases, wartime mortality, improvements in vaccinations, and changes in women's access to education and the workforce. Based on the data collected from the Bluff View Cemetery, Vermillion's demographic trends were like those of the nation.

Female choice via consortships in Bornean orangutans (*Pongo pygmaeus wurmbii*)

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Orangutans have a semi-solitary social structure with a high fission-fusion dynamic likely due to ecological constraints on group size. However, male-female associations are necessary for successful reproduction. Consortships are prolonged associations between male and female orangutans. The definition of a consortship differs across studies, but generally, they are defined as male-female associations lasting 5 or more hours, including multiple feeding bouts, and exhibiting coordinated travel. We investigated the role of consortships in the reproductive strategies of orangutans in Gunung Palung National Park, West Kalimantan, Indonesia, using behavioral data collected from May 2018-April 2019. We found that a male-female association was more likely to become a consortship if the female orangutan was sexually active versus non-sexually active (binomial GLM, $N=48$, $P=0.007$), but there was no difference between flanged and unflanged males (binomial GLM, $N=48$, $P=0.455$). Most copulations (85%) occurred within a consortship. Consortships had Brown indices that tightly clustered around 0.5 (median=0.521, $SD=0.092$, range=0.628), indicating greater mutual involvement in proximity maintenance, than in shorter associations (median=0.466, $SD=0.196$, range=1.0) (binomial GLMM, $N=48$, $P<0.05$). Additionally, during consortships versus shorter associations, travel bouts involved more female following of males (Wilcoxon test, $N=19$, $W=71.5$, $P=0.0216$), but there was no difference in male following (Wilcoxon test, $N=19$, $W=42$, $P=0.836$)