Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues

2026 Annual Report



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The Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues (PCAD) is a student-led initiative that facilitates dialogue between members of the professional anthropological community and pre-college scholars with a demonstrated interest in anthropology, with the goal of better engaging and supporting the next generation of anthropologists.

PCAD was co-founded in April 2026 by seven pre-college members of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) from California, New York, Virginia, Alabama, and New Jersey. Our research interests span biological and sociocultural anthropology and our experience includes doing college-level coursework, attending an AAA Annual Meeting, doing an AAA internship, receiving the AAA Junior Anthropologist Award, preparing submissions for peer-reviewed journals, and publishing a book of short stories related to anthropological principles.

We all recognized significant untapped potential in building stronger connections between pre-college anthropologists and the professional community, especially compared to other fields, and came together to address this opportunity.

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Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues (PCAD)

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Editor's Word

Anthropology is a broad field that strives to be inclusive of differences and embraces creativity. From the relationship between shoe-wearing habits and human foot arch development to the intersection of justice, the environment, and identity, and from academic papers to public ethnography and art installations, anthropology is unique in its promise of relevance and inclusion. While its breadth sometimes makes it difficult to succinctly summarize what anthropology is, it's also what brings people in, as anthropological approaches can serve many interests, passions, and needs. This makes it natural to assume that anthropology would have a lot to offer interested high schoolers who are eager to explore the field and use its methods to pursue their intellectual and social interests.

I first started exploring anthropology while trying to figure out how I could connect my long-standing interest in folklore and mythology with a growing concern for the social and political challenges of our time. My search led me to anthropology, and I became fascinated with the depth and creativity of the field. When I started looking for resources and communities that could help me learn more about what it takes to become an anthropologist, I soon realized that all roads led to the American Anthropological Association (AAA) as the main professional association of anthropologists in the United States, serving as an umbrella organization for a number of regional and more specialized associations.

The AAA seemed like a perfect place to learn about what anthropologists were doing and see where I could participate. Opportunities like the Junior Anthropologist Award (American Anthropological Association 2021) and the Virtual High School Internship (American Anthropological Association n.d.-a) offered by the AAA looked promising. However, when I attended my first AAA conference in 2025, people were generally shocked by my presence, as they had never learned about anthropology in high school and couldn't believe I had found the AAA on my own. They also didn't really know what to do with me: many people tried to be helpful, but because I didn't fit any of the usual boxes, their social scripts didn't work. While a few people didn't see this as a barrier to discussing the substance of my anthropological research, and I am very grateful for the few warm and deep interactions, I never stopped sensing the presence of an implicit hierarchy that made my lack of a university affiliation matter more than my story or my research.

I thought that a dedicated space for high schoolers—AAA's Virtual High School Internship—would be a good place to engage, but I found that the program had a very specific focus: translating existing academic research to make it more accessible to a broader audience (American Anthropological Association n.d.-b). While popularizing someone else's research has undeniable value, at that point I was looking for opportunities to advance my own research and had already begun thinking about how to address the gap I had noticed at the conference between pre-college anthropologists and the broader anthropological community. Given the lack of alternatives, I eventually decided to apply for that internship with some ideas that went beyond the scope of the program. Those ideas, however, were not what the AAA was looking for.

These experiences compelled me to find more high schoolers interested in anthropology and see what they were doing, what opportunities they were seeking, where their research interests lay, and how they were engaging with the field before entering college. Talking to other high school students I had found in the AAA Membership Directory, including some who had won the AAA's Junior Anthropologist Award and interned with AAA-affiliated podcasts, I realized that I wasn't the only one who wanted a community. Together with six other people, I started Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues (PCAD) to create an infrastructure for finding our collective voice and engaging in dialogue with the professional anthropological community. In the process, we shifted from the term "high school" in my original invitation to "pre-college" to include younger students who expressed interest in joining our conversations.

Our original plan was to host an online consultation with other pre-college anthropologists and then a participatory workshop at the AAA Annual Meeting in St. Louis to share the outcomes of our online consultation with AAA members and invite them to offer their perspectives. We did host the online consultation, and the collective

narrative documenting its outcomes is presented in the first part of this report. However, our session proposal (Ovchinnikova et al. 2026)—submitted under the Society for the Anthropology of North America (SANA) section, whose regional focus and activist history (Susser 2010) felt like a perfect fit—was not included in this year's conference program. Instead, we decided to host a drop-in reception as a side event for informal conversations focused on sensing and relationship building, rather than a structured, documented dialogue. This inspired the systematic analysis of mentions of "high school" and "high schoolers" in all available descriptions of AAA conference sessions from the past five years, which is presented in the second part of this report. In very practical terms, we wanted to see whether other pre-college anthropologists had recently made it into the AAA program and how AAA's inclusion of pre-college anthropology mapped onto the outcomes of our online consultation with pre-college students.

That analysis found no relevant sessions in the 2022 and 2024 programs—all mentions of the keywords referred to other contexts—but 2023 was a very good year for pre-college anthropology, with seven of the 10 relevant sessions appearing in that year's program. In one of those sessions, high school students were presenting their independent research as part of the official AAA program, but how did they do that? What did they learn in the process that could help future pre-college anthropologists follow in their footsteps and take it even further? Unless that kind of knowledge is collected and passed on to the next generation, it gets lost, and others have to start from scratch. I hope that, besides informing our conversations with the AAA community, this publicly available, searchable report will at the very least make our experiences, our mistakes, and our insights accessible to future high schoolers who might find them useful as they take their first steps in the field of anthropology.

There is usually a critical window of two to four years in which motivated young people are expected to choose what they want to do in college and demonstrate commitment and achievement by the time they submit their applications. A lack of visible opportunities to pursue a particular field while in high school can make students reconsider investing their energy in it, unless they are motivated enough to invent their own path, which is both very hard and very risky. It is usually much easier and safer to switch to an adjacent field, such as international relations, where young people have plenty of readily available leadership opportunities. This is a pattern that our delegates discussed in the online consultation.

My approach to this challenge—and my invitation to PCAD co-founders—was inspired by one of my mentors, Manuel Manga, who writes about "not just problem-solving, but also being designers of new institutions and futures" (Manga 2026). I am well aware that changing the systemic conditions that created the patterns my fellow pre-college anthropologists and I experience today will likely require more time than I have left as a pre-college student. There are also many unknowns, making it impossible to count on any specific outcome. However, PCAD was co-founded by two high school seniors who had already accepted college admission offers by the time they responded to my invitation. They felt called to contribute not to impress admissions officers but to support those who would come after them. This desire to give back, "to leave more community than you found" (Corrigan 2019), is deeply inspiring, and it is a pattern I want to support as we journey together.

Another mentor of mine, Maureen O'Hara, writes about "organizational integrity" as a "pattern of relationships that is able to maintain its integrity over time" (Leicester and O'Hara 2009). This organizational integrity is what I hope we can leave for pre-college anthropologists who will come after us, whether in the form of PCAD as an independent organization, a section of the AAA, or simply a pattern of young anthropologists finding their collective voice, engaging with agency, and making life better for those who come after them.



Anna Ovchinnikova
Editor & PCAD Initiating Steward

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COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE



Collective Narrative from the Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues Inaugural Online Consultation

PREAMBLE

On June 28, 2026, Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues (PCAD) hosted its inaugural online consultation to explore opportunities, barriers, and practical ways to strengthen connections between pre-college scholars and the broader anthropological community. The consultation centered on the experiences and perspectives of students who had demonstrated a serious interest in anthropology.

Our primary outreach channel was direct email invitations to U.S.-based members of the American Anthropological Association (AAA) whose listed affiliations included "high school." Because the AAA Membership Directory did not readily support a systematic search for this group, we invited the first fifty members we identified who met these conditions. We also emailed college counselors at thirty high schools, shared the invitation on social media and the PCAD website, and drew on the personal networks of early respondents. We used two registration forms: an initial form issued on behalf of Anna Ovchinnikova, PCAD's Initiating Steward, before PCAD was formally established, and a subsequent form identifying PCAD as the consultation's organizer.

Through this outreach, we received registrations from twenty candidates who met our eligibility criteria: they were pre-college students during the 2025–2026 school year and had demonstrated a serious interest in anthropology through activities such as taking anthropology courses or engaging in anthropological research. This group included five high school seniors, eight juniors, five sophomores, and two students preparing to enter high school. Ten attended the consultation as delegates. All twenty shared experiences through their registration responses that informed the consultation discussions and are therefore acknowledged as contributors to this report. We also accepted a request from a high school student in Singapore who made a compelling case for participating, bringing the total to eleven student delegates and twenty-one student contributors. The findings should be understood in the context of this selective outreach and voluntary participation.

