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## **Council Meeting – National Human Genome Research Institute**

A Brief Update from the American Society of Human Genetics

February 2015

### Society Update

- The ASHG Board of Directors met in October 2014 to discuss the organization's strategic plan and the future of the Annual Meeting. In addition to the 2014 Board, 2016 president Hal Dietz, MD, new board members Gail Jarvik, MD, PhD; Joel Hirschhorn, MD, PhD; Gert-Jan Van Ommen, PhD; and trainee board member Gorka Alkorta-Aranburu, PhD, were in attendance.
- ASHG has hired a [Scientific Program Manager](#), Lucia Barker, PhD, to support the work of the Program Committee and the Meetings and Education departments. Dr. Barker began working on December 15.
- ASHG began working with consulting firm Minding Your Business to assess the Annual Meeting, how it and the Society are marketed, and ways the meeting may be improved.
- The Society's journal, [The American Journal of Human Genetics](#), commemorated its 65<sup>th</sup> year of publication in 2014 through a special "Best Of" issue highlighting notable genetic advances during the last 65 years. The special issue was distributed at the ASHG 2014 Annual Meeting and is available upon request to Mary Rose Stoltz ([mstoltz@ashg.org](mailto:mstoltz@ashg.org) or 301-634-7318).

### Policy Activities

- The 2014-2015 [ASHG/NHGRI Genetics & Public Policy Fellow](#), [Katherine Blizinsky, PhD](#), completed her rotation at NHGRI in December 2014. She is currently working in Sen. Patty Murray's office on Capitol Hill, and will plan a potential rotation at ASHG headquarters.
- The 2013-2014 ASHG/NGHRI Genetics & Public Policy Fellow, Katherine Donigan, completed her fellowship in December 2014 and has joined the staff in personalized medicine at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).
- In light of rapid progress in clinical genomic testing, a working group of ASHG's Social Issues Committee is updating its [1995 policy statement on pediatric genetic testing](#). The chair of the working group, Jeffrey R. Botkin, MD, MPH, from the University of Utah, discussed the new recommendations at the 2014 Annual Meeting during a [joint symposium](#) with the American Society for Bioethics and Humanities (ASBH). ASHG will submit the report for publication in early spring 2015.
- ASHG convened a working group to draft a statement on the FDA's proposed regulation of [laboratory-developed tests](#), which the agency does not currently regulate. ASHG provided comments on the proposed regulation at FDA's public hearing in January and submitted written comments in advance of the February 2 deadline.

- ASHG will participate in a February 20 FDA workshop on regulatory oversight of next generation sequencing diagnostic tests.

## Educational Programs

### Professional

- ASHG and the Jackson Laboratory for Genomic Medicine held their first joint program for the genetics education of health professionals, [Cancer Genetics in the Primary Care Setting](#), Nov. 7-8, 2014 at the new JAX facility in Farmington, Connecticut. The in-person program included an evening networking session for primary care providers and genetics specialists, followed by a full-day workshop on ascertaining risk, genetic testing, and management of those found to be at risk. Attendees will participate in online learning for the next year. Implementations of the program are being planned for Massachusetts and Michigan.
- The first-ever [ASHG/NHGRI Genetics & Education Fellow](#), [Elizabeth P. Tuck, MA](#), completed her rotation at ASHG in January 2015. She is now working in the Education and Community Involvement Branch at NHGRI and may spend time at an external internship yet to be determined.

### 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 has opened its 10<sup>th</sup> annual [DNA Day essay contest](#), with essays due March 6. The 2015 essay question addresses definitions of a gene beyond a single, contiguous stretch of DNA coding for a functional protein product. Winners will receive monetary prizes and their teachers will receive grants to purchase genetics laboratory materials for their schools.
- ASHG will host a video contest for high school students interested in using film to communicate about genetics, tentatively scheduled to launch in fall 2015.

## ASHG's 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting – San Diego, October 18-22, 2014

- [ASHG 2014](#) featured 16 invited scientific sessions, 8 invited workshops, 400+ abstract-driven oral presentations, 3100+ poster presentations, education events, workshops, exhibitor seminars, award presentations, and career resources and coaching.
- A total of 6,566 scientific attendees (including 37 reporters) and 1,867 exhibitor personnel registered for the meeting.
- New initiatives included poster walks pairing trainee members with senior mentors (fully subscribed), a joint Building Bridges session with the European Society of Human Genetics, a joint satellite symposium with ASBH, and an interactive art exhibit called The Genetic Portrait Project.

ASHG's 65<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting – Baltimore, October 6-10, 2015

- Planning for [ASHG 2015](#), in Baltimore, is underway. In December and January, the Program Committee (PC) reviewed 73 proposals for invited sessions and 26 workshop proposals. Applications were due December 5, 2014 and Program Committee members have begun narrowing down, combining, and refining the proposals received.
- Abstracts will be accepted beginning mid-April 2015, with a deadline of June 11, 2015.

**The American Society of Human Genetics**

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