

AAI

Animal Assisted Interventions Organization

Nova Southeastern University

College of Psychology

Article I: Introduction

Mission Statement: The Animal Assisted Intervention (AAI) organization is a group of students dedicated to making a positive impact therapeutically by incorporating animals into mental health treatment. Membership is open to graduate students with an interest in incorporating animal-assisted interventions in practice. Our goal is to educate and raise awareness about the benefits of animals in relation to mental health and well-being. We hold pet therapy events, general member meetings, philanthropic endeavors, and psycho-educational presentations related to the benefits and logistics of incorporating animals in clinical practice. AAI gives students within the College of Psychology an opportunity to make a difference in the lives of individuals as well as further their education on relevant topics and issues when incorporating animal-assisted interventions in current and future practice. The organization will support graduate students within the College of Psychology in the areas of research, education, and advocacy of therapeutically incorporating animal-assisted interventions, as no other organization or courses offer this specialty in the graduate program.

Article II: Objectives and Implementation of Objectives

1. Educate students, faculty, and the community regarding the current incorporation of animal-assisted interventions and the benefits to mental health and well-being (e.g., educational presentations on writing emotional support animal (ESA) letters, training and continuing education opportunities related to AAIs, how to incorporate AAI into clinical practice, etc.).

2. Promote awareness about the healing power of animals on National Therapy Animal Day (e.g., fundraise for a local animal assisted therapy (AAT) organization, table and provide students with AAT information, distribute a semesterly newsletter, etc.).
3. Provide graduate students with opportunities for involvement in research on topics related to animal-assisted interventions (e.g., history and evolution of the human-animal bond, utilization of AAI with first responders, etc.).
4. Disseminate up-to-date information on research and best practices when incorporating animal-assisted interventions in therapeutic settings (e.g., provide students the opportunity to meet their dissemination of research requirement through poster presentations or lectures).
5. Advocate for greater awareness surrounding the incorporation of animals in therapeutic settings or for the purposes of mental health treatment (e.g., guest speakers who currently utilize AAIs, including but not limited to clinicians who incorporate AAIs in private practice, equine therapy facilities, correctional facilities, educational settings (AAE), and certified trainers who can discuss certifications and/or show video or physical demonstrations (at approved locations)).
6. Reduce the stigma surrounding mental health through positive engagement with animals (e.g., guest speakers, disseminating research, pet therapy events).
7. Provide opportunities for students and faculty to experience the positive benefits of AAI through community outreach and volunteer opportunities (e.g., participating in the Broward Lunch Buddies Program, volunteering with Equine-Assisted Therapies of South Florida, network with professionals utilizing AAIs, etc.).

Article III: Funding

The Animal Assisted Interventions Organization will be funded through the College of Psychology's Student Government Association appropriated monies.

Article IV: Officers and Elections

Section I: Selection of Executive Board Members

- A. Executive board positions are selected via self-nominations. Only students who are continuously enrolled and in good standing in a Doctor of Philosophy in Clinical Psychology (PhD), Doctor of Psychology in Clinical Psychology (PsyD), Doctor of Psychology in School Psychology (PsyD), Specialist Program in School Psychology (PsyS), or any Master of Science (MS) or Master of Art (MA) program in the College of Psychology at Nova Southeastern University are eligible to self-nominate.
- B. The inaugural chair (President) and co-chair (Vice President) will hold their position for two years unless they choose to relinquish their role. The inaugural Treasurer and Secretary will hold their positions for one year. In each subsequent year, the chair and co-chair will be formed through a process in which existing eboard members interested in leadership roles (i.e., chair(s) and co-chair(s)) are nominated by themselves and must apply demonstrating their commitment to AAI's objectives, qualifications for the position, and description of their leadership skills. The self-nominees for the chair and/or co-chair positions will be offered first to members who have previously served on AAI's eboard. If no eligible applications are received, the chair and co-chair positions will be subsequently available to second, third-, or fourth-year students within the College of

Psychology. All current eboard members are eligible to vote. Nominated students will be oriented to AAI's bylaws, specific roles, responsibilities, and time commitments.

Candidates will be elected, should they receive the majority vote of current AAI board members. In the event of a tie, the academic advisor will make the deciding vote, blind.

The current board members are required to mentor those taking over their position for the upcoming year to ensure that AAI's mission is continued, and that the organization continues to strive to meet the objectives listed above.

- C. AAI will utilize a blind voting process. Any student who is nominating themselves can apply for one or more board position(s). Interested individuals should send a self-nomination form to the chair by the specified date. Board positions will be voted on by the current eboard members, and the individual with the highest number of votes will be elected. Current eboard members may decide to maintain their current eboard position; if they decide to do so, they should notify the chair and co-chair by the specified date.

Eboard members who have been required to meet with the chair, co-chair, or academic advisor for any reason to discuss not fulfilling their positional roles according to the bylaws, will not be eligible to automatically maintain their position. Eboard members who find themselves in this situation and wish to maintain their position will need to apply alongside all other applicants to do so. The following positions are ineligible to be automatically maintained for more than one academic year: Masters Representative, First-Year Representative, and School Psychology Representative. The eboard must strive to elect at least a combination of four first- and second-year students to ensure the longevity of the AAI organization as whole.

