AAA Awards Committee Annual Report for 2004
January 28, 2005

Prepared by Dennis Wiedman (Chair) and Kim Baker (AAA Staff Liaison)

Membership of Committee: Dennis Wiedman (Chair) Andrea Wiley (Chair-designate), Kate Dudley, Patricia Urban, Leo Chavez, Dawn Fischer Banks (Student Representative), and Kim Baker (AAA Staff Liaison).

Note: Membership of the committee is appointed by the AAA President in consultation with the Committee. As charged by the Executive Board, the Chair is a member of the Executive Board, one seat is designated for a student, other members are former award recipients, and an AAA staff person acts as liaison to the office and as support person for the Committee. The normal membership term is three years. As the Chair (Dennis Wiedman) completed his third year, Andrea Wiley was appointed as the incoming chair by President Liz Brumfiel. By Andrea serving in an ex-officio role throughout the year she learned how the committee operates. This facilitates the transition in leadership.

Two new committee appointments are needed for 2005. Kim Baker has served many years as the AAA Staff Liaison, this role is transitioning to Kathy Ano.

Recommendation of Association Awardees to the executive Board. This is the primary job of the AAA Awards Committee. Competition for the AAA Awards was announced in the Fall (on the website and in the newsletter), and a March 1 deadline was set for submission of nominations. In 2004 we began to operate using the policy passed by the Executive Board to consider award nominees for three years. This enhanced the number of nominations under consideration: AIME, 3; Boas, 5; and Mayfield, 7. At its spring teleconference the Awards Committee made the following recommendations that were accepted by the AAA Executive Board at its May meeting:

Awards presented at the Awards Ceremony at the December Annual Meeting in Atlanta.

Franz Boas Service Award: Elliot Skinner
AAA/Mayfield Teaching Award: Mathew Richards
Textor Award in Anticipatory Anthropology: Carlos Valez-Ibanez
Anthropology in the Media Award: Melvin Konner

Other Issues:

In 2004 the Awards committee underwent a five year review by the Association Operations Committee. In addition to refinement of the Committee Charge, several actions resulted from the review including the official appointment of the Chair-Designate role in the year prior to a change in the chair, and the enhancement of the Boas Award.

The Awards Committee recommended to the AAA Executive Board that they enhance the monetary and material award given to the Boas award winner. As compared to the other awards, this leading award in the profession only awarded a finely crafted certificate. For the first time funds were provided to the 2004 awardee for transportation and hotel cost associated with attendance at the Atlanta awards ceremony. The design of a special medallion is now underway. The design is to be approved at the next Executive Board meeting.

• Coordinating operational procedures of all Association-wide Awards Committees. The multi-year effort to regularize and coordinate all Association-wide award committees resulted in an efficient year. Ane award that needs further attention is the AAA/SfAA Mead Award Committee. This award is coordinated with the Society for Applied Anthropology and the deadline for receiving nominations continues to be after the official AAA Awards committee meeting in the Spring. This leads to the nomination coming before the AAA Executive Board at its November meeting when it is too late to properly recognize the awardee at the Awards ceremony. Committee membership is now at four: 2 AAA, 2 SfAA, one member serving as Chair, which alternating between the two associations. The appointment of an AAA Chair will be required in 2005.

• Face-to-face meetings. As a means to save money, the AAA has moved toward telephone conferencing for the Awards Committee. This action is reasonable, but it creates certain problems concerning the lack of direct inter-person interactions in the operation of the Committee. As a way to counter this problem, we organize a meeting of the Awards Committee at the AAA Annual Meeting. In Atlanta discussions were held concerning the transition of leadership, and the Mead Committee.

Advertising the Awards. For years advertisements would be
occasionally printed in the Anthropology Newsletter with the awards criteria being published once a year. Each issue of the Anthropology Newsletter now has an advertisement and the reader is referred to the AAA Awards web page. Given the number of nominations this year this change was positive. The awards are now regularly included in the electronic newsletters.