COSWA Annual Report for 2002

To: AAA Executive Committee Bill Davis, AAA Kathleen Terry-Sharp, AAA
From: Miriam Chaiken, Chair, Committee on the Status of Women in Anthropology (COSWA)
CC: COSWA Members (Cheryl Rodriguez, Mary Ann Levine, Amy Rosenberg Weinreb, Sarah Nelson, Sara Trechter, Susan Kent, and incoming members Pamela Stone, Christina Wasson, and Elizabeth Bagwell) Re: COSWA Annual Report for 2002

COSWA has had a very busy year, contributing several major sessions to the AAA Meetings, contributing to the governance of the organization, and embarking on new initiatives to promote gender and social equity within the discipline of anthropology.

Activities in 2002

* COSWA Meetings - COSWA held one long face to face meeting on the first day of the AAA meetings, which had been preceded by two teleconferences, a four hour session in March and a one hour session in September. The opportunity to share views and work around a table afforded by an actual meeting is extremely valuable and should definitely be maintained, but we found we have adjusted to having some of our meetings in the teleconference format. In addition to the formal meetings, a good deal of business was conducted by exchanges of documents via email.

* AAA Session "Gendered Anthropology and Transnational Voices" was organized by Cheryl Rodriguez (and she served as discussant). This was a session concerning the contributions and perspectives of women anthropologists of the South and they ways they influence the discipline of anthropology. There was a very large and appreciative audience, largely of young professionals of ethnic minorities and non-western origin; scheduling of future sessions of this type are important to promote inclusiveness in anthropology and to encourage non-majority populations to see anthropology as a desirable profession with important opportunities.

* AAA Session "Women Academic Administrators" was organized by Mary Ann Levine and chaired by Miriam Chaiken. COSWA member Sarah Nelson served as discussant. This session examined the ways in which women have found opportunities in academic administration, and the unique contributions they have made to academia drawing from their backgrounds as anthropologists. Panelists were very distinguished anthropologists who have served as academic Deans, Provosts, and Vice Presidents.

* AAA Session on Survival Skills "Panel on Strategies for Publishing" was organized by Sara Trechter, who served as a panelist along with editors of academic journals and from major publishing companies, and anthropologists who had published for both an academic and popular audiences. The session was highly interactive, with good audience participation in discussions. Themes that were explored included strategies to ensure optimal professional mileage for publishing efforts, pointers for obtaining one's first publication, and issues to explore when negotiating with a publisher. This session was a continuation of a COSWA sponsored series of lunch hour workshops on professionalism in anthropology, largely intended to benefit graduate students and entry level professionals.
* Presentation of the Squeaky Wheel Award is conferred annually at the AAA meetings to recognize the contributions of an anthropologist to promoting gender equity within the discipline. This year's award winner was Dr. Carole Crumley of University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill. The award was presented to Dr. Crumley at the conclusion of our session on women in academic administration, and a full article concerning Dr. Crumley's important contributions will be published in an upcoming issue of Anthropology Newsletter.

* Survey of Departments of Anthropology - in anticipation of conducting the periodic survey of academic departments, COSWA Chair Miriam Chaiken worked with AAA Director of Academic Affairs, Kathleen Terry-Sharp to review the draft survey instrument. Suggestions were made to modify the instrument to be more sensitive to the ways in which professional rank was linked with gender inequity.

* "Chilly Climate" Narratives - in order to assess the nature of problems encountered in work places that might be considered types of discrimination we have continued with our invitation for colleagues to comment on their experiences with "chilly climates." The information gleaned in this process is being used to design a more systematic survey instrument to assess the degree to which these problems are pervasive within anthropology.

* Working Conditions Survey - Miriam Chaiken has drafted a brief survey instrument that will allow AAA to assess the nature of work place problems and discrimination facing professional anthropologists. COSWA members and AAA staff Kathleen Terry-Sharp and Lorie Van Olst provided important suggestions for modification and implementation of the survey. The instrument is intended to be able to compare responses based on gender, ethnicity, relative professional rank, and compare to those in academic jobs with those who work in more applied settings. The instrument should take approximately 15 minutes to complete and will be distributed to a random sample of AAA members in 2003. The results of this research should be available by the middle of 2003, and should be useful for program development and AAA long range planning.

* AAA Long Range Plan - COSWA members reviewed the AAA Long Range Plan, and noted that recommendations from last year's annual report, prepared by former COSWA Chair Kathleen DeWalt, had not been incorporated into the latest draft of the long range plan. Specifically, revision of wording to make references to diversity more inclusive (including ethnicity, sexual orientation, not simply gender) have not been implemented. Miriam Chaiken will communicate directly with the AAA staffers and AAA committee members who oversee the Long Range Plan to voice COSWA's concerns.

