

Candidate Biography

Dr. Melissa Liebert is an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Northern Arizona University. She has been a member (student and fellow) of the Human Biology Association (HBA) since 2010. She is also an active member of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA).

Her research broadly focuses on human adaptation to environmental and psychosocial stressors, the human stress response and its role in shaping disease outcomes across the lifespan, and the effects of culture change and economic development on health and well-being. Since 2009, she has served as a Senior Scientist for the Shuar Health and Life History Project (SHLHP) and has conducted eight seasons of fieldwork in Amazonian Ecuador. Through this work, she has facilitated the collection and analysis of various lifestyle and biological measurements to understand how culture change affects health outcomes among indigenous Shuar children and adults (e.g., diurnal cortisol patterns, cardiovascular and metabolic health, immune function, child growth, bone density, parasitic diseases). Additionally, she is involved with the World Health Organization's Study on global AGEing and adult health (SAGE), which is a longitudinal study of age-related changes in health among six lower- and middle-income countries (China, Russia, South Africa, Mexico, Ghana, and India). Since 2011, she has contributed to various SAGE projects on physical activity, sleep and cognition, depression, and obesity.

Currently, she is expanding her research on the health consequences of economic development in Ecuador by working with indigenous Andean populations and using community-based participatory research (CBPR) approaches. She is also developing research collaborations with local communities in Arizona to examine health equity among underserved populations.

Platform Statement

I am honored to be nominated for a position on the Nominations and Elections Committee of the Human Biology Association (HBA). I first joined the HBA as a student member in 2010 and then as a regular member in 2018, following my transition from a graduate student at the University of Oregon to my current position as an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at Northern Arizona University. Serving as a member of the Nominations and Elections Committee would be my first opportunity to represent the HBA in an official leadership position and would allow me to assist the organization that has continuously offered avenues of support throughout my professional career.

In many ways, the HBA has provided a foundation of research, scholarship, and mentorship that has supported growth and success in my academic career. Since becoming a member, I have attended nine Annual Meetings of the HBA where I delivered two podium presentations, six first-authored poster presentations, and 28 co-authored presentations. At the Annual Meeting of the HBA in 2011, I was a recipient of the Edward E. Hunt, Jr. Student Award for my poster presentation titled "The Shuar Health and Life History Project: Immunoglobulin E, C-reactive protein, and cardiovascular and metabolic health among the indigenous Shuar of Ecuador". During my membership, I also served as an advisor and co-author for six undergraduate poster presentations, whereby one student (William Olson) received the Hilde Spielvogel Award for Outstanding Presentation by an Undergraduate Student in 2014. At the 2012 Annual Meeting of the HBA in Portland, Oregon, I served as a member of the local arrangements committee, which provided an opportunity to interact with leaders of the HBA and learn more about the organization.

In addition to my participation in the Annual Meetings of the HBA, my colleagues and I have published eight articles in the *American Journal of Human Biology* since 2011. I have also reviewed several articles for the journal over the past few years.

It would be a privilege to serve on the Nominations and Elections Committee for the HBA. Thank you for your consideration.