



POSITION GUIDE

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



ABOUT THE AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Humans are highly complex creatures. Anthropology is the systematic study of the complexities of the human experience. The American Anthropological Association (AAA) is the world's largest association for professional anthropologists dedicated to advancing our understanding of humanity. Founded in 1902, AAA strives to apply this understanding to the world's most pressing challenges from climate resilience, combating infectious disease, to migration, and protecting cultural heritage. AAA amplifies the work, voices, and impact of the global anthropological community—connecting people and creating opportunities to advance the meaningful study of humans.

AAA is a worldwide network of scholarly and professional anthropologists with approximately 9,000 members from 86 countries. AAA serves as a convener across the broad expanse of the anthropological fields and experiences, bringing together archaeological, biological/physical, cultural, and linguistic anthropologists with academic and applied professionals. While 75 percent of AAA's members are employed in higher education or are students of anthropology, approximately 25 percent of their members work in the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, beyond the academy. As an international collective, AAA serves as the primary ambassador to the world community on the field of anthropology and strives to advance and support a wide and diverse fields and specializations.

KEY FACTS

- 25 total staff
- \$7M annual budget
- \$15M financial investments and reserves
- 80 contracted service providers
- Approximately 300 volunteers
- 17-member Executive Board (voting members)
- 9 Board Committees, 1 Commission, 2 Taskforces, and 12 Interest Groups
- 40 Specialized Sections

MISSION

AAA will advance anthropology as a discipline of scientific and humanistic research, practice, and teaching that increases our fundamental understanding of humankind, and applies this understanding to addressing the world's most pressing problems.

VISION

AAA enriches the discipline's intellectual terrain, working to dismantle the barriers that have hindered preparation, entry and career progression for scholars and practitioners, with special focus on anthropologists who have been alienated from, harmed by, or marginalized by the Association, both in the past and present.

VALUES



Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility,
Quality, and Sustainability

CONNECT WITH AAA





Anthropologists are global citizens by nature. Their work often crosses national borders and into the midst of pressing cultural, environmental, and public health challenges. AAA's colleagues hold globally significant positions, such as Jim Yong Kim, the former President of the World Bank and have received Nobel Peace Prizes, such as Norman Borlaug's work on food security and Svante Pääbo's recent award in evolutionary anthropology and genetics. Anthropologists provide critical insights necessary to overcome social biases, such as Emily Martin's pathbreaking feminist work in science and medicine. And they save lives, as evidenced by the critical role anthropologists played in limiting the spread of Ebola that served as a model for addressing COVID 19 and other highly infectious diseases.

AAA connects their diverse membership through annual meetings, section meetings, networking, and other events. AAA has 40 individual sections of specialized knowledge with a myriad of identities, experiences, and perspectives that reflect the complexities of human existence. AAA publishes a portfolio of 22 journals, supports college and university departments, recognizes excellence through numerous prizes and fellowships, and stages biannual research conferences in the spring and fall. AAA advances careers through career planning, professional development opportunities, and paid summer internships. AAA has many inter-organizational and global collaborations, including the World Council of Anthropological Associations, the International Union of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, the Consortium of Social Science Associations, the National Humanities Alliance, the American Council of Learned Societies, and UNESCO's Economic and Social Council.

As a 501(c)(3) membership organization, AAA is governed by an Executive Board that sets AAA's vision and strategic direction, safeguards AAA's assets, ensures AAA's financial health, and translates member values and interests into organizational plans and programs. The Section Assembly of AAA consists of the heads of the 40 Sections or designated Section representatives. In addition, AAA members engage in a wide variety of interest groups, committees, and taskforces. AAA has a robust, diverse portfolio of annual revenue that consists of membership dues (17%), grants and contributions (19%), publishing income (18%), meeting revenue (23%), and other income (23%). In 2021, AAA completed a new strategic plan for 2021-26. In this plan, AAA is committed to focusing on four strategic priorities: (1) building trust and accountability association-wide, (2) supporting equitable knowledge production and circulation, (3) making AAA a more welcoming community for people in practice settings, and (4) increasing outreach, advocacy, and education to prospective employers, media, public officials, and the general public. AAA's national headquarters is based in Arlington, Virginia.

