



2023 Election for Board Director

Candidate

Oliver Bear Don't Walk

Professional Title And Affiliation

Postdoctoral Scholar, University of Washington

Personal Statement

Since joining AMIA as a doctoral student, AMIA has provided me with the opportunities to find a community and mature as a leader in informatics. I've found amazing mentors and peers who have challenged me to grow not only as a professional and scientist but also as a person. AMIA is also a professional home, providing me with an environment and community to present and identify new scientific discoveries through peer discussions, formal presentations, and impromptu collaborations. Through AMIA, I've found many like-minded individuals who want to improve healthcare and biomedical research across the board and with a particular focus on marginalized communities. The relationships I've gained through working group discussions, AMIA committee work, and in-person meetings have made me look forward to the future of biomedical informatics as a field leading the way for equitable and justice-oriented research. I bring three unique perspectives to my current leadership in AMIA as an Indigenous person, a first-generation scholar from a low-income background, and an early career AMIA member. These perspectives have helped me to create a collaborative and equity-oriented environment within the DEI Committee, while also better understanding the barriers that certain members might face to fully engage with AMIA. Additionally, I am in a unique position to connect with and learn from more senior AMIA members while bringing the innovation and questions that come with being an early career researcher.

During my time as a co-chair for the DEI Committee, I have worked with Tiffani Bright and Robert Lucero to establish a new and expansive committee within AMIA, led the Inclusive Language and Context Style Guidelines project, and helped identify and cultivate collaborations between the DEI Committee and Women in AMIA, the Academic Forum, and the Scientific Programming Committee. Given a role as a Director, I would continue expanding DEI principles throughout AMIA by representing voices from multiple communities with a focus on the retention and advancement of AMIA members from marginalized backgrounds, transparent and inclusive leadership structures, and equity/justice-oriented scientific communication. As a Director I would bring additional DEI principles to leadership and guidance on AMIA's policies and strategic plans.

I joined AMIA as a doctoral student and have made lasting relationships along the way with peers and mentors alike. I am thankful for the supportive and collaborative community I've found that fosters my personal, professional, and academic growth. Throughout my career, I've

always acknowledged the communities that have supported me along the way and the responsibility to bring others forward with me. I see this responsibility continuing with my leadership within AMIA. I hope to bring not only my unique perspectives as an Indigenous person and first-generation scholar but also my core values of community building and humility to a position as a Director.

Bio

I am a citizen of the Apsáalooke Nation, a Postdoctoral Scholar at the University of Washington and an AIM-AHEAD Research Fellow. My research is at the intersection of clinical natural language processing, fairness, and ethics. My thesis focused on the technical and ethical aspects of extracting patient-level socio-demographic information from clinical notes. Building from my thesis my current research focuses on applying intersectionality to fairness audits of machine learning used to support the care of patients with HIV and working with Indigenous communities to identify Indigenous social determinants of health and work with this information in the electronic health record. I am grateful for the community support which has brought me this far, and as such pays it forward through teaching, mentorship, and serving as an organizer and faculty for IndigiData and a co-chair for AMIA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

Leadership Skills

I bring multiple skills to my leadership positions, of note are 1) community building, 2) humility, and 3) deliberate actions. All these skills are related to my core value of bringing my communities forward with me by gathering and listening to multiple perspectives and carefully considering the impacts of my thoughts, words, and actions.

I was taught early on that while I might go far as an individual, my community is what would truly sustain me and others over the long run. Because of this, I strive to build and foster community wherever I go by finding common goals and values between myself and others. This not only helps me thrive but also ensures these goals and values endure once I move onto new environments. Once established, a community helps keep me accountable and drives my actions.

Humility is one of my core values and is evident throughout all my actions and decisions. As a leader, I demonstrate humility by continually listening to and incorporating diverse perspectives. This humility is born from an understanding that I can only express a limited perspective when compared to my team, peers, and community. While this humility may look indecisive and timid to some, it allows me to cut through to the center of discussions by carefully weighing new ideas and perspectives before speaking my mind.

During my time as a co-chair for the DEI Committee, I have worked on being mindful of the impact my actions and choices have. I was taught that leaders don't just make decisions for the current people but for those who will come after and those not here. Proactive, thoughtful, and deliberate actions require me to be in community and listening to new perspectives when I make decisions as a leader. I can only embody so many perspectives, and given that my

decisions will have broader impacts, it's my responsibility to consider what my decisions will bring for those yet to come.

While these are the skills I bring to my own personal leadership, they also lend well to identifying and mentoring new leaders. By fostering community and leading with humility, I know that those I work with can feel comfortable coming to me for help but can also go to others as well. Humility allowed me to build trust and work closely while I supervised efforts on the Inclusive Language and Context Style Guidelines for AMIA, while community allows me to step back and know that the right people are working on the future of this project.

An important learning point for me when working on the Inclusive Language and Context Style Guidelines was the process of how board initiatives are implemented. Tiffani Bright, with the backing of the Board, brought the idea for creating an AMIA community where inclusive language is inherent to our science and professional conduct. I then the creation of the Inclusive Language and Context Style Guidelines and worked with the Scientific Programming Committee and other staff to supervise implementation into the AMIA review process.

Through my work with the DEI Committee, I have learned how the staff works with AMIA members to implement policies that the board defines and provides oversight for. If given the chance to serve on the BOD, I would be happy to trust in the structures that AMIA has defined by providing oversight with other board members while AMIA staff supervises the implementation of policies.

