



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
May 2016

Society Update

- Nominations for the 2017 ASHG Board of Directors closed on April 15. The Nominating Committee is reviewing the nomination materials and will determine the final slate for the ballot during the committee's conference call on May 27.
- ASHG is pleased to announce the new Mentorship Award, which honors ASHG members who have significant records of accomplishment as mentors. Nominations for all ASHG awards, including the new Mentorship Award, closed on April 29. The Awards Committee is reviewing the nomination materials and will select the award recipients during the committee's conference call on June 10. The board is reviewing the nominees for the Victor A. McKusick Leadership Award and will select the winner by the end of the month.

Policy Activities

- The 2015-2016 ASHG/NHGRI Genetics & Public Policy Fellow, Caroline Young, MA, is in her second rotation on Capitol Hill, in the office of Senator Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI). Her last rotation will be at ASHG headquarters.
- ASHG/NHGRI received 21 applications for the 2016-2017 Genetics & Public Policy Fellowship, and is interviewing candidates by phone this month. In-person interviews will take place in June, and a Fellow will be selected shortly afterward.
- ASHG is assembling statements on revised rules from the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which is likely to weaken parts of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act; and new guidance from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration on the regulation of laboratory-developed tests.
- ASHG is working with the Canadian Coalition for Genetic Fairness to support Bill S-201, Canada's Genetic Non-Discrimination Act, which has passed the Senate and is now under consideration in the House of Commons.
- The ASHG Social Issues Committee, along with representatives from the National Society of Genetic Counselors, the International Genetic Epidemiology Society, the Association of Genetic Nurses and Counsellors (UK), and the Canadian Association of Genetic Counselors, is preparing a statement on germline genome editing using CRISPR technology. The SIC continues to [accept member input](#) to inform the statement.

Educational Programs

General

- ASHG has hired Kanika Pulliam, PhD, as Educational Programs Manager. Dr. Pulliam will work on the development and implementation of genetics education programs, workshops, professional development programs, and awards for a range of audiences, with a focus on trainees.

Professional

- On February 24, ASHG hosted a free webinar titled “Community Bioinformatics Tools for Validating NGS Testing.” Speakers demonstrated tools such as Genome Analysis Toolkit (GATK), Genome in a Bottle, and precisionFDA. More than 250 people attended the live event, and a recorded version is available on the ASHG website.
- On March 22, ASHG held its first-ever virtual meeting, an all-day event titled “[Genetics in Your Clinic: What You Can and Should Do Now.](#)” This free, CE-eligible event addressed 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. 850 people participated in the live event, and a recorded version is available on the ASHG website.
- ASHG released a set of infographics on genetic testing in children and adolescents, with content based on ASHG’s 2015 position statement on the topic.
- The 2015-2016 Genetics & Education Fellow, Julie A. Nadel, PhD, completed her first rotation at NHGRI and began her second rotation at ASHG headquarters on April 1.
- ASHG/NHGRI received 31 applications for the 2016-2017 Genetics & Education Fellowship, and will begin interviewing candidates by phone this month. In-person interviews will take place in June, and a Fellow will be selected shortly afterward.

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 increase student learning and slow the loss of talent from undergraduate genetics courses.

K-12

- ASHG announced the results of its 11th annual [DNA Day essay contest](#) on April 25. More than 1,200 essays were submitted from 44 U.S. states and 23 other countries. The 2016 essay question, based on ASHG’s position statement on pediatric genetic testing, addressed whether adolescents should defer such testing until adulthood.

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

- The [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 a session of poster talks, a genetic counselors luncheon, travel awards for attendees from developing countries, and a joint session on genomics and cardiology with the American Physiological Society.

- Next in the the series of “Building Bridges” sessions with the European Society of Human Genetics, ASHG 2016 will feature a session on career paths in human genetics.
- 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.
- Abstract submission and meeting registration are now open, with abstracts due June 2.
- ASHG has hired Emily Greene as Program Assistant. Ms. Greene will provide administrative support to meeting- and communications-related activities, including online events.

The American Society of Human Genetics

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