The consultation followed an adapted World Café process (Löhr et al. 2020) comprising three rounds of small-group conversations. The facilitator joined breakout-room discussions as a delegate. In the first round, delegates reflected on their experiences of engaging with anthropology, including relevant experiences shared with them by their peers. In the second round, delegates formed new groups to identify patterns and insights across the perspectives shared in the first round. Following another rotation, they selected ideas to communicate to the professional anthropological community.

After the three rounds, delegates took turns sharing key reflections, which were recorded. Each delegate also had an opportunity to submit additional thoughts through a Google Form, including ideas prompted by others' reflections. The Collective Narrative Methodology (Pearlman et al. 2020) was used to synthesize the recording transcript and written responses into a collective narrative.

All delegates had an equal opportunity to contribute to the source material. To complement the ideas communicated directly in the narrative, we identified emergent themes and calculated the proportion of the text devoted to each. These percentages describe the distribution of words across themes in the collective narrative. They should not be interpreted as measures of consensus or the number of delegates endorsing a theme.

Drawing on delegates' reflections, we developed a conceptual framework identifying four areas of focus for future conversations about pre-college anthropology:

- **Discovery:** Introducing anthropology to pre-college students as an intellectual and professional path they can pursue—20% of the collective narrative.
- **Learning:** Equipping pre-college students with anthropological knowledge and skills—4%.
- **Contribution:** Engaging pre-college students as researchers and collaborators—54%.
- **Leadership:** Supporting pre-college students in exercising agency and taking the initiative to bring their voices into professional anthropological discussions—22%.

Discovery

Introducing anthropology to pre-college students as an intellectual and professional path they can pursue

Learning

Equipping pre-college students with anthropological knowledge and skills

Contribution

Engaging pre-college students as researchers and collaborators

Leadership

Supporting pre-college students in exercising agency and taking the initiative to bring their voices into professional anthropological discussions

The order of the elements in this conceptual framework reflects stages in the journey of a pre-college anthropologist. The collective narrative follows a different order: it begins with Contribution, which addresses the most pressing issues for our delegates; returns to Learning and Discovery to reflect on delegates' earlier experiences; and ends with Leadership to explore possibilities for future action.

The collective narrative was produced manually. AI tools were used only for transcription and final copyediting. Sonix.ai generated the initial transcript, which was verified against the consultation's audio recording. GPT-6 Astra Medium assisted with a final editorial review limited to grammar, spelling, and punctuation. AI tools were not used for idea generation or interpretation.

COLLECTIVE NARRATIVE

I. Engaging Pre-College Students as Researchers and Collaborators

In our conversations, we talked about our experiences with research as high school anthropologists, about looking to learn more from professors, and about getting involved with different kinds of research—from doing data organization and literature reviews, to physically visiting places and volunteering on site.

We talked a lot about research opportunities currently available to high school students and how to find and access mentorship pathways. It was interesting to notice that at some point, we all learned that the main way to do that is through cold emailing. However, because of how broad anthropology is as a field, cold emailing makes it hard to connect our studies with the kind of community impact we would like to see. So, a lot of the time, it feels like it is not a way to do research that reflects what we genuinely care about.

Some of us shared that a lot of the time, when we applied to programs or tried to reach out in various ways, we were told that we could apply, but we were just not going to get priority. So it would help to have more professors who are open to and more actively seeking out high school mentees, research assistants, or other forms of involvement, because we feel that, at least in some of our experiences, high schoolers have always been pretty low on the list of who gets priority for these opportunities.

It would be great if—once people have realized that anthropology is what they want to pursue—they could look into professors who are doing research in their areas of interest and have better chances than they do now that one of those professors would mentor them and show them what they could do in their specific area of anthropology in the future. For that, we need more professors who are open to mentoring high school students, including offering opportunities to ask questions, participate in research, or even just observe professors doing their research.

No one starts with a resume with some good sauce on it, and to become an anthropologist, it is not enough to be curious about the field. We have to actually start engaging in research. So, as we are trying to get our foot in the door, especially when we are just starting out, a lot of it is just cold emailing and trying to find an opportunity, which can be discouraging.

Of course, that is all part of the process, but we can see how other fields and professional associations, from the American Mathematical Society to United Nations Associations, have much better support infrastructure for interested high schoolers, which is making a real impact on decisions that some of us make when


Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues
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we choose college majors and build plans for our future. We feel like just actively wanting high schoolers can help the field attract more highly motivated and capable talent, and so far, in our experience, it has not been that way.

II. Equipping Pre-College Students with Anthropological Knowledge and Skills

What the professional anthropological community seems to be more interested in is making basic anthropological knowledge more accessible to entry-level learners. For example, unlike serious research opportunities, introductory anthropology courses are usually easily accessible.

III. Introducing Anthropology to Pre-College Students as an Intellectual and Professional Path They Can Pursue

However, before someone looks up an anthropology course, they need to discover what anthropology is and realize that it is something they are interested in. As we talked about our experiences getting into anthropology, we noticed how broad a subject it is, covering all these different topics: the environment, inequality, AI impacts, and more. We talked a lot about how many people are unaware of what anthropology really is in school and how it would be great if more people got into anthropology and understood how applicable it is to their various fields. It is not obvious for a high schooler to connect their specific interests to the discipline of anthropology without more entry points.

We can all create more opportunities for high schoolers to discover anthropology, including starting clubs in high schools and connecting high schoolers with courses and resources to explore. But we would appreciate it if professional anthropologists worked with us to create more entry points, such as virtual talks at schools or visits where professional anthropologists come to schools and shed light on what they do.

IV. Supporting Pre-College Students in Exercising Agency and Taking the Initiative to Bring Their Voices into Professional Anthropological Discussions

At the same time, those of us who have just graduated from high school and chosen anthropology as our college major were able to share advice based on our own experience, and we expect that those of us who stay in the field for a while will be able to provide even more support to the generation of pre-college anthropologists that comes after us.

Some of us also think that, with the political pendulum in the United States likely to swing back, anthropology will soon become more accessible and a lot more open, so trying to create a community of young anthropologists working together to create positive change will become easier. Even now, some of us pointed out that just the fact that we are all getting together and talking about this shows that there is definitely hope for younger generations and for the field of anthropology as a whole.

We talked about feeling that we, as young people, have a lot to contribute to the conversation, and that by coming together and presenting our perspectives and insights to the AAA and professional anthropologists, including those in academia, we expect them to be genuinely interested in helping our cause.

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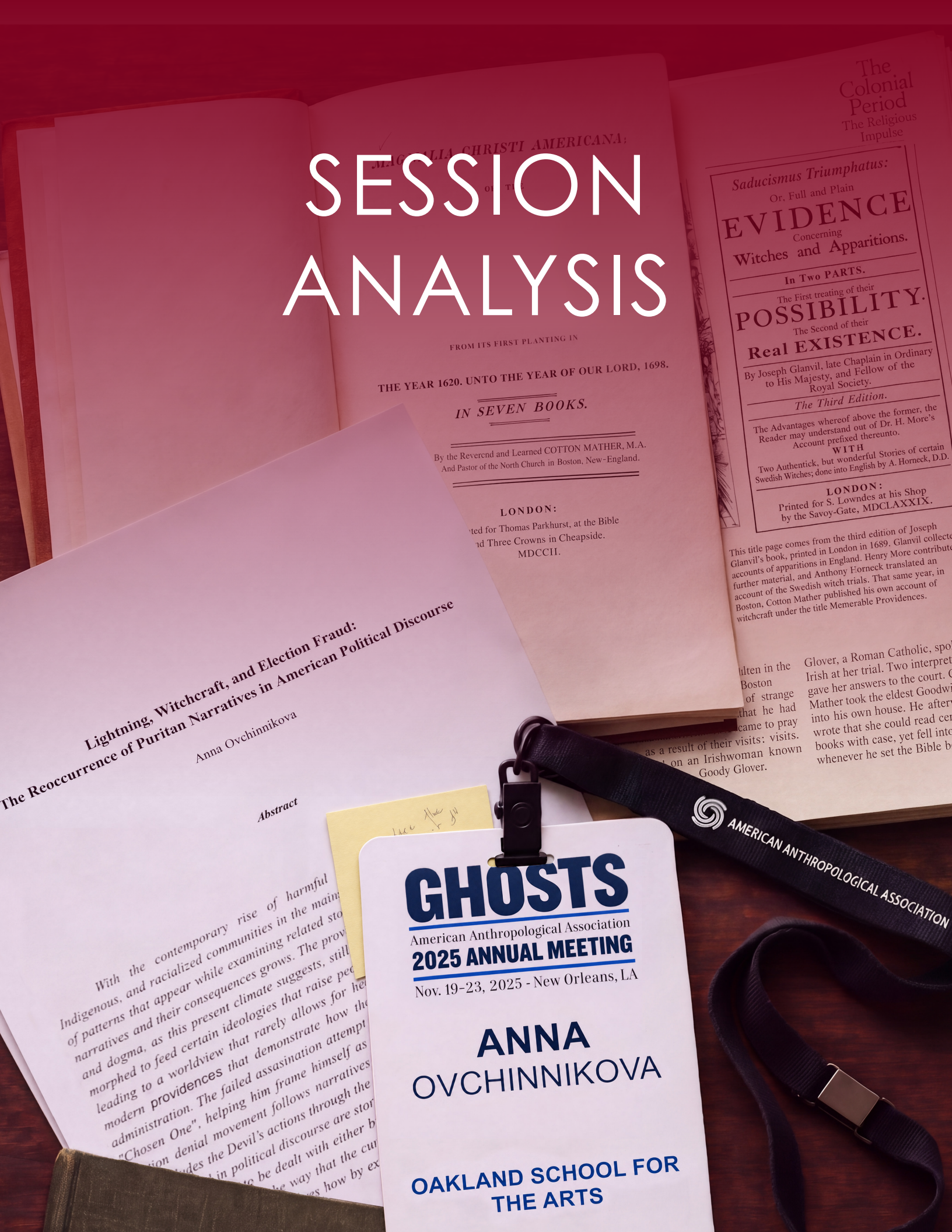
SESSION ANALYSIS



