



THE  
AMERICAN  
SOCIETY  
OF HUMAN  
GENETICS

*discover. educate. advocate.*

## **National Advisory Council for Human Genome Research**

A Brief Update from the American Society of Human Genetics

May 2017

### Society Update

- The deadline to submit nominations for the [ASHG Awards](#) was April 28. New this year is the Early-Career Award, which recognizes scientists who are in the early stages of their careers as independent investigators. The Awards Committee is reviewing the nomination materials and will select the recipients by early June. The board is reviewing the nominees for the Victor A. McKusick Leadership Award and will select the winner by the end of the month.
- The deadline to submit nominations for the 2018 [ASHG Board of Directors](#) was April 14. The nominating committee is reviewing the nomination materials and will determine the final slate for the ballot by the end of the month.
- ASHG signed on as an official partner for the [March for Science](#).

### Policy Activities

- ASHG announced a [new policy platform](#) on May 4. With the help of members and approval of the Board of Directors, the platform will provide direction for the Society's policy and advocacy activities.
- ASHG is [opposing the Preserving Employee Wellness Programs Act \(HR1313\)](#), which it believes would fundamentally undermine the privacy provisions of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) if passed into law. The society has raised awareness through the media, resulting in [many media stories](#). A [letter to Congress](#) expressing opposition has been signed by over 1,000 members and others from the genetics community. The Society is also working on a [letter from organizations](#) opposed to the legislation.
- The [2017-2018 ASHG/NHGRI Genetics & Public Policy Fellowship](#) application closed on April 21. Interviews with the top candidates will be conducted in the upcoming weeks.
- The [2016-2017 ASHG/NHGRI Genetics & Public Policy Fellow, Christa Wagner, PhD](#), is in her second rotation at Senator Sherrod Brown's office on Capitol Hill. She will start her final rotation at ASHG headquarters in October.
- 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 [finalizing a statement](#) on germline genome editing.
- ASHG is interviewing candidates for the Science Policy Analyst position. This individual will help fulfill the Society's advocacy role by conducting analyses on policy issues affecting genetics, developing policy statements consistent with ASHG's policy platform, and coordinating policy- and advocacy-related events.

## Educational Programs

### Professional

- The 2017-2018 [ASHG/NHGRI Genetics & Education Fellowship](#) application closed on April 21. Interviews with the top candidates will be conducted in the upcoming weeks.
- The 2016-2017 ASHG/NHGRI Genetics & Education Fellow, Teresa Ramirez, PhD, is currently working at ASHG headquarters in her second rotation. She will start her third rotation at the Association of American Medical Colleges in August.
- ASHG is set to release a series of online CME modules and videos for OB/GYNs dealing with prenatal cfDNA screening, developed in collaboration with the Mayo Clinic and Kaiser Permanente of California. The course is available in ASHG's learning management system (LMS).
- ASHG completed a series of three [webinars on pediatric genetic testing](#). All three webinars are eligible for CME and are now available in archived form in ASHG's LMS.

### Trainees

- ASHG is collaborating with The Jackson Laboratory to develop a year-long mentoring program for trainees, which will consist of webinars, online activities, and an in-person workshop at ASHG's annual meeting in Orlando.
- ASHG has expanded its diversity initiatives. At the annual meeting in Orlando, ASHG will host a Diversity Breakfast, open to a range of trainees from groups underrepresented in science, and provide programming for 10 trainees as part of the ASHG/FASEB Mentored Travel Awards Program.

### Undergraduate

- ASHG is adapting its faculty development program [Building Excellence in Genetics Instruction \(BEGIn\)](#) to include an online component that complements a one-day, in-person workshop, which will expand accessibility. ASHG also continues to provide 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 winners of the 12<sup>th</sup> annual [DNA Day essay contest](#) on April 25. This year, ASHG awarded first place to Adele Peng, a freshman at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology in Alexandria, Va. Sophia Spiegel, a junior at Bergen County Academies in Hackensack, N.J., won second place in the contest. Alvin Ya, a senior at Poolesville High School in Poolesville, Md., was awarded third place. 11 students received honorable mentions. The winners and honorable mention recipients were given monetary prizes as well as grants for genetics laboratory equipment to eligible teachers. We received entries from 40 U.S. states and 21 foreign countries.
- ASHG continues to add inquiry-based genomics lessons to its Lesson Plan Database, which is widely used by high school teachers and college faculty. Two new additions, both focused on bioinformatics and developed by former fellows, will be added soon.

[ASHG's 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting](#) – Orlando, Florida, October 17-21, 2017

- The [ASHG 2017 Preliminary Schedule](#) is now available on the meeting website.
- [Abstract submission](#) is now open. The deadline to submit abstracts is June 7.
- The Program Committee will review abstracts soon after the June 7 deadline.
- Register early to take advantage of the discounted rates and to purchase tickets for workshops and special events which sell out quickly.

**The American Society of Human Genetics**

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