
The Committee on Ethics (COE) continues to have an increasingly active mission within the American Anthropological Association. This year the COE focused particularly on educational issues relating to the ethical practice of anthropology. The COE also created structural changes within the COE itself to insure greater continuity of the COE from year to year and greater cohesiveness within the COE. In addition the COE sought to expand its base of expertise concerning ethical issues.

**COE Activities for 2002-2003:**

**Annual Meeting Activities:**

The COE sponsored two sessions at the 2003 AAA annual meetings: (1) Research with Stigmatized Populations and (2) Research with Vulnerable Populations. Both sessions arose from discussion within the COE and were chaired by COE members, Karen Nakamura and Carolyn Fleuhr-Lobban respectively. Each session drew a headcount attendance of 50-55.

Reports from both sessions indicate that more questions arose from the discussions among the attendees so that there is potential for further discussion in the "Ethical Currents" column or on the COE website. Both session chairs expressed a need for greater involvement by anthropologists in the work of IRB's to inform them about ethical issues in anthropology and to provide expertise concerning these issues.

**"Ethical Currents" column in the AN and the COE Website:**

1. The COE continued to use its "Ethical Currents" column in the Anthropology News to encourage discussion about the kinds of problems that anthropologists encounter in field settings and in their workplaces. Several columns were published in 2003 under the editorship of Joe Watkins. The topics covered in "Ethical Currents" included such issues as: the ethical management of museum collection acquisitions and the safeguarding of cultural resources in times of war and looting.

2. The COE continued to use e-communications, its website in particular, to discuss case studies and to respond to inquiries by the AAA membership. The COE received approximately 6 inquiries or comments from AAA members to which the COE responded either as individual members of the COE or through the office of COE Chair.

3. COE website links were updated by COE member, Larry Zimmerman, and AAA staff member, Stacy Lathrop.
Syllabi and Textbook Coverage of Anthropological Ethics:

1. COE member, Gail Goodwin Gómez, completed a survey of textbook publishers regarding the coverage of anthropological ethics.

2. Various COE members collected or contributed to the syllabi for ethics courses or sections of course syllabi dealing with anthropological ethics.

Assistance to the AAA Board on Policy Development:

1. COE member, Joe Watkins, drafted a letter of support for anthropologist, Sheldon Zink, concerning the confidentiality of field notes. The letter was forwarded to AAA President Don Brenneis who then drafted a "Statement on the Confidentiality of Field Notes", adopted as policy by the AAA Board on March 10, 2003.

2. COE Chair, Kathleen Martín, wrote a letter to the AAA Board requesting clarification and some reconsiderations of the role of liaisons on AAA committees.

3. COE Chair, Kathleen Martín, assisted AAA staff member Stacy Lathrop in developing the agenda of the COE for the AAA 2004 Operating Plan Initiatives.

Media Communication:

Given the interest of the mass media concerning ethical issues in anthropology, COE Chair, Kathleen Martin, was interviewed by the following 5 journalists: a reporter from the Chronicle of Higher Education on topic of the case of Sheldon Zink and the confidentiality of field notes, April 2003; freelance journalist, Edward Sacchette on the topic of ethics and traditional healers in Indonesia, May 11, 2003; by Simon Romero of the New York Times on topic of the dispute between anthropologists Peter Furst and Jay Fikes, Sept. 9, 2003; by John Burnett of NPR on the topic of the dispute between Furst and Fikes, Oct. 9, 2003; and by Jeffrey Brainard of the Chronicle of Higher Education on topic of the oral history ruling, Oct. 21, 2003.

Structural Changes within COE:

1. To insure continuity of the COE from year to year and enhance cohesiveness within the Committee, the COE voted to install a "Chair-Elect", "Chair" and "Past Chair" rotation. The "Chair-Elect" and the "Past Chair" are to be current members of the COE as is the "Chair". Under this system, Carolyn Fleuhr-Lobban became the "Chair-Elect" for 2003-4; Anne Pyburn, Chair 2003-4 and Kathleen Martín, Past-Chair, 2003-4.