Engaging Pre-College Students as Future Anthropologists:
A Systematic Analysis of American Anthropological Association Conference Sessions, 2022–2026

High school anthropologists have a stake in the discipline's future and contributions to make in the present. In the Inaugural Online Consultation of the Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues (PCAD), delegates described pursuing anthropological interests, seeking research opportunities, and encountering barriers to participation in the professional community. Their reflections provide a starting point for examining how that community engages with students before college. This analysis examines American Anthropological Association (AAA) conference programs from 2022 through 2026 to explore the attention given to high school students' discovery of anthropology, learning, contributions to research, and leadership. It brings these program descriptions into conversation with delegates' experiences and aspirations, identifying points of connection and gaps that warrant further inquiry.

SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

This analysis systematically examines mentions of the terms "high school" and "high schoolers" in American Anthropological Association (AAA) conference programs from 2022 through 2026 through the lens of pre-college students' engagement with anthropology as a discipline. The source materials comprise the PDF programs for the 2022–2025 conferences (American Anthropological Association n.d., 2023, 2024, 2025) and the web-based program for the 2026 conference, accessed on September 20, 2026 (American Anthropological Association 2026). Sessions listed in the 2026 program are treated as scheduled activities. The 2022 program explicitly notes missing data, so additional relevant sessions may not be represented in the available records.

Every program was manually searched for the terms "high school" and "high schoolers," and every session containing either term was reviewed. This procedure provided complete coverage of sessions explicitly mentioning these terms within the program materials examined. The identified sessions were examined to distinguish substantive engagement with pre-college students from other references to high schools or high school populations. Substantive engagement was defined as a direct connection between the session content and the actual or potential involvement of pre-college students in learning about or contributing to the field of anthropology.

Sessions addressing substantive engagement were organized into four thematic categories using a conceptual framework based on the collective narrative from the Inaugural Online Consultation of the Pre-College Anthropology Dialogues (PCAD):

1. **Discovery:** Introducing anthropology to pre-college students as an intellectual and professional path they can pursue.
2. **Learning:** Equipping pre-college students with anthropological knowledge and skills.
3. **Contribution:** Engaging pre-college students as researchers and collaborators
4. **Leadership:** Supporting pre-college students in exercising agency and taking the initiative to bring their voices into professional anthropological discussions.

Each relevant session was assigned to exactly one category based on its primary focus. Appendix A contains relevant excerpts from session descriptions, along with notes explaining the rationale for assigning each session to a particular category.

The descriptions of all sessions within each thematic category were examined and compared with the reflections of high school anthropologists who attended the online consultation. The number of sessions in each category and their distribution across the five-year period were also examined and compared with the number of other sessions mentioning the search terms and with the estimated total number of AAA conference sessions.

The review is exhaustive with respect to the specified search terms in the programs examined. Its scope does not necessarily encompass relevant sessions described exclusively through alternative terminology, such as "pre-college," "middle school", "secondary education," "K–12," or "adolescents." These additional terms were used in an initial, non-exhaustive search but did not yield any sessions addressing substantive engagement of pre-college students in anthropology.

The analysis concerns how activities were presented in 2022-2026 conference programs; it does not independently evaluate their implementation or outcomes and it cannot establish whether the findings

reflect longer-term patterns or recent developments. It also excludes opportunities not reflected in conference programs, such as the AAA Junior Anthropologist Award and the AAA Online Internship Program, from which some of our delegates have benefited, as well as opportunities available to pre-college anthropologists outside AAA. Nevertheless, given AAA's central role in American anthropology, its conference programs provide valuable insight into how the professional anthropological community engages with pre-college anthropologists.

The search for sessions and their substantive analysis were conducted manually, without AI assistance. GPT-6 Astra Medium and GPT-6 Astra Extra High were used to format Chicago-style references, suggest stylistic alternatives, check spelling and punctuation, fix encoding issues with the 2023 program (the "" symbol replacing some letters), and estimate the total number of sessions in each PDF program.

FINDINGS

The search identified 90 unique conference sessions—approximately 2% of all sessions[1], excluding poster displays—with the keywords appearing in their titles or descriptions. It also identified 11 posters, eight of which appeared in the 2025 program. Two additional posters were initially identified in the 2026 program but were absent from the preliminary program when references were checked on October 12, 2026.

The dataset contained 10 sessions addressing substantive engagement: approximately 11% of sessions mentioning the keywords and an estimated 0.2% of all AAA sessions across the five conference years[2]. Seven appeared in the 2023 program, one in the 2025 program, and two in the 2026 program. Our search did not identify any sessions addressing substantive engagement in 2022 or 2024.

Sessions mentioning the keywords without addressing substantive engagement included anthropological research on high school populations unrelated to students' interest in anthropology (e.g., Ángeles 2026), as well as references to contexts unrelated to high school populations such as the repurposing of high school buildings as sites of torture (Payne 2026a, 2026b). Although every session was manually reviewed to determine whether it addressed substantive engagement, a systematic analysis of topics not related to substantive engagement was outside the scope of this study. Appendix B provides a full list of related session titles for future inquiry.

1. Discovery: Introducing Anthropology to Pre-College Students as an Intellectual and Professional Path They Can Pursue

In the collective narrative from our online consultation, approximately 20% of the text, measured by word count, concerned discovering anthropology. Because of our selection criteria, all delegates had successfully engaged with the discipline, but our stories revealed gaps in support at this initial stage. As some of us articulated in the collective narrative, "It is not obvious for a high schooler to connect their specific interests to the discipline of anthropology without more entry points."

Of the 10 sessions addressing substantive engagement, two fall under the Discovery category:

- One session was a town hall focused on attracting more people to anthropology amid concerns about declining participation in the field. It invited high school teachers and students to join the conversation alongside other stakeholder groups (Artz et al. 2023).

1 The estimated total of ~4,500 sessions falls within the range of 4,100–6,400 sessions, throughout which 10 sessions would represent 0.2% of the total when rounded to the nearest tenth of a percentage point.

