

Annie L. Nguyen, PhD, MPH
AAHB President (2022-2023)

1. When did you attend your first Academy annual meeting?

2011 in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

2. What attracted you to AAHB?

The 2011 meeting focused on community-academic partnerships and the presence of community partners as presenters and attendees left a positive impression about the tone and values of organization. I continued to attend AAHB because of the sense of community that the Academy provides to members.

3. What do you value about the Academy, and why did you choose to be involved as President?

I find a lot of value in the collegiality that is fostered by the smaller-sized conferences and opportunities to volunteer on councils and serve in leadership positions. I ran for President because I wanted to give back to an organization that provided me with the supportive space to grow as a health behavior professional. Prior to running, I served in various roles and had become familiar with the inner workings of the Academy. I felt I had a solid understanding of the history of the Academy, its Mission, and ideas about how it should evolve in the future.

4. What was your vision for AAHB when you assumed the role of President?

I assumed the role in 2022, as we were more “post-COVID” than “in the COVID era” and the pandemic had permanently shifted many things- remote technologies became a way of life, costs increased, and schools were cutting travel and professional develop budgets. There were social movements around issues like racial equity, reproductive justice, and economic security and I saw an opportunity for us to as an organization to ask “big questions” about the values that we want to embody. As president, I aimed to strengthen a sense of inclusive community for members and make the conference more accessible to all researchers.

5. What was your biggest accomplishment as President?

Working through the logo re-branding and website revamp process as past-President/President was probably the largest lift. But I am also proud that my term, we implemented a meeting Code of Conduct and began work on a professional Code of Civility, expanded student membership to all graduate students (not just doctoral students), grew our membership, had the largest conference attendance up to date, and eliminated the hosted bar at poster sessions to create a more inclusive environment for all.

6. Where do you see AAHB in the next 10 years?

The membership will need to grow to maintain financial sustainability. The costs of hosting a conference are steadily increasing and I suspect the ways we share our research will not look the same in 10 years.

7. Do you have any advice for students and early career researchers?

You are always your own best advocate but that doesn't mean you have to go it alone. Lean on your mentors, friends, and peers to find support and allies.