* COSWA Web Site - Amy Rosenberg Weinreb coordinated efforts with AAA staffer Kate Patch to update resources on the AAA maintained web site. The redesign of the AAA website has given greater visibility to COSWA and has resulted in more frequent communication from AAA members to COSWA over issues of gender equity. We anticipate that this resource will be even more useful in the future, as additional resources and results of our internal research are posted on this site.

**Plans for 2003**
Many of the activities that are described above for COSWA will continue into the coming year, and several new activities are also anticipated.

* Administer Working Conditions Survey and Analyze Data - COSWA expects the survey to be administered early in 2003, through the contract research program that AAA has hired. The instrument will be finalized by COSWA members and Academic Affairs Division Director Kathleen Terry-Sharp, and the administration and analysis of data will be assisted by Lorie Van Olst. An article summarizing the results of the survey, and appropriate actions to be taken subsequent to these results should be prepared for the Anthropology News before the end of the calendar year.

* AAA Session 2003 "Anthropologists and Children" will be organized by Pamela Stone and Sara Trechter. They will invite papers for a full length session from anthropologists who do research on children and children's issues, and from anthropologists who have participated in research with their children in tow. The theme of this session will also connect with the Working Conditions Survey, as juggling family responsibilities is one of the key issues we anticipate will be a major conclusion of the research.

* AAA Session 2003 "Negotiating for a Job" will be organized by Elizabeth Bagwell, and will be part of COSWA's ongoing mission to provide helpful advice for professional development to young anthropologists. This session will consist of a panel of professionals who will report on their own successful and unsuccessful efforts to negotiate terms of employment, and should help provide useful strategies for those who attend.

* Anthropology Newsletter Column "Ask Ann Thropology" - AN editor Stacy Lathrop suggested to COSWA that we consider publishing a periodic advice column for members, loosely modeled on the Ms. Mentor column in the Chronicle of Higher Education. This suggestion was warmly embraced by COSWA, and Sarah Nelson agreed to coordinate the thrice annual column for the coming year. She came up with the innovative title "Ask Ann Thropology" and a draft of the first column is under review, for probable publication in Spring 2003.

**Ongoing Concerns**

Several issues have been of ongoing concern by members of COSWA, and it is appropriate to highlight these here, as we hope to work toward long-term solutions to these issues. As with many problems, the root of the dilemma is largely financial. One of the critical issues facing AAA is the adequacy of the operations budget, and due to economic downturns, several cost cutting measures have been adopted by COSWA. We have eliminated one annual meeting, traditionally held in the spring, which permitted COSWAns to have a "real" meeting to conduct business, rather than the teleconference that we now utilize. While there are some logistical advantages of not having to travel at a time of year when weather is unpredictable, it has made the dynamic of COSWA's work quite different, and has put greater burden on the one actual meeting at the AAAs, as there is more work to accomplish. In order to address this problem, we have increased the length of the November meeting from two hours to five, and added a short teleconference in September. One of the financial ramifications of this change has been that COSWA members are essentially required to be the first people to arrive at the meetings, and
given the span of the sessions we sponsor, among the last to leave. As AAA provides partial financial compensation for only one day of the meeting, it means that COSWA members have had to absorb the expenses for four additional days of the meetings from their own pockets. This additional expense is most problematic for the student member of the committee, as this person typically has no institutional support for attending the AAA meetings. Additionally, the new members who rotate on to the COSWA board each year are not offered any compensation for their participation, but if they do not participate in the actual meeting, they are less effectively incorporated into the team as they participate only in faceless teleconferences for the first year of their term. In order to address these concerns, we recommend that:

1. The reimbursement policy increase the compensation package offered to the student member of COSWA to cover three days of the meeting instead of just one.
2. The new members who are rotating on to the COSWA board be awarded the same level of support (one day) as standing committee members.

An additional financial worry has been the funding of the Survey of Departments, which has been delayed for several years. As AAA staff are quite aware, the last survey was quite flawed, so we are currently in a situation where our best knowledge of the state of employment and equity within the discipline is a decade old. We urge the AAA Executive Committee and permanent staff to make implementation of the Survey of Departments a high priority for the coming year, so that future planning efforts can be based upon accurate and timely data.

Conclusion

It is important to note that the Committee on the Status of Women in Anthropology has consistently been acknowledged as one of the more effective working groups within the AAA. We have been strongly supported by our AAA liaison, Kathleen Terry-Sharp, and her assistant Kate Patch, without whom COSWA would be much less effective. The members of COSWA are busy and hard working professionals, and they should individually and collectively be thanked for their important service to our profession. I am grateful to all for the opportunity to have worked with such a group of colleagues on issues of mutual concern.