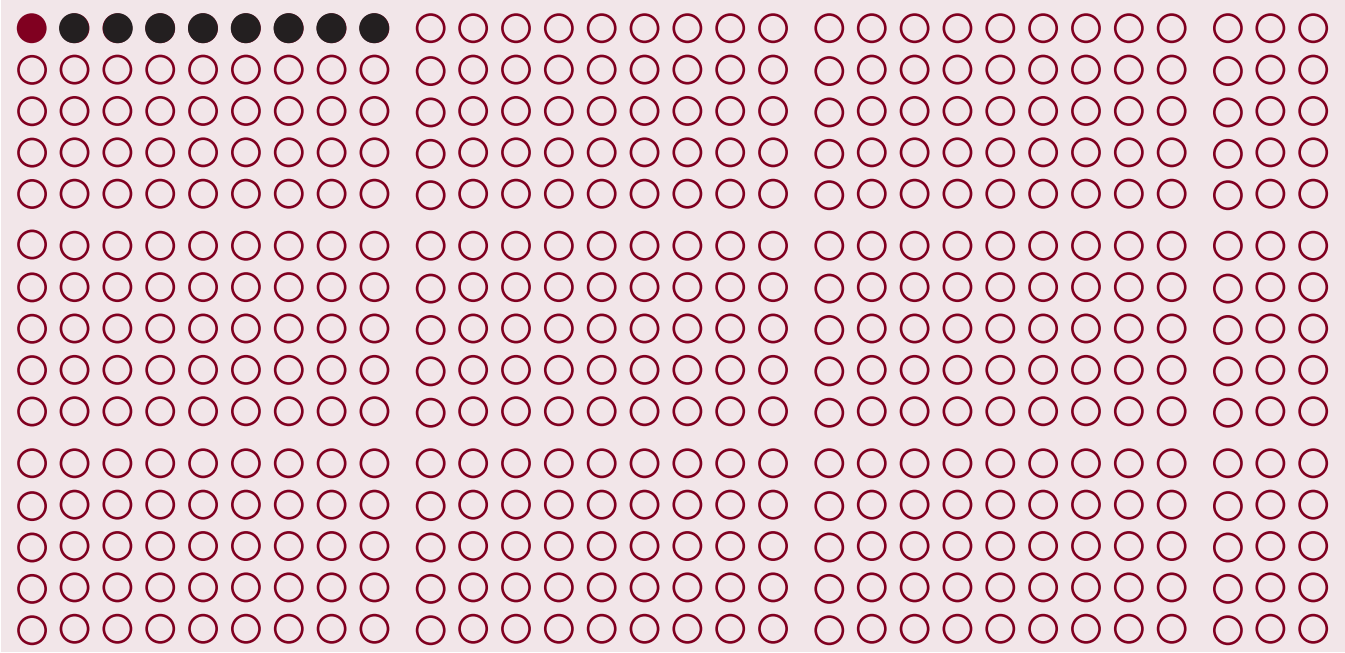
2 The description of this session in the 2023 program PDF we reviewed ends abruptly. See Appendix A for a full explanation of the reasoning behind our classification.

Sessions that address substantial engagement of pre-college students in anthropology 10

Other sessions that mention "high school"-related keywords 80

Estimated number of all other sessions 4410

= 10 Sessions



- Another session, scheduled for 2026, addresses the use of feminist anthropological frameworks in high school classrooms. It explores assignments and exercises that use anthropological methods to build community and ts strategic focus is on engaging a new generation of feminist anthropologists (Gill et al. 2026).

2. Learning: Equipping Pre-College Students with Anthropological Knowledge and Skills

Approximately 4% of the collective narrative, measured by word count, concerned learning more about anthropology. In our discussions, this emerged as a comparatively accessible aspect of engagement: "What the professional anthropological community seems to be more interested in is making basic anthropological knowledge more accessible to entry-level learners. For example, unlike serious research opportunities, introductory anthropology courses are usually easily accessible."

Our search identified two sessions in the Learning category:

- One session focused on using anthropology to teach "controversial" topics, including in high school settings[4] (Kolhoff et al. 2023).
- Another session focused on developing a cultural anthropology curriculum for students in grades 11–12 (Alvarez 2025).

3. Contribution: Engaging Pre-College Students as Researchers and Collaborators

More than half of delegates' reflections—approximately 54%—focused on research opportunities: "we talked about our experiences with research as high school anthropologists, about looking to learn more from professors, and about getting involved with different kinds of research—from doing data organization and literature reviews, to physically visiting places and volunteering on site."

We see this as the main bottleneck in supporting capable and motivated high school students with a serious interest in anthropology. Research opportunities could help sustain their engagement through pivotal decisions, such as choosing a college major, and strengthen the field's future talent pool at a time of political and economic pressures. As some of us put it in our discussions, "... we can see how other fields and professional associations, from the American Mathematical Society to United Nations Associations, have much better support infrastructure for interested high schoolers, which is making a real impact on decisions that some of us make when we choose college majors and build plans for our future."

Our search identified five entries in the Contribution category, all but one were from the 2023 program:

- One session focused on making academic articles more accessible through collaboration among high school students from New York, undergraduates, and a small team of scholars. Participants worked together to "transpose" several articles into a series of short, accessible readings (Fader et al. 2023).
- Another session presented a paper on the 20-year history of a public and collaborative ethnography project in New Orleans founded in collaboration with high school students (Regis 2023).

Sessions Addressing Pre-College Engagement in Anthropology by Year and Primary Focus, AAA Annual Meeting Programs, 2022–2026

	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2022-2026 Total
Discovery	0	1	0	0	1	2
Learning	0	1	0	1	0	2
Contribution	0	4	0	0	1	5
Leadership	0	1	0	0	0	1
All Sessions	***0***	***7***	***0***	***1***	***2***	***10***

- Two sessions, a paper presentation and a panel discussion, featured the same community ethnography project on language and gentrification that involved students of a predominantly Black high school in Washington D.C. In that project, the students collected and analyzed data, as well as made publishing decisions, which was positioned as flipping the conventional dynamics by engaging community members in interpreting and translating with the assistance of a researcher (Sims 2023; Slobe et al. 2023).
- The latest session, scheduled for the upcoming conference in St. Louis, is a roundtable discussion that explores "collaboration in teaching as a vital transformative praxis through which we can live into more fully human relationships and work together to respond to the compounding crises of this historical moment". Its description includes partnerships with high school students (Hamm-Rodriguez et al. 2026).

4. Leadership: Supporting Pre-College Students in Exercising Agency and Taking the Initiative to Bring Their Voices into Professional Anthropological Discussions.

Approximately 22% of the collective narrative, measured by word count, was dedicated to pre-college anthropologists' self-organization and initiative. In that section, our delegates also described the support they expect from the broader anthropological community: "We talked about feeling that we, as young people, have a lot to contribute to the conversation, and that by coming together and presenting our perspectives and insights to the AAA and professional anthropologists, including those in academia, we expect them to be genuinely interested in helping our cause."

Two sessions (Gill et al. 2026; Regis 2023) had a strong leadership dimension but were ultimately classified under Discovery and Contribution, respectively (see Appendix A for further details on their classification). Of the 10 sessions addressing substantive engagement, one was classified under Leadership:

This session showcased anthropological research on education, art, identity, mobility, and the environment conducted by four high school students. It also explicitly centered their experiences as pre-college anthropologists and supported their efforts to bring their voices into professional anthropological discussions (Halperin et al. 2023).

DISCUSSION

Looking at the composition of AAA conference sessions over the last five years, we see that pre-college anthropology is represented at all the four aspects of young anthropologists' engagement—from discovery to learning to active contribution to leadership—but that representation is uneven. No relevant sessions were identified in two of the five years, most were concentrated in the 2023 program, and the 2025 and 2026 programs covered only one and two of the four aspects, respectively.

For American high school students, the period available to discover and pursue academic interests before making college plans is relatively short. A year without visible opportunities to engage with a professional community may influence whether students continue pursuing anthropology or turn to fields offering more accessible support. Conference programs provide one indication of such opportunities, although they do not capture the full range of support available.

At the same time, the relevant sessions demonstrate the potential of AAA meetings as a platform for supporting pre-college anthropology in ways that respond to students' needs and contribute to a long-term strategic vision. In these session descriptions, high school students appear as agentic actors and active contributors who participate in collaborative research and showcase

“... [AAA] sessions [that address substantive engagement of pre-college students in anthropology] demonstrate the potential of AAA meetings as a platform for supporting pre-college anthropology in ways that respond to students’ needs and contribute to a long-term strategic vision. In these session descriptions, high school students appear as agentic actors and active contributors who participate in collaborative research and showcase independent work.”

independent work. The sessions also include strategic discussions about attracting students to the field and engaging them as researchers. These patterns are consistent with the priorities discussed by PCAD delegates during the online consultation. They invite further inquiry into the conditions and actions that could strengthen these favorable patterns, make them more consistent over time, and increase their visibility to both pre-college anthropologists and interested members of the wider anthropological community.

