

Bios and Platform Statements: Nominations & Elections Committee

Dr. Nicole Burt

Candidate Bio: Dr. Nicole Burt is the Curator of Human Health and Evolutionary Medicine at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. She studies diet, health, and environmental interactions using diverse methodologies that include carbon and nitrogen stable isotope analysis of hair and teeth. She has done research in medieval Britain, ancient Greece as well as modern Canada, USA, and Vanuatu. She has been a HBA member since 2017 when her research changed from a more traditional bioarcheology/paleopathology approach to focus on modern health, food access, and the food system. She has previous committee experience as part of the co-Chair of the Cleveland Cuyahoga County Food Policy Coalition Steering Committee (2019-present), AAPA Program Committee (2017-2019), AAPA Early Career Executive Committee Mentee (2016-2017), and as a AAPA Ethics Fellow (2019-2020).

Platform Statement: I am honored to be nominated for a position on the Nominations and Elections Committee of the Human Biology Association. If elected I would prioritize sustaining the high quality of work done by the previous holders of my position. It is important for small organization like ours to have active and motivated individuals in all elected positions. I am committed to making sure we are soliciting nominations from a diverse group of people who support the goals of our organization. I think it is important to encourage members in all sectors and especially earlier career members to participate in Association leadership. As a more recent member of the HBA myself, I have found the organization valuable to my own professional development and an organization I am happy to belong to. I am committed to performing the duties of this position, to the best of my abilities, willingly and in a timely manner.

Dr. Theresa Gildner

Candidate Bio: Dr. Theresa Gildner is an Assistant Professor at Washington University in St. Louis. She has been a member of the HBA since 2012. Her research examines how living conditions and environmental interactions influence disease risk (especially parasitic infection), and how these factors can produce and perpetuate health inequities. As part of the Shuar Health and Life History Project, she has evaluated how lifestyle variation is associated with hormone levels, immune function, and parasite infection patterns among Indigenous Shuar of Amazonian Ecuador. Building upon this research, Dr. Gildner recently co-founded the Rural Embodiment and Child Health (REACH) Study, examining parasitic disease patterns among children living in rural and low-resource regions of the Southern United States. Additional research projects include ongoing work with the World Health Organization's Study on global AGEing and adult health (SAGE), a longitudinal study examining well-being among older adults in six middle-income countries. She also recently co-founded the COVID-19 And Reproductive Effects (CARE) Study, which assesses how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected healthcare and well-being among pregnant individuals living in the United States.

Platform Statement: I am excited by the prospect of joining the HBA Nominations and Elections Committee. I have been closely involved with the association since the beginning of my doctoral program. The HBA has always felt like an academic home, and I greatly value the wonderful mentors and collaborators within the association who have supported me and my research program. These

cumulative experiences have inspired me to give back and become more involved. As a junior service fellow in 2020, I assisted in producing the Sausage of Science podcast. My work on the podcast provided an excellent opportunity to interact with more HBA members and gain valuable insight into the mechanics and effort behind running the association. I wish to build upon this experience and serve in an official leadership position as a member of the Nominations and Elections Committee, assisting in efforts to organize and grow our association.

Dr. Melanie A. Martin

Candidate Bio: Dr. Melanie Martin is an Assistant Professor of Biological Anthropology at the University of Washington. She has been a member of HBA since 2014, and has served on the Publications Committee (2019-2021) and as a mentee in the Community Building and Networking Program (2020 – present). She is also active in the American Association of Biological Anthropology and the American Anthropological Association (member sections: Biological Anthropology Section, Evolutionary Anthropology Society, Society for Anthropological Sciences), and is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the International Society for Evolutionary Medicine and Public Health, and the International Society for Research in Human Milk and Lactation. Dr. Martin examines biocultural influences on growth, development, and reproduction, and has conducted research with the Tsimane of Bolivia (Alumni, Tsimane Health and Life History Project) and the Qom/Toba of Argentina (Co-Director, Chaco Area Reproductive Ecology Program). Currently she is working with collaborators in the U.S. to examine mother-infant health and immune outcomes following acute maternal COVID-19 infection, and to test models that predict maternal morbidity and adverse pregnancy outcomes in archived clinical health studies.

Platform Statement: If elected to the HBA Nominations and Elections Committee, my primary goal would be to work expeditiously and collegially with other committee members to solicit nominations for elected positions and awards, and assist with electoral procedures. In soliciting nominations for committee members, early career, and lifetime achievement awards, the Nomination and Elections Committee is integral to the HBA aims of disseminating innovative and impactful research on global human biological variation, and supporting the next generation of researchers through a diverse and inclusive community. I believe that these nominations should recognize not only scholarly achievement, but also the work of colleagues who have promoted the above aims through outstanding professional service, mentorship, public science communication, and promotion of scientific and ethical integrity.

The HBA has been my primary professional organization as a graduate student, postdoc, and now early career faculty member. Over the last 10 years I have regularly attended and presented at the HBA Annual Meetings, published in the American Journal of Human Biology, volunteered as a judge for student awards, participated in the HBA Student Reception and Community Building and Networking Program, and recently completed a 2-year term on the Publications Committee. My research and professional development have benefitted immensely from the HBA network, and I am committed to furthering the aims of the organization. It would be an honor to continue my service to the organization and its tradition of promoting community and innovation in human biological research.