Section II: Selection of Faculty Advisor:

- The executive board will select a faculty advisor(s) at the time of the creation of the eboard. At least one advisor serving AAI will be a full-time faculty member within the College of Psychology with an interest in AAI. The selection will be based upon the faculty member's expertise in research, service, and advocacy within professional psychology. The advisor will be informed of all projects that AAI holds during scheduled meetings.

Section III: Executive Board Meetings

AAI executive board meetings will be held at a mutually agreed upon time decided at the start of each semester. Meetings will be scheduled monthly for executive board members and the faculty advisor (if they wish to attend), and at least once a semester for the General Member Committee Representative and general members. In the event of an executive board member's absence, he, she, or they are responsible for disseminating projected updates and developments to all board members **before** the meeting so that they may be addressed within the meeting.

Article V: Executive Board Member Expectations and Responsibilities

Section I: Expectations of eboard members

- Attendance at all eboard meetings is required. The only exceptions to this are class, practicum, or emergency unforeseen circumstances that arise. In the event you cannot attend a meeting for any of the above circumstances, you are expected to inform the chair **and** co-chair as soon as possible.
- Active participation is expected at all AAI eboard meetings (e.g., come prepared with ideas, collaborate on events in progress, etc.).

- Being chosen to be a part of the eboard is a time commitment. You are expected to sign up for tabling, volunteer at events/booths, help with event set up/take down, and actively advertise for all events and fundraisers.

Section II: Eboard Responsibilities

Faculty Advisor: David Feldman, Ph.D.

- The faculty advisor will serve for a term of no less than one year and may remain as the AAI faculty advisor for as long as the faculty advisor and the AAI executive board feel is appropriate.
- The faculty advisor will not be required to attend all AAI meetings but may be asked to do so on occasion.
- The faculty advisor will meet with the President and/or Vice President at least once per semester.

1. Chair (President): Maggie Smith

- Leads and oversees AAI and its development (e.g., projects, events, meetings).
- The President regularly checks AAI e-mails, organizes meetings with AAI faculty advisor(s), and organizes and presides at all meetings among executive board members.
- The President also ensures that AAI is meeting its obligations and responsibilities, and that all board members are acting in accordance with the bylaws and satisfying their duties.
- The President informs members of all events and opportunities relevant to AAI's mission.

- Oversee and contribute to current and novel events and projects (e.g., selecting topics, coordinating presenters) and report updates to the Executive Board.
- Obtain all self-nominations for eboard elections and facilitate the voting process.

2. Co-Chair (Vice President): Cynthia Torres

- If the President is unable to act on behalf of AAI, the Vice President will assume the responsibilities of the President.
- The Vice President informs members of all events and opportunities relevant to AAI's mission.
- Coordinate all eboard monthly meetings (e.g., sending out doodle polls and Zoom links).
- Oversee and contribute to current and novel events and projects (e.g., selecting topics, coordinating presenters) and report updates to the Executive Board.
- Organize registration for and promote student involvement in community, volunteer, or charitable events and activities (e.g., awareness walks, toy drives).

3. Treasurer: Josh Kevelson

- Complete University required Treasurer and Logistics training.
- Coordinate events and projects to raise money for selected non-for-profit organizations.
- Endorse all approved AAI expenditures and coordinate with appropriate parties for reimbursements.
- Maintain records of all expenditures/budgets.

4. Secretary: Rosemary Pham

- The Secretary is responsible for keeping minutes of AAI eboard and general meetings serving as custodian of all records and completing/sending the Monthly Requirement Form to SGA. If unable to attend a meeting, it is the Secretary's responsibility to find another eboard member to assume their responsibilities during their absence.
- Send out all correspondence regarding upcoming events and opportunities to general members via email.
- Disseminate information for events and newsletter to College of Psychology SGA.
- The Secretary may also be tasked with heading student programming that seeks to connect AAI to NSU College of Psychology students.
- The Secretary will also assist the President and Vice President in planning and preparing for all AAI events, including reserving rooms for meetings.

5. Research Chair: Miranda Boblett

**Research chair must have preexisting research experience as determined by the chair, co-chair, and faculty advisor, this may include but is not limited to professional publications, presentations at a professional conference, etc. **

- Coordinate research projects within AAI.
- Act as a liaison between faculty research advisors and AAI projects.
- Oversee all research projects which include but are not limited to poster presentations, symposiums, member dissemination events, paper presentations, and manuscripts.

- Provide support to students surrounding relevant research conferences such as conference information and development of conference materials.
- Schedule research meetings every semester to update members on any changes and progress.
- Keep an accurate and up-to-date list of all projects and their progress.
- Promote and offer research opportunities to AAI general members within the College of Psychology, when available.