Our online consultation provides additional context for interpreting these findings: "Some of us shared that a lot of the time, when we applied to programs or tried to reach out in various ways, we were told that we could apply, but we were just not going to get priority. So it would help to have more professors who are open to and more actively seeking out high school mentees, research assistants, or other forms of involvement, because we feel that, at least in some of our experiences, high schoolers have always been pretty low on the list of who gets priority for these opportunities"

These shared experiences highlight the gap that still exists in supporting the next generation of pre-college anthropologists. Future inquiries could track changes in AAA conference programming over time, analyze coverage of pre-college anthropology in Anthropology News, and draw on a broader range of perspectives on engaging pre-college students as leaders and contributors through interviews and participatory processes involving researchers, teachers, industry anthropologists, and AAA officers. These perspectives could help illuminate the mindsets and systemic forces shaping the patterns identified in this analysis and inform efforts to strengthen both pre-college engagement and the future of American anthropology.

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Phillips, Aprille. 2023. "Policy Ecology, Intersectionality, and the Seal of Biliteracy in Nebraska." Presentation in the session "Exploring Interstitiality within Intersectional Identities to Make Sense of Transitioning Education Contexts in Nebraska," chaired by Jessica Mitchell-McCollough, at the AAA/CASCA Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, Canada, November 15–19.

Regis, Helen, and Rachel Breunlin. 2023. "Ethnography as Infrastructure for Imagining Futures in the City." Presentation in the session "Moving beyond Disaster and Recovery: New Perspectives on Public Scholarship and Engaged Anthropology after Katrina," chaired by Martha Radice and Rachel Breunlin, at the AAA/CASCA Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, Canada, November 15–19.

Samuel, Morenike, and Courtney Helfrecht. 2025. "Coaches' Perspectives on Football, Health, and Well-Being among Title 1 Athletes." Poster presentation in the session "Morning Coffee Poster Session" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Shaw, Carolyn Martin. 2025. "Double Haunting: Reading Fiction from the Civil Rights Movement and Reliving It." Presentation in the session "Shape Shifting Ghosts, Saintly and Devilish, Haunt Our Crisis," chaired by Betty Harris, at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Sims, Nandi. 2023. "Community Ethnography in Chocolate City." Presentation in the session "Linguistic Anthropological Methods in Education," chaired by Alexander Feliciano Mejía and Tyanna Slobe, at the AAA/CASCA Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, Canada, November 15–19.

Slobe, Tyanna. 2023. "Expertise and Elite Stances in Classroom Interactions." Presentation in the session "Linguistic Anthropological Methods in Education," chaired by Alexander Feliciano Mejía and Tyanna Slobe, at the AAA/CASCA Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, Canada, November 15–19.

Slobe, Tyanna, Nandi Sims, and Anar Parikh. 2023. "Linguistic Anthropological Methods in Education." Conference session at the AAA/CASCA Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, Canada, November 15–19.

Slobe, Tyanna. 2025. "Affective Divides: Political Crisis and the Politics of Emotion in Chilean Classrooms." Presentation in the session "Youth Language and Politics," chaired by Tyanna Slobe, at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Sosa, Gloria. 2025. "Undocumented High School Girl Activists Leading Social Change in Los Angeles." Flash presentation in the session "Association of Latina/o and Latinx Anthropologists Flash Session #1" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Sosa, Gloria. 2026. "Undocumented High School Girls Leading Social Change in Los Angeles." Scheduled oral presentation in the session "Latina/o/x Migration: Resilience, Resistance, and Reality" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO, United States, November 18–22. https://americananthro.secure-platform.com/annualmeeting/solicitations/103006/sessiongallery/95835.

Spiegelman, Julia. 2023. "Translinguistic Agency and Its Limits: Lessons from Adolescent Non-binary Learners of Spanish." Presentation in the session "Trans Linguistic Logics: Pronominal and Grammatical Epistemologies," chaired by Joshua Raclaw and Ariana Steele, at the AAA/CASCA Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, Canada, November 15–19.

Stalcup, Meg. 2025. "Visualizing Empires: Maps, Botanical Illustrations, Memes, Renderings." Presentation in the session "Media and Empire in the Americas," chaired by Laura-Zoe Humphreys, at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Stone, Nomi, Kate Marshall, Aisha Beliso-DeJesus, et al. 2025. "The Book's Spectral Futures: Academic Writing in the Age of Public Anthropology." Roundtable/town hall at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Sullivan, Noelle. 2024. "'Making a Difference' in Global Health Voluntourism." Presentation in the session "Going with Your Gut: Visceral Ethics, Justice and Praxis in Anthropology" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL, United States, November 20–23.

Tallman, Paula. 2024. "Action Research for Gender Equality in Peru and Indonesia." Poster presentation at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL, United States, November 20–23.

Tavarez, David. 2025. "Revitalization, Knowledge and Self-Determination in the Zapotec Diaspora." Presentation in the session "Language, Environment, and Changing Climates: New Approaches to Language Reclamation," chaired by Georgia Ennis and Jacqueline Messing, at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Tooker, Deborah. 2024. "Akha 'Soul' Wellness Rituals in the Context of Thai 'Modernity.'" Presentation in the session "Cultural (Dis)content and Form in the Experience of Mental Health and Illness" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL, United States, November 20–23.

Tyeklar, Nora. 2026. "'Get Up, Stand Up': Speaking and Teaching through Institutional Survival at Dr. Ámbédkar High School in Hungary." Scheduled oral presentation in the session "On the Verge of Belonging: Language, Precarity, and Institutional Thresholds," chaired by Nora Tyeklar, at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO, United States, November 18–22. https://americananthro.secure-platform.com/annualmeeting/solicitations/103006/sessiongallery/95652.

Ullman, Char. 2024. "Vulnerable Policy Actors: A Network Ethnography Looking at Racial Equity and Gender Inclusivity Policies in a Majority-Minority Public High School." Presentation in the session "Coalition of the Unwilling: An Exploration of Vulnerability and Precarity as Sources and Resources for Resistance" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL, United States, November 20–23.

Vaught, Sabina, Ikenna Acholonu, Margaret Goldman, et al. 2024. "Epistemic Disobedience and Ethnographic Futures." Roundtable/town hall at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL, United States, November 20–23.

Ventura, Julissa, Paulette Curtis, Fatima Raja, Kristen Ogilvie, and Janeth Martinez-Cortes. 2022. "Power, Equity, and Identity in Higher Education." Virtual oral presentation session at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, United States, November 9–13.

Wagner, Josefine. 2024. "'What Are You Looking At?' Navigating Fieldwork at an Irish High School." Presentation in the session "Ethnographic Work in Learning Spaces: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Methodologies and Research Ethics" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Tampa, FL, United States, November 20–23.

Wolf, Jacob. 2026. "'Think Like the Computer': Exploring Subjectivity and Ideology in K–12 Computer Science Education." Scheduled oral presentation in the session "Education, Power, and Possibility: Ethnographic Perspectives on Learning, Ideology, and Social Transformation" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO, United States, November 18–22. https://americananthro.secure-platform.com/annualmeeting/solicitations/103006/sessiongallery/95365.

Wong, Jia-Hui Stefanie. 2023. "Centering Counternarratives of Communities of Color: Teaching and Learning Black and Latinx Studies in Connecticut." Presentation in the session "Education in Raciolinguistic Transitional Spaces," organized by Hilario Lomeli, at the AAA/CASCA Annual Meeting, Toronto, ON, Canada, November 15–19.

Wong, Jia-Hui Stefanie. 2025. "Ethnic Studies without Ethnic Studies Pedagogy?: Implications of Mandating the Teaching of Ethnic Studies." Presentation in the session "Persistent Hauntings: The Complexities of Institutionalizing Racial Justice Projects in Education," chaired by Catherine Park, at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Wurtz, Heather, Sarah Willen, Katherine Mason, et al. 2022. "Grassroots Collaborative Ethnography during COVID-19: Insights from the Pandemic Journaling Project." Virtual roundtable/town hall at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, United States, November 9–13.

Yıldız, Güneş. 2026. "Tracing Anxieties: American Missionary Schools in Turkey and the Figure of the Spy." Scheduled oral presentation in the session "IVPs Centered on Middle East" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO, United States, November 18–22. https://americananthro.secure-platform.com/annualmeeting/solicitations/103006/sessiongallery/96841.

Yoon, Sun Min. 2022. "Socialism in Vietnamese High School and Nationalism among Vietnamese Youth." Poster presentation at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Seattle, WA, United States, November 9–13.

