



THE
AMERICAN
SOCIETY
OF HUMAN
GENETICS

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Council Meeting – National Human Genome Research Institute
A Brief Update from the American Society of Human Genetics
February 2016

Society Update

- Derek Scholes has joined the ASHG staff as its Director of Science Policy, a new position intended to enhance ASHG's involvement in the genetics policy arena. Dr. Scholes, a former ASHG-NHGRI Genetics and Public Policy Fellow, joined the staff on February 1.
- The Society plans to offer a new annual award for mentorship, which will be presented for the first time at the ASHG 2016 Annual Meeting in Vancouver, BC. The criteria and selection process for this award are currently in development.
- ASHG is working with DelCor, Inc., to conduct an audit of its IT systems and processes, with the goal of assessing strengths and weaknesses and identifying ways to use IT resources as efficiently as possible.

Policy Activities

- The 2015-2016 Genetics & Public Policy Fellow, Caroline Young, MA, is in her first rotation at NHGRI. Future rotations are planned for Capitol Hill and ASHG headquarters.
- [Applications](#) for the 2016-2017 Genetics & Public Policy Fellowship are currently open, with a deadline of April 25.
- In December 2015, Katherine Blizinsky, PhD, completed her legislative branch rotation of the policy fellowship in Senator Murray's office. She was a part of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, where she worked on a variety of issues, including NIH certificates of confidentiality. She currently is seeking a permanent position that would continue her immersion in science policy.
- The ASHG Social Issues Committee, along with representatives from the National Society of Genetic Counselors, the Association of Genetic Nurses and Counsellors (UK), and the Canadian Association of Genetic Counselors, is preparing a statement on genome editing in embryos using CRISPR technology. The SIC continues to [accept member input](#) to inform the statement.

Educational Programs

General

- ASHG is [currently accepting applications](#) for the position of Educational Programs Manager, who will work on the development and implementation of genetics education programs, workshops, award programs, and other materials for audiences ranging from trainees through high school students and the public.

Professional

- On February 24, ASHG will host a webinar titled “Community Bioinformatics Tools for Validating NGS Testing.” The webinar will be free and open to all interested ASHG members and non-members. Speakers will demonstrate tools such as Genome Analysis Toolkit (GATK), Genome in a Bottle, and precisionFDA.
- On March 22, ASHG will hold its first-ever virtual meeting, an all-day event titled [“Genetics in Your Clinic: What You Can and Should Do Now.”](#) Primarily intended for primary care clinicians, this event will address currently available genetic technologies (and their limitations), personal and family history information that indicates a need for genetic testing, how to interpret results effectively, and when to refer to genetic services. The meeting is free and will offer continuing education credits.
- The 2014-2015 [ASHG/NHGRI Genetics & Education Fellow, Elizabeth P. Tuck, MA](#), has completed her fellowship and is currently working on K-12 genomics education as a contractor at NHGRI.
- The 2015-2016 Genetics & Education Fellow, Julie A. Nadel, PhD, is completing her first rotation at NHGRI and will begin her second rotation at ASHG headquarters on April 1.
- [Applications](#) for the 2016-2017 Genetics & Education Fellowship are currently open, with a deadline of April 25.

Undergraduate

- ASHG continues its faculty development program [Building Excellence in Genetics Instruction \(BEGIn\)](#) – which includes 1.5-day workshops held on university campuses – and a full-day workshop for undergraduate faculty at its Annual Meeting. These events focus on improving genetics instruction to slow the loss of talent from undergraduate genetics courses.

K-12

- ASHG is accepting submissions for its 11th annual [DNA Day essay contest](#), with essays due March 11. The 2016 essay question, based on the new ASHG position statement on pediatric genetic testing, addresses whether adolescents should defer such testing until adulthood. Winners will receive monetary prizes and their teachers will receive grants to purchase genetics laboratory materials for their schools. In addition, the contest’s sponsor, EmbiTec, will award classroom gel electrophoresis kits to the winners’ schools. The European Society of Human Genetics is using ASHG’s question as one of two options for its own [essay contest](#).
- ASHG held its first-ever [Teen Genes Video Challenge](#), a video contest for high school students interested in using film to communicate about genetics. Entrants were asked to select an application of genetics that interests them and explore its significance and potential impact on their lives. Thirteen videos were submitted, and the winner and runners-up were selected by ASHG members.

[ASHG’s 66th Annual Meeting](#) – Vancouver, BC, October 18-22, 2016

- The [preliminary schedule of events](#) features a presidential address, plenary and platform sessions, invited sessions and workshops, poster sessions, an exhibit hall, and a variety of social and special events. New additions for 2016 include poster talks on the first day, an awards banquet, and a joint session on genomics and cardiology with the American Physiological Society.

- The 2016 meeting also will include a strategic planning session, ASHG Next, where members and Society leadership will review progress on the 2013 Strategic Plan and consider new priorities and activities.
- The Program Committee (PC) is working through invited session and workshop proposals. Abstract submission and registration will open in April, with abstracts due June 2.
- The Training and Development Committee, in conjunction with the PC and staff, is considering ways to improve the meeting's career development resources, including redesigning the career center and changing the focus of lunchtime career-development sessions.
- The Meetings Department is [currently seeking applications](#) for a Program Assistant, who will provide administrative support to meeting- and communications-related activities.

The American Society of Human Genetics

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