Annual Report CMIA 2007

The CMIA addressed its usual areas of responsibility involving the administration of the AAA Minority Dissertation Fellowship, as well as its invited sessions for the annual meetings. The CMIA did not, however, have a further major engagement with minority issues in the association. We did, however, establish a minority anthropologist list serve through the efforts of CMIA committee member Sonya Atalay. We also communicate concerns from the Disability Research Interest Group.

**Minority Dissertation Fellowship**

The Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology selected Rocio Magana as the recipient of the 2007-08 AAA Minority Dissertation Fellowship. Ms. Magana is a doctoral candidate at the University of Chicago and is engaged in a dissertation research project on “Bodies on the Line: The Protection of Life, Death and Authority on the Arizona-Mexico Border.” Her work examines a critical bi-national issue involving the exposure and protection of life among undocumented Mexican immigrants in the Arizona-Mexico region, and in particular examining the deliberate neglect that is part of both American and Mexican governmental policies. Ms. Magana was recognized at the AAA Annual Meetings in Washington, DC during the awards ceremony on Saturday evening, and was taken to lunch by the CMIA which also hosted those applicants who received the “honorable mention” distinction (Sameena Mulla of Johns Hopkins U; Lidia Marte of U of Texas at Austin; and Anita P. Chikkatur of U of Pennsylvania).

We followed through on previous plans to expand the eligibility for the Minority Dissertation Fellowship by rewording criteria to be more inclusive. The success was reflected in this past year with a growing number of applicants of Asian and South Asian descent, as well as a range of proposals from students in archaeology and biological/physical anthropology.

**Invited Sessions**

CMIA used their allotted invited sessions to co-sponsor sessions with several of the constituent sections, a plan which we will continue during the current year. Sessions sponsored this past year included: “Are we truly diverse? Minority scholars perspectives in anthropology; Developments in anthropology and diversity consulting; and Polymorphic associations in Type-1 Diabetes in the Mapuche population.

**Budget Issues**

We note with dissatisfaction that some of the key budget issues raised in our 5 year report a year ago have yet to be addressed satisfactorily. As was true for last year, the CMIA has been frustrated by budget issues, including:

1. The lack of funding for expansion of the Minority Dissertation Award;
2. The lack of funding for a reception at the AAA meetings;
3. Lack of funding for hosting a lunch reception for the Minority Dissertation Awardee and honorable mentions;
4. The lack of a full-time staff member at the AAA to dedicate to minority issues; and
5. The lack of travel support for CMIA committee attendees at the annual meetings.

**List Serve**

A listserv was created in 2007 by the American Anthropological Association's Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology. It is meant to be used as a networking tool to aid minority anthropologists in sharing opportunities and news that might include job postings, research or funding possibilities,
discussion of relevant topics, mentoring of students and junior faculty, etc. The list is open to all interested parties. This minority anthropologists list serve has been set up at MINORITY_ANTHROS-L@LISTSERV.INDIANA.EDU. Anyone interested in joining the listserve should email Sonya Atalay (satalay@indiana.edu).

Reorganization
Since our 2005-2006 year, it has become increasingly apparent that the CMIA needs a reorganization and refocus in order to become effective in addressing the issues of both the minority constituency within anthropology, as well as the needs of the larger membership to effectively address minority issues. It is clear that with the current structure and processes, the CMIA is not effectively engaged with the relevant AAA’s sections and committees, nor is it effectively addressing the variety of diversity initiatives that the AAA should engage. There needs to be a major organization effort by the AAA to strengthen the purpose of the CMIA and its ability to produce relevant work.

To that end, the CMIA has endorsed the charge given to the Ad Hoc Commission on Race and Racism in Anthropology and the AAA. The CMIA has solicited from the Commission the opportunity to provide input on the revised mandate and plan of action for CMIA. The current representatives of CMIA have specifically proposed a general plan to solicitation of input for this change through the establishment of a list serve or other on-line communications vehicle for the purpose of soliciting and discussing views from selected leaders and members of the most relevant sections (i.e., ABA, ALLA, SOLGA, Native American representatives) in order to get specific input regarding the desired changes in CMIA.

We hope that next year’s CMIA report will reflect our pleasure with the process and outcome of the AAA leaderships’ efforts to re-integrate CMIA into the mainstream of AAA deliberations.

Report from Disability Research Interest Group
By action of the Board, we are further submitting the following from the Disability Research Interest Group:
The Disability Research Interest Group is a member of the Society for Medical Anthropology of the American Anthropological Association. For the past several years, we have been aware that our members as well as other people with disabilities have encountered severe accessibility issues at the annual meeting that prevented their full and equal participation in this essential scholarly and employment venue.

The problem is that the AAA meeting staff and hotel facilities are not meeting even the bare minimum requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Specific examples that we would like to bring to the attention of the Executive Board regarding the 2005-2007 meetings are:

· Limited hours of ASL interpretation and strict limits of interpreter provisioning to only those sessions that were requested beforehand. Unlike hearing people who can change their mind about which panel they wish to see – even mid-panel – Deaf and hard of hearing people are forced into a locked schedule based on the preliminary program.
· Captioning was not initially provided as an option to hard of hearing and only provided after external intervention. Computer assisted real-time transcription (CART), other transcription services, and assistive listening devices need to be presented as options.
· Rooms were not set up with spaces and proper sight lines for sign language interpretation or wheelchair access.
· Not all venues were accessible or had access issues, including business meetings, cash bars, and job interviews.
· Paper presenters/chairs were not aware that some audience members might request papers in machine readable format (for text-to-speech readers or Braille keyboards). Speakers did not slow down in order for the real-time transcribers or interpreters.

The Executive Board is surely cognizant that section V-B of the AAA Long Range Plan states:

The AAA will promote a broader understanding of diversity and will diversify the Association and discipline in practice, research, training, and outreach. We understand diversity to include socially constructed categories of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, disability, class, language, nationality, national origin, and religion.

We call upon the Executive Board to:

· Assign a non-voting representative from the Disability Research Interest Group to sit on the Annual Meetings Committee for a period of three years to monitor continuing accessibility.
· Direct the Nominations Committee to acknowledge disability status as a consideration in committee and commission nominations. We are aware that currently gender, ethnicity, and sexual orientation are already informally used in this process.
· Direct the AAA staff that meeting the bare minimum standard of the ADA is not sufficient. The Disability Research Group would be willing to conduct a training for AAA staff and section leaders before the next annual meeting if necessary.
· Have a professional disability consultant walk through the conference meeting area with hotel and AAA staff before the annual meeting and suggest modifications to the built environment, seating arrangements, or to the program structure necessary for reasonable accommodation.
· Assign volunteers at the next annual meeting whose specific charge will be disability accommodation. Empower them with the ability to request services on demand.
· Direct the Academic Relations Department to educate department chairs and search committees that both direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of disability is a federal offense as well as counter to the core principles of the AAA.
· Direct the AnthroSource committee to examine accessibility issues with the current web site.
· Organize a commission to survey the membership on disability issues. We suggest the Commission on Lesbian and Gay Issues in Anthropology (COLGIA) and COSWA studies as models.

End Submission from Disability Research Interest Group

Submitted by Michael Winkelman, Chair CMIA 2007-2008