



**An Update for the National Advisory Council for Human Genome Research
The American Society of Human Genetics, Mona Miller, Executive Director
May 2018**

ASHG Annual Meeting Update: ASHG is preparing for its Annual Meeting October 16-20 in San Diego, with its continued emphasis on new, emerging science across the broad range of genetics and genomics in research and medicine. The abstract deadline is June 7. Many invited workshops and concurrent sessions are now available on the [schedule of events](#) so attendees can begin planning travel. Joint collaborations will be held with the Pharmacogenomics Research Network, the International Society for Computational Biology, and the International Genetic Epidemiology Society.

The American Journal of Human Genetics: Under the new editorship of Bruce Korf, AJHG, the official ASHG journal, continues to build on its foundation as a leading source of emerging science across the field. The [March issue](#) incorporated the annual meeting presentations from ASHG then-president Nancy Cox and several award winners. Along with maintaining the Journal's scientific excellence and author experience, Bruce has expressed interest in increasing the publication of commentaries and other discussion pieces from the research community, patient advocates and others.

Media and Communications: ASHG provided scientific background and comment to several major news outlets. ASHG Past President [Nancy Cox published an opinion-editorial in the Orlando Sentinel](#) on the importance of genetic diversity. Recent ASHG blog posts include: [Inside AJHG: A Chat with Tony Capra and Will Bush](#); [Help Secure \\$2 Billion More for NIH](#); [Judging DNA Day Essay Submissions: A Look Inside the Process](#) – by Dennis Drayna, member; [Networking Session was Great – What's Next](#) – by Rohit Thakur, trainee member; [Representing ASHG and Genetics at FASEB Hill Day](#) – by Neil Hanchard, board member

"Public-Facing Education" – Students and Public Outreach & Engagement: ASHG was delighted to partner with NHGRI and others around the world to celebrate DNA Day and the 15th anniversary of the HGP. ASHG announced the [winners](#) of the 13th annual ASHG DNA Day Essay Contest. We received more than 1,000 submissions from 43 U.S. states and 23 countries. ASHG also promoted a [range of activities](#) in conjunction with DNA Day, including five new "infographics" about key "15 for 15" topics. The Undergraduate Workshop will be held again this year before the ASHG Annual Meeting, and the High School Workshop program will pilot going directly into San Diego classrooms. The Society's Information and Education Committee is discussing ways to enhance its programs for students and the general public and engage members in this activity.

"Field-Facing" Education – Career and Professional Development, Trainees, and Diversity: We are planning a range of trainee-focused career and professional development sessions during the Annual Meeting, including a second year of the Conference to Careers program, a partnership with JAX. A session focused on the genetic counseling community will explore the importance of recruiting diverse cohorts in research efforts. It will acknowledge and discuss the history of eugenics that influences interest in participating; what currently is underway to increase diverse cohorts; and practical skills for engaging diverse groups. ASHG met with NSGC leadership and we are exploring ways we could leverage each of our meetings to develop content that explores research career paths for genetic counselors.

Strategic Planning & Membership Input: Given rapid changes in the field and trends in research membership societies, the Board agreed it should revisit the current ASHG strategic plan, which was last completed in 2014. The Board will meet in early 2019 for a special session to discuss how ASHG can best serve its community within its resources, assessing priorities and areas of unique strength. To inform that session, the Society will actively seek and integrate feedback from members, as well as other allied groups and partners. The Board stressed the importance of ASHG seeking strong participation in its upcoming member survey and directed staff to ensure ASHG provides opportunities for input at the Member Business Meeting and other Annual

Meeting sessions. ASHG has been invited to engage with Vence Bonham's group focused on diversity and scientific workforce topics to ensure these important topics are part of the dialogue as well. Leadership of ASHG and ACMG met in Charlotte to discuss areas for possible collaboration or coordination, and ASHG has begun outreach to APHMG and ABMGG and other partners in the community.

Policy & Advocacy: The Social Issues Committee continues to advance a 'Duty to Recontact' statement. ASHG will host a second Policy Luncheon at the Annual Meeting on Genetic Information and Privacy Protections and a first-ever Advocacy Workshop titled "Speaking up for Genetics Research Funding." ASHG's policy unit has launched a range of communications activities to commemorate the 10th anniversary of GINA, including a 2-minute illustrated video highlighting GINA's protections.

ASHG/NHGRI Fellowships: Applications have closed for the 2018-19 Fellowship year and review is underway. As the policy fellowship MOU between ASHG & NHGRI ends in August 2018, the Board voted enthusiastically to continue the program and reach out to NHGRI leadership about continuation. Current year fellow Nikki Meadows had been serving in the office of Rep. Slaughter. Following the representative's sudden untimely death, Nikki has found a new position on the HELP Committee. ASHG issued a statement upon Rep. Slaughter's passing, noting her long connection to and support for the Fellowship.

Organizational: On May 14, staff will welcome Frank Balser as the new senior director for finance and operations. On May 21, ASHG will move its headquarters to 6120 Executive Boulevard, Suite 500 in Rockville, MD. Staff are excited and grateful to have a welcoming and modern new home to support existing and potential new directions to serve the human genetics community.