



# Physical Anthropology Section - 2012

## H21 Anthropology and the AAFS: A Significant Impact in Its First 40 Years

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After attending this presentation, the attendees will understand the origin of the Physical Anthropology (PA) Section of the AAFS, its significant growth, and patterns of its demographic evolution. Attendees will also learn of the impact that the Section has had in the Academy's annual programs.

This presentation will impact the forensic science community by showing the significant growth of the field and the increase of forensic anthropologists available to pursue identification of primarily skeletal remains.

Excellent accounts of the origins of the Physical Anthropology Section are available in Snow, Ubelaker and Scammell and Rhine.<sup>1-3</sup> Origins generally reflect the state of osteological identification at the time. Of the original 14 members, there were 11 PhDs and 3 MAs; 11 males and 3 females; the East was most heavily represented, followed by the Rocky Mountain region. More importantly, they were bright, broad based but focused, moderately assertive, and enjoyed the fruits of research and the dissemination of knowledge. All but two were, or would work in, academics and all but two continued as productive members of the Section. The section experienced a rapid growth: at the end of its first decade it numbered 66; by 1992 it had climbed to 159; the following decade to 245; and currently there are 406 individuals spread over eight membership categories. It is believed that the Physical Anthropology Section has grown faster than any other section during the past 40 years. Based on the AAFS Membership Matrix presented at the Chicago meeting, the PA Section is currently composed of 45 Applicants, 80 Associate Members, 90 Fellows, 47 Members, 9 Retired Fellows, 1 Retired Member, 121 Student Affiliates, and 13 Trainee Affiliates for a total of 406 individuals. The sex ratio is 33% males and 67% females.

More importantly, the PA section has been a leader in the presentation of scientific papers. The Connective Tissue has chronicled the PA section relative to other AAFS sections seven times since 1994. The most recent Academy profile (Table 1) presents the data from the Chicago meeting in 2011 and is generally indicative of earlier years.

	N	PP	MM	R <sub>1</sub>	PP <sub>2</sub>	R <sub>2</sub>	%MP	R/M
Criminalistics	2845	(207)	41.2	1	27.3	1	7.3	10
Path/Bio	935	(136)	13.5	2	17.9	2	14.5	5
General	847	(54)	12.3	3	7.1	4	6.4	11
Toxicology	526	(52)	7.6	4	6.9	5	9.9	9
Odontology	446	(50)	6.5	5	6.6	6	11.2	8
Phys. Anth	406	(102)	6.7	6	13.5	3	25.1	1
Qu. Doc	212	(27)	3.1	7	3.4	9	12.7	7
Jurisprudence	210	(47)	3.0	8	3.6	8	22.4	3
Engineering	174	(24)	2.4	9	3.2	10	13.8	6
Psychiatry	152	(36)	2.2	10	4.8	7	23.7	2
DMS	106	(21)	1.5	11	2.8	11	19.8	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>6919</b>	<b>(758)</b>	<b>100.00</b>					

Table 1. Summary statistics of interest to our section, 2011.

N = section size in rank order;

PP = number of papers presented by members of that section;

MM = percent of members within Academy;

R<sub>1</sub> = rank order of membership in the Academy;

PP<sub>2</sub> = percent of total presented papers from that section;

R<sub>2</sub> = rank order of percent of total papers from that section;

%MP = % of members presenting papers from each section;

R/M = rank order of members presenting papers by Academy section

For being 6th in size, the PA Section has shown to be the most productive in scholarly presentation at any of the recent Annual Meetings! To put this in perspective, the members of the Criminalistics Section presented 27.3% of all papers at the Chicago Meeting, but they comprise 41.2% of the Academy membership. The Pathology/Biology Section presented 17.9% of all papers at the Chicago Meeting and they comprise 13.5% of the Academy Membership; a rather balanced presentation production. The Physical Anthropology Section, presented 13.5% of the papers presented at the Chicago Meeting while holding only 6.7% of the Academy membership. As in the past few years, the members of the Criminalistics Section presented a lower relative percentage of papers; the members of the Pathology/Biology Section presented papers commensurate with their size in the Academy, and members of the Physical Anthropology Section appear to be more industrious in presenting their scholarly work at the annual meetings. There are excellent reasons for this distribution of data: the criminalists have a large number of individuals doing the applied work and may have less time for research or case presentation, while the anthropologists, mostly university faculty and graduate students, are expected to have a commitment to research and the dissemination of knowledge which are necessary for professional promotion and salary increases. The Central Identification Laboratory also maintains a high level of research and scholarly activity despite a significant level of deployment for Search and Recovery missions and subsequent identifications.

Student, Trainee Affiliate, and Members have been very competitive in applying for and receiving considerable, significant grant monies from within the section, within the AAFS and external sources. As well, numerous student



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presenters have received the J. Lawrence Angel Award, and 28 members or colleagues have received the T. Dale Stewart Section Award, three members have been named as Distinguished Fellows, and one has been the recipient of the International Adelaide Award.

It will be very interesting to watch the continuing evolution of the Physical Anthropology Section over the next ten years. Changes that currently reside in the Anthropology Scientific Working Group and the Executive and Legislative branches of our government will provide continued excitement for both the near and long range future of the Academy's Physical Anthropology Section.

### References:

1. Snow CC. Forensic Anthropology. Annual Review Anthropology 1982;11(2):97-130.
2. Ubelaker D and Scammell H. Bones: a forensic detective's casebook. New York: Edward Burlingame Books, 1992.
3. Rhine S. Bone voyage. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.

### Section History, Growth, Impact on AAFS Program