2. Given the increasing requests by the AAA membership for assistance on ethical issues, the COE sought to expand its base of expertise by proposing a "Friends of the COE" group comprised of former COE members who would be willing to offer assistance to the COE on a voluntary basis. Kathleen Martín proposed to launch this effort.

COE Activities proposed for 2003-2004:
Annual Meeting Activities:

1. The COE proposed to organize an interdisciplinary, IRB focused session on the recent "oral history as exempt from IRB consideration" ruling by the OHRP. The COE expressed concern about the impact on anthropology of this ruling classifying oral history as exempt because it is not considered science by the OHRP. The COE also was concerned that the ruling was made seemingly without consultation of others outside the oral history association. COE members, Lauren Clark, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Kathleen Martin volunteered to organize this session.

2. The COE proposed to organize a free of charge, 4-field workshop on teaching ethics in field school contexts. COE members, Anne Pyburn and Larry Zimmerman with the assistance of Linda Whiteford agreed to organize this workshop.

The "Ethical Currents" column in the AN and the COE Website:

1. "Ethical Currents" column: COE members, Rachel Caspari, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Larry Zimmerman agreed to serve as the new editors of the column on a rotating basis starting with the September 2004 issue.

2. COE Website: the COE proposed to do the following: (a.) create a single general comment box for the AAA membership to make inquiries and respond to ethical issues. The COE would respond and the ensuing discussion could then, with the appropriate author's permission, be e-posted or published in the "Ethical Currents" column (b.) request if the AAA Board wishes the COE briefing papers currently posted on line to be updated. The COE suggests that the briefing papers could be used as an anthropological ethics handbook (c.) post case studies on line, a task to be undertaken by the "Ethical Currents" editors (d.) develop more case studies appropriate for undergraduate teaching.

Syllabi and Textbook Coverage of Anthropological Ethics:

1. Syllabi Project on Ethics: Anne Pyburn volunteered to collect additional syllabi concerning ethics and obtain permission to post these syllabi on line along with the ones the COE has already collected.

2. Textbook Reportage of Ethics: the COE suggested that the AAA create a non-monetary award to be given for the best anthropological textbook for its discussion of ethics. Kathleen Martin volunteered to work with Dennis Weidman, Chair of the AAA Awards Committee, and assist Lauren Clark and Anne Pyburn in drafting the proposal to the AAA Board. The COE will also draft a letter to be considered by the AAA Board to be sent to anthropology acquisitions editors regarding how and why anthropological ethics should be incorporated into anthropology textbooks.

Gregor-Gross Resolution:

The Resolution that passed the vote of the AAA membership included in it certain tasks to be undertaken by the COE by the 2003 AAA meetings. Since the outcome of the vote, however,
was determined only just prior to the 2003 AAA meetings, the COE asked for and received permission from the AAA President, Don Brenneis to postpone its report until the 2004 AAA meetings.

Regarding the Gregor-Gross Resolution, the COE wishes to remind the AAA Board and the AAA membership that its mission is to educate, not adjudicate. The COE report consequently will follow the statement written by Joe Watkins, former Chair of the COE and current editor of the "Ethical Currents" column that appeared in the March 2003 issue of the AN.

In Closing: Some Suggestions for the AAA Board

Finally the COE would like to suggest to the AAA Board that the AAA needs policy discussion/development concerning anthropological ethics on the following topics: field schools and government related/sponsored research.

Beyond the need for policy discussion/development in particular areas of anthropological practice, however, the COE expressed concern about the many issues that arise regarding anthropology and IRB's especially since the operation of IRB's increasingly affects the practice of anthropology. The COE would like to suggest that the AAA Board insure the presence of anthropological voices in the discussions and policy-making decisions of the institutions that increasingly set the parameters of the conduct of research. As the AAA Board will note from this report, the COE has undertaken several tasks related to anthropological ethics and policy setting by IRB's.

The task to insure the presence of anthropological perspectives in institutions that increasing create the contours of the conduct of research, however, remains beyond the mission of the COE resting instead in the purview of the AAA Board.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen R. Martín, Chair, COE 2002-2003