6. Public Relations Chair: Jocelyn Cantonesta Escobar

- Advertise all general meetings, events, and fundraisers throughout the College of Psychology.
- Promote AAI to all College of Psychology members.
- Direct contact with SGA for any events (e.g., emailing SGA to promote all upcoming events by 5:00PM on Fridays).
- Responsible for getting flyers approved/printed and updating social media (i.e., Facebook, Instagram).
- Posting all event flyers on all social media platforms, AAI bulletin board, and throughout Maltz.
- Posting on social media at least once per week and expanding AAI's social media presence.
- Attending events and taking photos and videos to upload on the social media page. If unable to attend events, it is the Public Relations Chair's responsibility to find another eboard member to assume their responsibilities in their absence.

- Collaborate with Internal Event Coordinator, External Event Coordinator, Therapy Dog Representative, and Fundraising Chair to update and maintain the AAI bulletin board with upcoming events.

7. Events Chair: Sydney Acton

- Organize, coordinate, and promote internal and external AAI events, socials, and community engagement opportunities.
- Collaborate with the College of Psychology, other NSU schools, local businesses, and community organizations to develop programming.
- Promote student attendance and engagement at AAI events.
- Keep the executive board and general membership informed of upcoming events and activities.
- Collaborate with the Public Relations Chair to maintain and update the AAI bulletin board with upcoming events and announcements.
- Work with the Fundraising Chair to coordinate fundraising efforts associated with external events, when applicable.
- Promote diversity, equity, and inclusion by disseminating information on topics relevant to AAI's mission.
- Serve as a liaison between AAI and the College of Psychology Diversity Committee.
- Plan and coordinate at least one diversity-focused event each academic year.

8. Animal-Assisted Therapy Program Representative (AATP Representative): Olivia Batista

- Coordinate with the SGA Wellness chair regarding scheduling AAI's semesterly therapy animal (e.g., dog and cat) event.
- Coordinate with the Broward County Humane Society's Animal-Assisted Therapy Program, Parking Services, Facilities Management, and Kirk Berner to arrange all animal therapy events.
- Plan and coordinate all therapy animal (e.g., dog and cat) events within the NSU (e.g., around midterm or finals week).
- Collaborate with the undergraduate Pawsitivity Organization.

9. Fundraising Chair: Ana Scargle

- Plan and coordinate all of AAI's fundraising events (e.g., set up tabling within the College of Psychology, set up and take down donation boxes, deliver donation items to organizations).
- Collaborate with the External Events Chair regarding fundraisers for events that will take place off campus.
- Coordinate with the Treasurer regarding raised funds.

10. School Psychology Representative:

- Act as a representative between AAI and the students within the College of Psychology's School Psychology program.

11. First Year Representative:

- Act as a liaison between AAI and the first-year doctoral students within the College of Psychology.

12. Counseling Program Representative:

- Act as a liaison between AAI and the students within the College of Psychology Counseling program.

17. General Board Member Duties

- Chair new advocacy projects (subcommittees) as they arise.
- Attend semesterly general member meetings.
- Participate in events whenever possible.
- Communicate effectively with eboard members regarding ongoing projects.
- Meet project deadlines.
- Explore possibilities for internal and external advocacy projects and consult with the eboard before undertaking new projects.
- Emailing & calling necessary persons asking for support.
- Advertising for brown bags & other events to students.

18. Inter-Organization Counsel Chair: Cynthis Torres

19. General Member Committee (optional)

- Plan an event suggested by one of AAI's general members each academic year.
- This committee will be assisted by the General Member Committee Representative.
- The General Member Committee Representative will aid a committee of up to 5 general members who will collaborate to plan this event.

- This event is not eligible for AAI eboard funding and should be an event where no funding is required, or funding is provided by the Dean's funding.

Article VI: Resignations, Removals, and Vacancies

Section I: Resignations

A serving officer may resign from the Executive Board by delivering a written resignation letter to the chair, or if the resigning officer is the chair, then the chair will submit the resignation letter to the serving co-chair. The position is thereupon deemed vacant and the selection of board member process, as outlined above, will take place.

Section II: Removal

An officer and/or advisor may be revoked from their position before his or her term would have otherwise expired by a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority of votes cast at an executive meeting or a mutual agreeance by the chair, co-chair, and advisor. At least one of the following conditions must be met before said removal can occur:

- A. Appropriate grounds leading to the termination of the office due to not fulfilling the duties outlined above for the person's respective position.
- B. The position of an officer who ceases to be in good standing with the bylaws, College of Psychology, and responsibilities, will automatically become vacant.

Section III: Filling Vacancies

If an officer's position becomes vacant, the vacancy will be filled within one month of said vacancy by appointment of the eboard with the final approval granted by the chair and co-chair(s).

Article VII: Revisions and Amendments

AAI can propose bylaw amendments through its voting process for subsequent approval by the majority of the Executive Board or by unanimous vote by the chair, co-chair, and academic advisor. Proposed amendments become effective upon the e-board's/academic advisor's approval. Once revisions or amendments have been approved by the E-Board, a copy of the approved revisions and amendments must be provided to SGA. This may be done by emailing SGA an updated copy of the AAI Bylaws