THE POSITION

The next Executive Director of the American Anthropological Association will have an exciting and pivotal opportunity to help build AAA into its next phase of dynamic growth and impact. The Executive Director, an energizing, innovative, and entrepreneurial leader, provides overall vision, leadership, and operational direction to AAA's membership programs and initiatives. The Executive Director reports to AAA's Executive Board and serves as an ex-officio non-voting member on all association boards and committees. The new Executive Director will start from a highly advantageous position, with a strong foundation following ten years of strong leadership with many successes and accomplishments and will inherit a financially diverse and stable budget and vigorous financial assets. The Executive Director will advise and inform the Executive Board on strategic issues affecting AAA and will work closely with the Board to ensure AAA's vitality, sustainability, and continued success with its global membership. The Executive Director manages a \$7 million budget and a talented team of 25 association professionals. The next Executive Director, a skilled listener, communicator, and relationship builder, will bring a bold vision and confident leadership to ensure the growth and vitality of the world's most preeminent association for advancing the field and practice of anthropology. AAA seeks a visionary leader who believes that knowledge, and particularly anthropological knowledge, is vital in today's world. This position will be based at AAA's headquarters in Arlington, Virginia.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES

Within the first 12 to 18 months, the Executive Director will achieve the following major objectives:

- Develop plans for a sustainable revenue model that enhances AAA's efforts to advance open access publishing and a membership model that is affordable to all anthropologists regardless of employment status.
- Actively work to inspire, build, retain, and empower AAA's national staff by ensuring a well-resourced, equitable, and hybrid workplace.
- Develop a professionalized infrastructure that strengthens member services, ensures association-wide equity and representation, and provides expanded programs for non-academic anthropologists.
- Build positive, meaningful relationships with AAA's Executive Board, Section Assembly, committee and taskforce volunteer leaders, members, funders, donors, sponsors, and other stakeholders.
- Develop and implement a website redesign that is even more member-friendly and accessible to all.
- Serve as a passionate, stalwart champion and advocate for the AAA's efforts to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and decolonization among AAA members and constituent societies worldwide.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The Executive Director will have the following primary responsibilities:

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

- Provide leadership in collaboration with the Executive Board in developing organizational, financial, and program plans.
- Provide guidance and support for the Executive Board's policy making activities; assist the Executive Board in setting association priorities; provide counsel and support for the board's officers in the execution of their responsibilities.
- Support the organization's short- and long-range strategies to achieve its mission, vision, and objectives.
- Energize and advance AAA's efforts to become more open, trustworthy, and accountable as a diverse, equitable, inclusive, and accessible global organization.
- Maintain a substantive and up-to-date understanding of significant trends impacting the field of anthropology.





ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

- Lead, recruit, hire, inspire, and grow AAA's talented team of association professionals, ensuring a national staff that is diverse in its representation and reflects the AAA community.
- Establish management policies, procedures, and guidelines as appropriate to implement the strategic direction and policy decisions of the Executive Board.
- Direct and manage staff, financial and other resources to implement plans and policies authorized by the Executive Board.
- Prepare and submit an annual operating budget for consideration by the Executive Board.
- Ensure organization's finances aligned with Board-adopted financial plans, policies, and guidelines.
- Plan, develop, and execute strategies to increase AAA's revenue and ensure funding is available to support organizational activity.
- Oversee successful implementation of the organization's programs including publications, annual meeting, education, research, professional development, public policy, and membership.
- Engage and oversee external contractors, consultants, service providers, and advisers as are necessary to implement the programs and activities of the association.
- Supervise the execution of written contracts and/or agreements; maintain AAA records and documents in compliance with local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