Yudawanti, Anisa. 2025. "If These Walls Could Talk: Negotiating the Echoes of Carcerality and Coloniality in School Infrastructure." Poster presentation in the session "Happy Hour Poster Session" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Zaloom, Caitlin. 2025. "The Credit Compromise: How Redistributing Opportunity Beat the Culture Wars." Presentation in the session "Spreading It Around?: New Perspectives on Redistribution," chaired by Caitlin Zaloom and Deborah James, at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans, LA, United States, November 19–23.

Zoller, Andrea. 2026. "Dialect, Mother Tongue, and Dueling Economies of Recognition in a Northern Italian School." Scheduled oral presentation in the session "Remaking Place and Space in Europe" at the American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO, United States, November 18–22. https://americananthro.secure-platform.com/annualmeeting/solicitations/103006/sessiongallery/95256.

Appendix A: Excerpts from Session Descriptions Referring to Substantial Engagement of Pre-College Students in Anthropology

I. Discovery: Introducing Anthropology to Pre-College Students as an Intellectual and Professional Path They Can Pursue

2023:

"The Anthropology Career Readiness Network (ACRN) is aware of the substantial change occurring in higher education today. Overall enrollments are shrinking, departments are under pressure to attract and retain students, and instructor hiring is limited. Anthropology programs are no exception to these patterns. In the U.S., there has been a 20% decline in bachelor's degrees between 2011-2021. Some anthropology programs have been merged or are at risk of being merged; members of some other anthropology programs fear being eliminated entirely. Given that so much of this change affecting colleges and universities is occurring on the heels of COVID-19, it is no wonder that instructors and students are experiencing burnout, and that grave concerns are mounting over the future of anthropology programs.

One option open to anthropology programs under these circumstances involves increasing anthropology's usefulness and relevance in the world. How might anthropology teaching faculty and anthropology students and graduates tackle this challenge? This Town Hall is designed specifically to discuss strategies for accomplishing this task. We welcome all instructors-from high schools and community colleges to those working with PhD candidates. Our hope is that you will talk about what would be most useful to you as you are educating this next generation. We extend an invitation to all students, hoping you will share your thoughts and concerns about using your anthropology when you enter the workplace. We also ask anthropologists employed in industry, government, and nonprofits to participate to share what you have learned based on your personal experiences" (Artz et al. 2023).

Note: This session is an example of a holistic approach to engaging high school students in anthropology. Notably, students were explicitly invited to join the conversation. Although the discussion addressed learning and relevance, its framing around the "pressure to attract and retain students" supports its classification under Discovery.

2026:

"In this Discussion session, participants will share a pivotal assignment or exercise that they have used to engage students and/or other constituents in meaningful and critical conversation on the current political moment, as well as thinking "on the verge" toward future possibilities for circulating feminist anthropological methodologies beyond the academy. Participants will consider how to sustain the relevancy of anthropology and feminist writing inside the institution and beyond. We will explore the meaning and materiality of "assignments" (that can be accomplished in classrooms) and "exercises" (that may be utilized within academe, but also in organizing and educational work beyond the academy). We will prioritize ways that we can draw our students and young activists—those who will likely be the next generation of feminist anthropologists—to engage in work that utilizes methodological strategies from anthropology that may be employed within higher education contexts, by activists engaged in coalition-building, within high school classrooms, and other unexpected spaces, such as within families, and in the home" (Gill et al. 2026).

Note: This session is an example of a primary focus on Discovery combined with strategic attention to Learning, Contribution, and Leadership. Its emphasis on participants sharing "a pivotal assignment or exercise that they have used to engage

students and/or other constituents in meaningful and critical conversation" in the context of cultivating "the next generation of feminist anthropologists" supports its classification under Discovery.

II. Learning: Equipping Pre-College Students with Anthropological Knowledge and Skills

2023:

"Join the leadership of the American Anthropological Association and the National Council for the Social Studies for a discussion on how anthropology can be used to teach "controversial" topics (race, gender / sexuality, religion, migration) in the social…" (Kolhoff et al. 2023).

Note: The description of this session in the 2023 program PDF we reviewed ends abruptly. However, one of the presenters, David Homa, lists Los Gatos High School as his affiliation. Because part of the description is missing, however, it is unclear whether the session explicitly frames teaching these topics as a way to encourage students to pursue anthropology or simply as a pedagogical approach to meeting specific learning objectives. While we assume the latter, the former would warrant moving this session from Learning to Discovery.

2025:

"In this age of increasing social division, young people desperately need theoretical frameworks, terminology, and facts grounded in social science research to help them understand their world.

Though not often taught at the high school level, cultural anthropology has the potential to help adolescents develop the language and knowledge needed to explore otherwise abstract social phenomena such as inequity and structural violence. With ethnography, the discipline also communicates the importance of trusting people's lived experience and the validity of experience as a way of knowing-an essential lesson for helping develop empathic young people. This presentation reflects on my experiences teaching cultural anthropology to 11th and 12th grade students in both public and independent school contexts and proposes possible approaches to curriculum design for high school anthropology courses that can help achieve these aims. Teaching cultural anthropology in high school requires a different approach than the university level, due to the greater diversity of interest and reading levels. The presentation explores specific curricular and pedagogical approaches that have been effective in the high school classroom, including backwards design, explicit vocabulary instruction, discussion and reading modeled on English courses, and experiential learning through the practices of participant observation and interviewing. These strategies are grounded in an exploration of curriculum theory, specifically the tension between "emergent curriculum" and an objectives-based approach. Finally, the presentation articulates the need for anthropologists to make instructional resources more accessible to a high school population and advocates for strategies that can help make theory and scholarly research comprehensible to a younger audience" (Alvarez 2025).

Note: This session's strong focus on pedagogy, including its exploration of "possible approaches to curriculum design for high school anthropology courses," supports its classification under Learning.

III. Contribution: Engaging High School Students as Researchers and Collaborators

2023:

"The Demystifying Language Project (DLP), established in 2018 by Ayala Fader, is an inter-institutional collaboration between Fordham University UMass Amherst and New York City public high schools. The project aims to transform high school students' experiences with language, which are too often prescriptive and stigmatize the diverse linguistic repertoires of multilingual and multidialectal students of color. Building on similar efforts such as the SKILLS program (Bucholtz, Casillas, and Lee 2018), the DLP aims to introduce students to research on language and power, and encourage them to use those ideas to think through the role of language in their lives and communities. However, a 2019 Fordham pilot program revealed a dearth of reading material in the field that is accessible to high school students. To address this issue, the DLP organizers created an innovative writing workshop supported by grants from Wenner-Gren, Spencer, and Fordham University. The workshop, held in summer 2023, involved structured collaborations and mutual mentoring among scholars of language and social life, undergraduate students from our two institutions, and New York City high school students. Small teams of scholars, undergraduates, and high school students, worked together to 'transpose' (Mena 2022) published academic articles into a series of short and accessible readings. This curated series will be published online as an open-access resource co-hosted by the Society for Linguistic Anthropology section of the American Anthropological Association and Fordham's New York Center for Public Anthropology.

This roundtable provides an ethnographic account of the philosophy, design, and implementation of the DLP writing workshop, bringing together participants with different roles in the project to talk about their experiences and share lessons learned. Ayala Fader and Miriam Urízar-Ávila will discuss the history of the DLP and the organization and goals of the writing workshop. Lynnete Arnold will discuss the Central American social change model of acompañamiento (accompaniment) that was used to structure collaboration among high school students, undergraduates, and academics (Arnold 2019). Mike Mena will speak about his approach to teaching non-specialist audiences using what he calls 'transposition pedagogy' (Mena 2022). As both method and creative mindset, transposition pedagogy is a way of translating academic content for general audiences that leans into nuance by using familiar metaphors in unfamiliar ways, producing academic content that is simple, but never simplified. Participating scholar Krystal Smalls and Fordham undergraduate students Penny Joseph and Danna Rojas will discuss their experiences in the writing workshop. To conclude the session, Donna Auston of the Wenner Gren Foundation will discuss the Wenner Gren Workshop Grant that funded the writing workshop and the importance of public anthropology" (Fader et al. 2023).

Note: This session covers "structured collaborations and mutual mentoring" that involved high school students which supports its classification under Contribution.