Reputation for Excellence (in informatics)

I bring a commitment to community and focus on the health of future AMIA members which can enhance AMIA's reputation as a hub for community-oriented informatics leaders. I hold an MS in biomedical informatics from Stanford University and a PhD in biomedical informatics from Columbia University. I am currently a Postdoctoral Scholar in Biomedical Informatics and Medical Education at the University of Washington working on bridging Indigenous knowledge systems and clinical informatics to promote health in Indian Country. I approach my personal, professional, and academic duties with a sense of humility and commitment to community.

Were it not for the support, mentorship, and guidance of my many communities I would not be where I am today. It is my privilege to be able to promote equitable and impactful informatics research with marginalized communities and to train the next generation of scientists and leaders. Given that my work is driven by a commitment to community, I strive to be in good relations which requires emotional maturity to navigate complex social interactions, personal integrity to stay true to my values, and honesty to be trusted at my word. I am also a DEI leader within AMIA as a co-chair for the DEI Committee, previous subcommittee chair for the DEI Task Force, and a role to introduce the 2021 AMIA Symposium Keynote, Abigail Echo-Hawk.

Perspective Add

I bring many nuanced and deep perspectives to AMIA and will continue to do so if elected to the AMIA Board. The three most prominent perspectives which I am most comfortable sharing

are my 1) socioeconomic, 2) racial, and 3) early career backgrounds. I believe that these perspectives/backgrounds will be instrumental to AMIA, given AMIA's goals for engaging a broader range of current and potential members and transforming health care, especially for people from marginalized backgrounds.

I am the first in my family to graduate with a bachelor's degree (let alone a master's and doctorate) and come from a family that has experienced poverty and homelessness. I am well equipped to understand and speak about the nuances of being a first-generation scholar from a low-income background and navigating academia and AMIA's hidden social norms.

I am a citizen of the Apsáalooke Nation and comfortable engaging with discussions of Indigenous history in the U.S., Indigenous sovereignty, and the marginalization of racial groups within the U.S. I often feel like I walk between and within worlds of Indigenous culture and revitalization and Western/white academic professionalism. I understand the complex feelings of joy, pride, and isolation that come from being the only member of a marginalized group within academic spaces and knowing that I can open doors for others like me. Finally, I embrace my father's lessons to approach each situation with the confidence to lead and make change but also the humility to listen first and move slowly. As I reconnect, I embrace my Apsáalooke culture to help guide me in my personal, professional, and academic life.

Finally, I bring the perspective of an early career researcher to AMIA. While I am a younger applicant to the Board, I've had the opportunity to grow and mature in various leadership positions, guided by mentors such as Sue Bakken, Tiffani Bright, Robert Lucero, and Peter Tarczy-Hornoch. Of note, are my current position as the co-chair of the AMIA DEI Committee and previous position as a subcommittee chair of the AMIA DEI Task Force, both of which I began during my predoctoral training. I have found success with voicing my opinions and observations as an early career researcher and learning from the feedback and guidance of those with more experience than me.

Team Player

Building community and incorporating multiple perspectives are core to my success as an academic and leader. During my time as co-chair of the DEI Committee (2 years) and a subcommittee chair of the DEI Task Force (1 year) I have exemplified community building by helping my leadership team bring together 80+ volunteers into an egalitarian, fair, and open leadership structure. From the beginning, it was important for us to ensure that we considered multiple perspectives, especially from those who did not usually feel empowered to speak up. This is an involved leadership style that often promotes care but can sometimes be at odds with loyalty and obedience if practiced without careful consideration. To promote dedication to AMIA's core values, I have found it important to instill a sense of shared creation for our communities within AMIA in those I work with. This has also been helpful for me to remain dedicated to building an AMIA that remains true to AMIA's core values while striving for equity, justice, and inclusion for current and future members.

AMIA Engagement and Participation

AMIA member: 5-10 years

I have been an AMIA member since 2017 and serve as a co-chair for the AMIA DEI Committee. Before the AMIA DEI Committee, I served as a subcommittee chair for the AMIA DEI Task Force. I have been a part of leading AMIA's DEI initiatives since 2020. Through these leadership roles, I have guided AMIA to improve engagement, retention, and advancement for AMIA members from marginalized communities while promoting science relevant to people from marginalized communities. As an integral leader early in the formation of AMIA's DEI efforts, I've had many roles in helping to align AMIA's mission, vision, and core values with DEI principles. For example, I led the DEI Committee's effort to create the Inclusive Language and Context Style Guidelines that build on AMIA's reputation as a hub for advanced biomedical discoveries and commitment to promoting DEI. These guidelines are now incorporated into the AMIA review process and will continue to grow and change through the work of the DEI Committee. In alignment with AMIA's mission to act as a bridge between knowledge and collaborations, I have also fostered strong relationships between the DEI Committee and various AMIA groups such as Women in AMIA, the Scientific Programming Committee, and the Academic Forum. Additionally, I serve on the Editorial Board and as a Guest Editor for a Focus Issue on social determinants of health and natural language processing for JAMIA. Through these roles, I have honed my understanding of AMIA's scientific focus and scientific communication skills.

Informatics Interests

Big Data, Data Mining, Data Science, Ethics, Health Equity, Natural Language Processing, Research