MEMBERSHIP

- Promote AAA's goals of advancing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility to make AAA a vibrant and welcoming space for all anthropologists.
- Monitor and evaluate the Association's membership, financial and program conditions and trends.
- Assess member needs and interests and propose programs and services to meet those needs with the overall goal of attracting and retaining AAA members.
- Promote active and broad membership participation in all areas of the organization's work.
- Promote active communication among AAA members, sections, leadership, and staff.
- Provide guidance and oversight in recruitment and expansion of membership



COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING, AND OUTREACH

- Identify, assess, and inform the Executive Board of internal and external conditions and issues that affect the organization, assess changes in the Association's external environment and propose strategic responses to those changes.
- Strengthen alliances with other scholarly/professional societies and constituent groups, both nationally and internationally.
- Improve outreach to Minority-serving Institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Tribal colleges, and Hispanic-Serving Institutions, as well as community colleges and high schools.
- Oversee efforts to build pathways into the profession by strengthening outreach to anthropology departments, energizing K-12 students and teachers, and ensuring successful public-facing programs and activities.
- Represent and advocate on the behalf of the Association to other organizations, potential funding sources, government, media, and the general public.

QUALIFICATIONS

The ideal candidate will bring most of the following qualifications and skill sets:

- At least seven to ten years of successful senior-level leadership experience in a complex multifaceted organization, such as a national association or a comparable multi-stakeholder institution.
- An enthusiastic commitment to advancing the field of anthropology with the drive and passion to expand its impact.
- A team-focused leader with a proven ability to hire, manage, motivate, and retain diverse high-performing teams.
- Successful experience in empowering, building, and maintaining productive relationships with complex boards, committees, and other volunteer leaders.
- Recognized success and a track record of increase revenue streams and exceeding goals and objectives, along with evidence of successfully marketing and growing an organization.
- Experience with a variety of publishing and meeting environments in associations, with a familiarity with disciplined-based scholarly publications, meetings, and conferences.
- Strong cultural competence with a commitment to diversity, inclusion, decolonization, repatriation, and cultural equity.
- High integrity, intellectual agility, creativity, and vision; and the kind of leadership that inspires the best in others and serves as an effective advocate to a wide variety of funders and constituencies.
- Technologically savvy, and ideally familiar with social media and communication technology.
- Exceptional interpersonal, listening, conflict resolution, and motivational skills with an ability to inspire and generate enthusiasm among members, volunteers, funders, and other stakeholders.
- Strong business and financial acumen, budgetary and financial forecasting skills, including an ability to manage and interpret vendor contracts, service agreements, and other legal documents.
- Excellent and inspirational communication skills, including strong written, verbal, public speaking, and media skills.
- Ability to travel as necessary to represent the organization and meet with funder, partners, and stakeholders.
- A bachelor's degree (preferably in anthropology, history, sociology, or a related field) is required; an advanced degree would be an advantage.



COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

The salary range for this position is \$290,000-\$310,000. Benefits include medical and dental insurance (100% paid for single coverage); employer-paid life, AD&D, and short- and long-term disability insurance; a generous pension plan and a 401(k) plan; generous paid time off; 12 paid holidays including the week between Christmas and New Year's Day off with pay; Employee Wellness Program; Employee Assistance Program; Flexible Benefits Plan; commuting reimbursement; a relaxed, healthy, joyful work environment; and a flexible, hybrid workplace. A generous relocation package will be provided for the successful candidate.

APPLICATION

AAA has retained Campbell & Company to conduct this search. The team for this project includes Dan Nevez, Vice President, and Angèle Bubna, Consultant.



DAN NEVEZ
Vice President, Executive Search



ANGÈLE BUBNA
Consultant, Executive Search

[APPLY NOW >](#)

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Campbell & Company is a national nonprofit consulting firm that helps organizations create greater impact through executive search, fundraising, communications, and strategic information services. Campbell & Company has helped place exceptional leaders in all sectors, including human services, arts & culture, education, healthcare, environment, associations and membership organizations, and civic and public affairs.

Underlying all our work is a shared focus on the Campbell & Company mission: to collaborate and innovate with people who change lives through philanthropic vision and action.

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