"This paper considers the development of a public and collaborative ethnography in New Orleans over the past 20 years. Founded in 2004, the Neighborhood Story Project published a series of books with public high school students using photography, ethnography, and creative non-fiction to tell (decolonized) stories about their neighborhoods and communities. This grew into a nonprofit organization in partnership with the University of New Orleans. The first five books were published in June of 2005. A few months later, when the city was under water, there was a strong pull from national media to concentrate on the disaster itself. As an organization, we made a commitment to situate living and writing about the city within long arcs of time and a deep commitment to building equitable futures. We were writing through rather than about disaster. We sought to create collaborations with neighborhoods and community-based organizations to put forward the best of themselves and what they could be. In 2006, we wrote about this beginning with the Nine Times Social and Pleasure Club's reclamation of the Ninth Ward, and have since developed an imprint

at UNO Press, worked with community-based museums on catalogues and public programs, and built bridges between grassroots and mainstream institutions. We have co-created a living archive – spanning archive and repertoire (Taylor 2003) – that has helped to change the paradigm for ethical and collaborative co-creation in the city. Building on Alisse Waterston's (2020) query about lightness in dark times, we track some of the interventions of the NSP as public anthropology that has helped to create a narrative infrastructure for the city" (Regis 2023).

Note: This session focuses on public and collaborative ethnography, including a project involving high school students that grew into a nonprofit organization. It has a strong leadership dimension, noted in the Leadership subsection of the Findings section. However, because the description does not present high school students as initiators of the collaboration, we classify the session under Contribution rather than Leadership.

"This paper considers how we can incorporate historically underrepresented populations in the processes of conducting ethnographic research and, subsequently, how these researchers conceptualize their responsibility to educate the public on their results. I describe a community ethnography project aimed at understanding the cultural and linguistic outcomes of gentrification, led by youth researchers at a primarily Black high school in Washington, D.C. In the project, students will design ethnographically-informed research; conduct interviews; write fieldnotes; analyze linguistic and ethnographic data; and publish their results in a public-facing forum with the help of academic researchers. Historically, ethnographers aim to interpret a community's culture and translate it into meaningful theories with the assistance of community members. The project discussed in this presentation flips the dynamic so that community members are interpreting and translating with the assistance of a researcher. The design of the Community Ethnography in Chocolate City project is not new, but this analysis of and commentary on the methodology comes at a time in which calls to diversify academic voices and reach new audiences abound" (Sims 2023).

Note: This session focuses on involving students in anthropological research and providing the support infrastructure that would enable them to "design ethnographically-informed research; conduct interviews; write fieldnotes; analyze linguistic and ethnographic data; and publish their results in a public-facing forum with the help of academic researchers." While the description does not present the students as the project's initiators—a role that would shift the focus from Contribution to Leadership—the session is an excellent example of engaging high school students as active contributors to public-facing research.

"This panel brings together scholars from interdisciplinary academic backgrounds (linguistic anthropology, education, linguistics, and cultural anthropology) to discuss ethnographic approaches to the study of language in educational contexts. We start in the classroom: the first two presentations focus on student-teacher and peer interactions that reveal larger political projects related to socioeconomic class in Chile (Slobe) and mother-tongue, multilingual, and colonial education in Aruba and Curaçao (Wiel). The next speakers move us beyond traditional classroom contexts to examine (trans)local educational projects that encourage ethnographers of language to re-imagine our methodologies. Mejía's work with Mayan-Mam communities in Guatemala and Oakland grounds analysis of ethnoracial identities in participants' own perspectives on cultural and linguistic variation in contexts local to the Cuchumatán mountains and Bay Area diasporic communities. Sims highlights potential research contributions from groups historically underrepresented in academia through a community ethnography project on language and gentrification wherein youth from a predominantly Black high school in Washington D.C. make data collection, analysis, and publishing decisions. Together, the papers in this panel highlight the importance of incorporating community members' perspectives and experiences into our research because our work has broader implications for educational and legal policy. This is especially clear in the final paper by Parikh that examines the consequences of U.S. federal policy that use

the category of 'limited English proficiency' to describe individuals who face linguistic barriers in accessing federal programs and services. Drawing from ethnographic research with South Asian civic engagement initiatives in Chicago and applied anthropological work with an Atlanta-based Asian American advocacy campaign, Parikh considers how ideas about education and (il)literacy among marginalized communities inform broader policy campaigns centered around expanding language access. A discussion led by Dr. Elaine Chun will reflect on the scholars' contributions to linguistic anthropology and education." (Slobe et al. 2023).

Note: This session discusses a paper concerning the same initiative as the previous one, so the same classification logic applies.

2026:

"One of two discussions on collaboration, this roundtable-style discussion explores collaboration in teaching as a vital transformative praxis through which we can live into more fully human relationships and work together to respond to the compounding crises of this historical moment. We will need to be able to work together if we are to survive, and yet the individualism that is the hallmark of our field, our institutions, and our society at large has left many of us without the skills needed to build and sustain collaborative projects. This roundtable discussion aims to increase our capacity for collective work in the realm of teaching by bringing together participants with experience carrying out a variety of collaborative projects in undergraduate and graduate teaching in anthropology. These projects include study abroad and study away programs, partnerships with directly-affected communities, community organizations, and high schools, and mutually supportive co-teaching between colleagues at different ranks. Participants will discuss the different models and frameworks used in their projects, the potentially productive role of tension in collaborative partnerships, and the values that undergird diverse collaborative approaches to teaching. In addition, participants will share how they enact these models through concrete practices, providing insights into strategies for successful and sustained collaboration. Ultimately, we will consider what it is that we accomplish through collaborative teaching, moving beyond the specific goals of a particular course to explore how collaboration can construct more liberatory forms of relationship and build a more just world." (Hamm-Rodriguez et al. 2026).

Note: This session focuses on collaborative approaches to teaching, including partnerships with high school students. Its emphasis on using collaborating across ranks and "moving beyond the specific goals of a particular course to explore how collaboration can construct more liberatory forms of relationship and build a more just world" supports its classification under Contribution.

IV. Leadership: Supporting Pre-College Students in Exercising Agency and Taking the Initiative to Bring Their Voices into Professional Anthropological Discussions

"Join us for a special presentation of anthropological research completed by high school students. In this session, we will hear from students who have delved in the world of anthropology, researching issues related to education, art, identity, mobility, and the environment. Through the showcase, these future anthropologists will demonstrate their critical thinking, cross-cultural understanding, and curiosity in tackling complex anthropological questions. Not only will presenters discuss their research, but we will also hear how they became interested in anthropology and what it is like to pursue this research while in high school" (Halperin et al. 2023).

Note: This session centers on pre-college students' anthropological research and, crucially, their experiences of becoming pre-college anthropologists. It is the only session that centers the voices of pre-college students and supports their direct engagement with the AAA community, supporting its classification under Leadership.

Appendix B: Titles of Sessions That Mention "High School" or Related Terms but Do Not Address Substantive Engagement of High School Students in Anthropology

The following list includes all other sessions from the past five years that mention "high school" or "high schoolers" but do not fall into the four categories discussed above:

2022:

1. Identities With/In Educational Landscapes (Blackburn et al. 2022).
2. Imagined Futures: Unsettling Policy And Practice In Educational Spaces (Nichols et al. 2022).
3. Power, Equity, And Identity In Higher Education (Ventura et al. 2022).
4. Grassroots Collaborative Ethnography During Covid-19: Insights From The Pandemic Journaling Project (Wurtz et al. 2022).

2023:

1. Estar aquí en los Estados Unidos. Y visitar a mi mamá: Newcomer Youth's Transborder Dreams (Ángeles 2023).
2. Cellular Ambivalences: The Anthropology of Digital Interactions in the US (Bell et al. 2023).
3. Indigenous-based Resurgence in Urban Education (Colin 2023).
4. Education in Raciolinguistic Transitional Spaces (Elin-Saintine et al. 2023).
5. Mexican In/migrant Students Negotiating School Access in Rural Idaho (Gallegos Buitron 2023).
6. Social, cultural, and political dimensions of mathematical success for Black American children (Gholson 2023).
7. Illuminating care in the co-construction of cultural community wealth in an English Learning (EL) cl… (Gray 2023).
8. "It's not just a facade": State Counterinsurgency and International Teacher Solidarity in a Public S… (Halle-Erby 2023).
9. Identity Transitions and (Re)Construction in International Contexts (Hanks et al. 2023).
10. Tensions in Transition to Project Based Assessment: Negotiating Transformative Agency while Shifting Curriculum and School Culture (Hantzopoulos 2023).
11. Paths of Resistance in the Classroom (Harris 2023).
12. Instructional Conversations and Multilingual Learners: Moving from Isolation to Belonging (Hixon 2023).
13. "This place is like high school": Gossip and the positionality of the field worker (Jones 2023).
14. Higher Education Experiences with Transitions (Kentor et al. 2023).
15. What Does it Mean to Be First Gen? Using a Transgenerational Lens to Understand Care and College-Going (Kentor 2023).
16. Indonesian Students in a Singaporean University and Their Lessons in Evaluating Self-Worth (Larson 2023).
17. Transitional Futures: Language and Cultural Ideologies among Yucatec Maya Schoolchildren (Litka 2023).
18. Youth Dreamworlds in the Orinoco River: 'Green Energy', Plantations, And Education In Rural Colombia (Lopez Vega 2023).
19. Shhh! I'm a School Librarian Using My BA in Anthropology to Radically Transform the Library (Orr 2023).
20. Policy Ecology, Intersectionality, and the Seal of Biliteracy in Nebraska (Phillips 2023).
21. Expertise and Elite Stances in Classroom Interactions (Slobe 2023).
22. Translinguistic agency and its limits: Lessons from adolescent non-binary learners of Spanish (Spiegelman 2023).
23. Centering Counternarratives of Communities of Color (Wong 2023).

