To: AAA Committee on Scientific Communication  
From: Deborah Heath, 2002 Executive Program Chair  
Re: Final report on the 101st Annual Meeting of the AAA

Overview of the 101st Annual Meeting: The 101st annual meeting of the AAA, "(Un)Imaginable Futures: Anthropology Faces the Next 100 Years," will be held at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in New Orleans, LA from 20 November to 24 November (beginning Wednesday at noon and ending on Sunday at 2:00 pm). The 2002 meeting will go on record as the one of the largest central states meetings in AAA history with 3362 individually volunteered papers and 463 sessions. The meeting theme generated widespread interest and regrettably we were unable, due to time/room constraints, to schedule all the proposed papers and sessions, with 120 rejected sessions.

Meeting Theme: President Don Brenneis and Executive Program Chair Deborah Heath selected the meeting theme "(Un)Imaginable Futures: Anthropology Faces the Next 100 Years," to provide us with a forum to engage with one another and the public in a collaborative and creative process. The meeting's theme marks the AAA Centennial year, juxtaposing the Association's past accomplishments with both the perils and the possibilities that face us as anthropologists and as citizens of an increasingly complex world. The meeting's theme highlights the many ways in which anthropological knowledge can be directed toward educating those in both public and private sectors, while disseminating critical information to policy makers, decision makers and opinion makers on a variety of issues. This year's meeting provides countless sessions throughout the week's schedule that meet and exceed the criteria as outlined in the long range plan: exploring emergent policy issues, integrating practice and theory and crossing subdisciplinary boundaries.

Executive/Presidential Sessions: As the following partial list of presidential and executive panels indicates, these sessions reveal not only the timeliness of the program but also the ways in which the program fulfills the criteria outlined in the long range plan.

Presidential Sessions:
* The Ethnographer's Discipline: Alfred Métraux
* Schooling That Works: Anthropologists Partnering with Immigrant and Indigenous Communities
* 9/11 and Hegemonic Response: Global Emergency or Alarming Excuse?
* Autonomy in an Age of Globalization: The Work of June Nash
* The Future of Scientific Research on the Amazon: Perspectives Post-Yanomami Controversy
* First Rites: Innovative Undergraduate Research in Anthropology [poster session]
* The Work and Life of Clifford Geertz

Executive Sessions:
* Building the Able-Bodied Subject: The Anthropology of Bioengineered Futures
* Communism and Cosmopolitanism
* The Biological Roots of Human Aggression, Revisited
* Making New Things
* (Un)Imaginable Pasts: Innovation and Loss in African Practical Repertoires
* Mass Graves, Civil Wars, Modern Catastrophes: Anthropologists and the Dead in (Un)Imaginable Contexts
* Practicing Anthropology: Ethnography Inside and Outside the Discipline
* Minority Anthropologies, Anthropologists, and the AAA: Looking Back and Forward 100 Years
* Nature's Futures
* Anthropology and Women's Human Rights: Cross-cutting Interests and Complementary Agendas
* A Plagued Future? Emerging Diseases, Biowarfare, and Other Anticipated Microbial Horrors
* Rethinking Europe/Non-Europe: Anthropological Dialogues with Dipesh Chakrabarty and Ken Pomeranz

Centennial Sessions: Culminating a prodigious three-year effort on the part of the Centennial Commission, Regna Darnell and Frederick Gleach have organized a set of special sessions, which include the following:
* Laughing at Ourselves: the Art of Anthropology
* Formative Moments in North American Departmental Histories
* Canada's National Traditions
* The Anthropology of Professions and Professionalism in Anthropology
* Displacement and Settlement in the Current Global Context

Public Policy Forums: This year's program contains a set of strong, wide-ranging forums on public policy concerns.
* Globalization, Treaties, and Tobacco
* The Sonoran Desert Conservations Plan
* Addressing the Digital Divide
* Violences Legitimate and Illegitimate: Playing with "Terrorism" the Word
* Bioterrorism, Epidemics, and the Future of Public Health
* World Anthropologies for World Publics

Anthropology and the Present Moment: An initiative proposed by the Executive Program Committee, this year's program includes a series of noontime plenary session devoted to incisive and timely issues linking anthropology to the wider world.
* Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland and UN Human Rights Commissioner
* Jody Williams, Nobel Peace Laureate, advocate of the initiative to ban landmines
* "The Future of the Book," a session bringing together editors from several major academic presses in what promises to be a trenchant, lively and illuminating interchange.

Collaborative Sessions with the National Communication Association: The AAA and the NCA, which is holding its annual meeting in New Orleans at the same time, are co-sponsoring a series of sessions at both meetings on the "digital divide," issues of unequal access to information and communication technologies. Participants at both meetings will have access to sessions at either location. Our thanks to the NCA organizers for their energetic efforts to coordinate this venture.
Workshops: This year's program offers a broad array of workshops, including the following topics: assistance with job searches and grant writing, ethnographic and fiction writing, use and selection of qualitative research software, digital visual anthropology, teaching on-line, use of geographical information systems in spatial analysis, anthropological field schools, and media training.

The Role of the Executive Program Committee: The Executive Program Committee (EPC) was selected to represent all four subfields, as well as practicing anthropology. Several EPC members organized sessions and/or enlisted colleagues to organize sessions in areas that were considered essential to balance the presidential/executive program. The EPC was consulted on a multitude of issues, including but not limited to scheduling and selecting speakers for the noontime plenary sessions "Anthropology and the Present Moment".

Scheduling the Meeting: To expedite the scheduling of the meeting we followed the model adopted by the program committee in recent years, i.e., the Executive Program Chair, the President, and the incoming President met, along with the Executive Secretary, this past June. This was the first year of on-line submission, with numerous details still in the process of being resolved at the time that we met. With much active support from the AAA staff, the process nonetheless proceeded relatively smoothly, and we anticipate that most data management issues will have been taken care of before next year's meetings. The prospect of computerizing the (rather daunting) scheduling process itself still remains, unfortunately, a remote possibility. The challenges are compounded by the high level of active lobbying from meeting participants to change their initial assignments in the program schedule.

Increasing Attendees' Level of Satisfaction: We have responded to the 2000 and 2001 meeting evaluation survey in which the following suggestions were made: that panels be structured to include less formal presentation and more discussion and that discussion be spread throughout a session (and not, as it is typically done, at the end of the session). We requested that organizers of presidential, executive and public policy panels incorporate the above-mentioned recommendations and we are very pleased to report that at this year's meeting we will see numerous creatively structured panels.

In Appreciation: It has been a privilege to serve as the Executive Program Chair for the AAA for the 2002 meeting and to have had the opportunity to work closely with Don Brenneis and the staff at AAA headquarters. I would especially like to thank Lucille Horn on whose shoulders the daunting task of organizing the meeting ultimately rests, and Jan Meier, whose indefatigable efforts were invaluable throughout the planning process. I am especially appreciative of the EPC for their insight and their contributions toward shaping the program: Genevieve Bell, Lawrence Cohen, Augustin Fuentes, Bruce Grant, Linda Hogle, Debra Martin, Lisa Rofel, Monica Schoch-Spana, Susana Sawyer, Dan Segal, and Ann Stahl.