

Preface

We are very excited to take on the role of the Co-Editors-in-Chief of *Bioarchaeology International* despite the extremely challenging timing of the transition in July 2020, amid a global pandemic and increasing global awareness of the urgent need to revise ethical standards toward greater representation and equity in our discipline. The Founding Co-Editors-in-Chief, Sabrina Agarwal and Brenda Baker, have stepped down from their role after roughly four years of dedicated service, although they continue to play an integral advisory role as the founding editors of *Bioarchaeology International*. We want to begin by expressing our deep gratitude to Brenda and Sabrina. They instigated and led the huge effort to conceptualize the scope of the journal, organize a prestigious advisory and editorial board, and design and implement all the processes and procedures for publishing the journal. As one of the earliest journals in the University of Florida Press lineup, they also helped lay the processual and procedural foundation for the press to publish nine other journals. For the years 2016–2020, the journal flourished under their extraordinary stewardship, and it brought to fruition their vision for a rigorous future of contextual, theoretically informed, and data driven bioarchaeology (Agarwal and Baker 2017). We applaud their success in bringing the journal to a point where it has a very strong international reputation in the field due to its high quality, and impactful, relevant articles, and we will endeavor to continue to build on this excellence.

Despite our trepidation about beginning our term during incredibly challenging circumstances, our fears of the potential impact of the pandemic on submissions, peer review, editorial activities, and most other aspects of the publication process were unfounded. We are pleased to note that the journal currently has three issues in production, and we continue to receive truly excellent papers, which means *Bioarchaeology International* will be able to continue publishing the highest quality work in this vibrant field. We are also extremely pleased that the average time to make a first decision for the journal is only 42 days. That being said, we have also faced challenges moving papers through the later stages of the publication process this year, particularly at the copyediting and proofs stage. COVID-19 led to a hiring freeze at the University of Florida Press, and frankly this is currently our greatest challenge, but it is being alleviated as the Press has hired new editing

and proofreading staff. Therefore, we also want to take this opportunity to express our extreme gratitude to the staff and to all the authors who have stood with us as we work with the Press staff to clear the backlog related to the pandemic and we are hopeful for a return to normalcy soon.

Building on the systems and processes established by Brenda and Sabrina, we have made a few changes since starting our term. We began with four major goals, three of which are related to ethics and representation, and all of which were intended to expand the relevance and influence of the journal by encouraging the highest quality of submissions. Our first priority as new editors was to review the members of the advisory and editorial boards, to relieve members who had completed their terms, and to invite new members who will help us to fulfill our goals of inclusive representation and ethical bioarchaeological practice. We want to take this opportunity to thank the former board members for their years of service and to welcome those who have taken on new roles on the advisory or editorial boards. In revising the board membership, we focused on more representation, including international and BIPOC scholars. Certainly, this will lead to better anthropology. Our new associate editors—Alexis Boutin, Graciela Cabana, Carlina de la Cova, Jonny Geber, Ann M. Kalkiouras, Tracy Prowse, Hisashi Nakao, Liv Nilsson Stutz, Laurie Reitsem, Dong Hoon Shin, Jorge Suby, Christina Torres-Rouff and Rachel Watkins—are exceptional scholars representing diverse topical areas and we are grateful they were willing to accept our invitation and to commit themselves to serving the field in this way. Some of our new advisory board members—D. Troy Case, Pamela Geller, Rebecca Gowland, John Krigbaum, Judith Littleton, and Tiffany A. Tung—have moved from the editorial board, and we are so grateful for their willingness to take on this role and provide their expert advice. Another new advisory board member—Jane Buikstra—is a new addition to the board. She is obviously a deeply admired scholar in the field who has already contributed suggestions to help us maintain the excellence of the journal.

One of our goals was also to expand our ethical guidelines for publication in the journal to more closely align with current values of our field. We worked with the Press and the founding editors to update the research ethics, consent, and integrity

statement. We hope readers will take a moment to read our expanded statement, which acknowledges the importance in bioarchaeological research of collaboration with and permission from Indigenous stakeholders and local communities for research, publication, and to present photographs of human remains.

We have also added a new statement on sexual harassment and sexual violence, which demonstrates the commitment of the journal and the Press to take sexual and interpersonal misconduct seriously and to provide an inclusive and safe environment for all members of our community. It is now a violation of *Bioarchaeology International's* ethical standards for prospective authors to engage in any conduct prohibited under Title IX, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, dating violence, domestic violence, stalking, sexual exploitation, and retaliation. We reserve the right to make editorial decisions based on these ethical standards.

Finally, we worked with the staff at the Press to offer further streamlining of the submissions process, which allows authors to “submit-as-you-like.” We hope this will be attractive to researchers, particularly early career scholars. This new submission system means authors do not have to format submissions specifically for *Bioarchaeology International* until acceptance. We continue to be one of the few journals

in biological anthropology to offer professional copy editing upon acceptance and we are interested in expanding our international authorship through these practices and in forthcoming special issues.

Typically, special issues are proposed to the journal, but in 2020 we as Co-Editors-in-Chief solicited manuscripts for a topical special issue on *Pandemics in the Past and Present: Contributions from bioarchaeology*. Bioarchaeology is pertinent to address substantial challenges related to the third epidemiological transition, emerging and re-emerging infections, climate and environmental change, social inequality and building a more equitable, sustainable future. We look forward to contributing to our field's efforts to provide the long-term perspectives that build understanding and capacity for resilience in the context of current-day global challenges.

Gwen Robbins Schug and Siân E. Halcrow
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References Cited

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