

Steve Sussman, Ph.D
7th AAHB President (2007-2008)

When did you attend your first Academy annual meeting? I went to my first Academy annual meeting in the Year 2000. I have been a member since then.

What attracted you to AAHB? I felt that there was an excellent group of like-minded researchers, who shared my general area of research interests. I felt a lot of academic and social support during most of my time in AAHB.

What do you value about the Academy and why did you choose to be involved as President? I have been given more professional organization opportunities in AAHB than in any other organization I have been involved with. People in the Academy wanted me to be President and so I ended up taking on this role.

What was your vision for AAHB when you assumed the role of President? My goals back then included: (1) increasing membership up to at least 500 members; (2) having a home journal that was organization-run (which is impossible with a small membership); and (3) encouraging mentorship with young researchers and graduate students to increase growth (I believe that has happened a great deal). In addition, I had thought that we might consider changing the name of the organization to International Academy of Health Behavior (IAHB) to facilitate more global involvement.

What was your biggest accomplishment as President? I am not sure that the year of my presidency produced a big impact. Possibly, a mentoring emphasis did increase. There was some growth in membership. The conference that year did make money.

Where do you see AAHB in the next 10 years? Since my days as President, extremely high caliber researchers continued to join AAHB due to the work and increasing visibility of the general membership. I envision this continuing to occur. I hope that membership will continue to increase, and that we will have a home journal. I am not sure which research directions the organization will emphasize. However, we always seem to be at the forefront. Finally, I am hoping there will be more competitively presented paper presentations/symposia as well as poster sessions.

Do you have any advice for students and early career researchers? Be good at working with people, be good in methods, be good substantively, be persistent but flexible; follow your research desires and meld them at least in part with what is realistic; be hopeful; enjoy your work.