2024:

1. "Le Baccalauréat : Influences on the Identity of High Schoolers and their Relationship with the Greater Community (Abel 2024).
2. Educational Anthropology and Its Current and Future use for Alaskan Educational Systems (Addison 2024).
3. All I know is "Gaawiin:" Struggles and Issues Encountered by Indigenous Students learning

Ojibwe (Drexler 2024).

4. Ethnographic work in learning spaces: Cross-cultural perspectives on methodologies and research ethics (Gugoloth et al. 2024).
5. New Trouble: The Construction of Newness and the Imperative to Practice Solidarity with Insurgency in Im/migrant Education (Halle-Erby 2024).
6. Renegotiating the Boundaries of Urban Space in a Security Context: An Ethnography of Two High Schools in the Northern Neighborhoods of Marseille (Mellal 2024).
7. "Making a Difference" in Global Health Voluntourism (Sullivan 2024).
8. Akha "Soul" Wellness Rituals in the Context of Thai "Modernity" (Tooker 2024).
9. Vulnerable Policy Actors: A Network Ethnography Looking at Racial Equity and Gender Inclusivity Policies in a Majority-Minority Public High School. (Ullman 2024).
10. Epistemic Disobedience and Ethnographic Futures (Vaught et al. 2024).
11. What are you looking at?" Navigating Fieldwork at an Irish High School (Wagner 2024).

2025:

1. High School Newcomer Youth's Classroom Experiences: From Linguistic Violence to Linguistic Sanctuaries (Ángeles 2025a).
2. Navigating Exclusion: The High School Experiences of Immigrant Youth in Rural Pennsylvania (Ángeles 2025b).
3. Hevalti and the Politics of Intimacy: Friendship as a Foundation of Contemporary Kurdish Mobilization (Aydin 2025).
4. 2808 Haunting Monoglossic Ghosts in the Education of Multilingual Communities (Caldas et al. 2025).
5. Living Frozen: Experiencing Suspension, Anxiety, and Uncertainty in China's Gaokao Repeaters (Chen & Liu 2025).
6. To Possess the Ghosts: Black Youth Aesthetics as (Re)memory and Haunting in Racialized Geographies of Terror (Coles 2025).
7. Unpacking Moral Development: Toward a Processual Approach to the Ordinary Ethics of Play and Games (De Francesco 2025).
8. Scale and Loss: frontiers of care and the ghosts of mediation (Dent & Bell 2025).
9. "Did you see what she posted?": Multimodal Gossip and the Ethics of Exposure in Digitally Mediated Youth Interaction (Duric 2025).
10. Youth Language and Politics (Ghazaryan et al. 2025).
11. The Construction of Newness in the Context of Conquest (Halle-Erby 2025).
12. Association of Latina/o and Latinx Anthropologists Flash Session #1 (Magana Carbajal 2025).
13. Disrupting Hauntings of Linguistic Ideologies in Educational Soundscapes with Newcomer Students using Multilingual Youth Participatory Action Research (Meinzen et al. 2025).
14. Community organizing for school-based ethnic studies in a post-Covid world: Collective power in a virtual public meeting (Nygreen et al. 2025).
15. Circulating Elders: Beyond Dichotomies of "Left Behind Children" and Senior Caregivers in Rural Meixian (Oxfeld 2025).
16. Justice beyond reparation: Remembrance and future-making in the aftermath of the Sewol Ferry Disaster in South Korea (Park 2025).
17. Double Haunting: Reading Fiction from the Civil Rights Movement and Reliving It (Shaw 2025).
18. Affective Divides: Political Crisis and the Politics of Emotion in Chilean Classrooms (Slobe 2025).
19. Undocumented High School Girl Activists Leading Social Change in Los Angeles (Sosa 2025).
20. Visualizing Empires: Maps, Botanical Illustrations, Memes, Renderings (Stalcup, 2025)
21. The Book's Spectral Futures: Academic Writing in the Age of Public Anthropology (Stone et al. 2025).
22. Revitalization, knowledge and self-determination in the Zapotec diaspora (Tavarez 2025).
23. Ethnic Studies Without Ethnic Studies Pedagogy?: Implications of Mandating the Teaching of Ethnic Studies (Wong 2025).
24. The Credit Compromise: How Redistributing Opportunity Beat the Culture Wars (Zaloom 2025).

2026:

1. Navigating (In)visibility: Latinx Newcomer Youth in Central Pennsylvania (Ángeles 2026).

2. Reflecting on the Summer Sessions on Race: Critically (Re)examining Race and Racism from Youth Perspectives in the Rural West (Boysen-Taylor & Stevens 2026).
3. Cutting hair, making men: masculinities of male rural migrant hairstylists in urban China (Chen 2026).
4. "Twenty Weeks Ago": Reconstructing Chronotopes in Digitally Mediated Gossip (Duric 2026).
5. Making visible the space in between: Relationality and learning in diverse classrooms (Gholson et al. 2026).
6. Engaging Appalachian Youth: an Ethnographic Examination of Climate Education (Hale 2026).
7. Guns in the Toy Box: Storytelling and Cultural Change in Traditional American Gunsmithing (Johnson 2026).
8. Governing Education Under One-Party Rule: Procedural Violence and Community Contestation in Texas Curriculum Struggles (Lara 2026).
9. Pedagogies of Bioenergy: Sovereignty, Vocational Education, and Rural Segregation in the Colombian Orinoco (Lopez Vega 2026).
10. Between Prestige and Pretension: Raciolinguistic Negotiations of English Among Puerto Rican Adolescents (Morales 2026).
11. Renewal as scholarly homemaking: Sustaining mentorship for community-engaged scholars in fluidity (O'Connor et al. 2026).
12. The Specter of the Sexual Counterrevolutionary: A New Criminal Type from a Khmer Rouge Torture Prison (Payne 2026a).
13. The Specter of the Sexual Counterrevolutionary: A New Criminal Type from a Khmer Rouge Torture Prison (Payne 2026b).
14. Undocumented High School Girls Leading Social Change in Los Angeles (Sosa, 2026)
15. "Get up, stand up": Speaking and teaching through institutional survival at Dr. Ámbédkar High School in Hungary (Tyeklar 2026).
16. Education, Power, and Possibility: Ethnographic Perspectives on Learning, Ideology, and Social Transformation (Wolf 2026).
17. Tracing Anxieties: American Missionary Schools in Turkey and the Figure of the Spy (Yildiz 2026).
18. Dialect, Mother Tongue, and Dueling Economies of Recognition in a Northern Italian School (Zoller 2026).

Image Descriptions

Front Cover
PCAD Co-Founder and Co-Host of the Inaugural Online Consultation, Averie Chiang, signing certificates of participation on July 29, 2026. Photograph enhanced using Adobe Firefly and GPT-6 Astra Extra High, with an emphasis on preserving fidelity to the original image.

Collective Narrative — Section Title Page (p. 4)
Photograph of certificates of participation prepared for the PCAD Inaugural Online Consultation delegates, taken on July 29, 2026.

Collective Narrative — Illustration (p. 8)
PCAD Co-Founders and Co-Hosts of the Inaugural Online Consultation, Averie Chiang and Anna Ovchinnikova, following the signing of certificates of participation on July 29, 2026. Photograph enhanced using Adobe Firefly and GPT-6 Astra Extra High, with an emphasis on preserving fidelity to the original image.

Session Analysis — Section Title Page (p. 11)
Photograph of Anna Ovchinnikova's first research paper, selected reference materials, and her first American Anthropological Association (AAA) conference badge, taken on November 26, 2025. Image enhanced using Adobe Firefly and GPT-6 Astra Extra High, including the reconstruction of some textual elements.



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