ANTHROPOLOGY EDUCATION COMMITTEE REPORT 2008: MARK LEWINE AND Beverly CHIARULL , CO-CHAIRS

The AEC began the year by acting to clarify its role as the only permanent standing committee charged by the AAA Executive Board with promoting anthropology education at all levels of the educational system and by so doing to improve public knowledge and understanding of anthropology. AEC members met with various sections of the AAA which have active interests in particular levels of anthropology education. CAE leaders and Pres. Setha Low met with AEC co-Chairs Kathryn Borman and Mark Lewine to sort out misperceptions of AEC in the AAA structure and in the reporting process. We communicated with the AAA and CAE leadership and others that we were interested in developing working groups with other AAA sections and committees involved in anthropology education in order to develop lines of mutual communication. These relationships would provide a pool of expertise and identify future AEC members representing various levels of anthropology education. CAE represents mainly K-12 research expertise and AEC continues its linkage to CAE through Catherine Emihovich; SACC represents mainly community college education and formed a Working Group with AEC/SACC member Lewine; COTA/GAD represents university anthropology education and John (Mike) Coggleshill accepted on behalf of COTA an invitation to collaborate from AEC; Archaeology Section has an interest in archaeological education and was contacted by AEC co-Chair and member Bev Chiarull at their midyear board meeting at the Society for American Archaeology Annual Meeting. She has also contacted the SAA Public Education Committee. Other section contacts will be added as they express interest.

As our overall charge encompasses all of anthropology education, we agreed to continue our priority focus on under-represented levels of anthropology education: K-12 and community college, as well as public outreach. Several issues emerged as a committee consensus:

1. It was agreed that our small fixed size of 6 appointed volunteer members was too small for a charge that is great in scope and complexity so that we would explore alternatives such as adding working groups from related sections of the AAA, developing an Interest Group, exploring the use of digital social networking tools for efficient communication.

2. It was agreed that AAA had too little staff support and budget to seriously engage many of the alternatives needed to accomplish our charge and that we would explore grants, interns, and other means to enhance our capacity without resources. We wrote to encourage the addition of some scheduled staff time from Damon Dozier of AAA staff in addition to Richard Thomas so that we could move our agenda forward.

3. It was agreed to explore the long term AEC objective of an Anthropology Education Outreach Center but do so with the use of digital social networking devices so that we could develop such a center within our limited means. Colleen Popson, creator of Anthro Quest, was recommended as a member and asked to lead this effort and we set up an NEH Grant process for start-up support as well as a couple of digital networking devices to begin our
work. The NEH grant was pulled abruptly just three months from the deadline date for submissions, and Colleen and the AEC are seeking alternative sources of support.

4. Currently, much of the work of the AEC now centers on development of our digital outreach project, utilizing wikispaces.com. Colleen Popson spent much time and effort creating first a survey of AEC members as to what educational issues and categories make most sense for each of our focus populations: K-12, community college, university and public outreach anthropology education. She then set up a Ning and Wikispaces network for interchange that is ongoing at present, developing both dialogue and content for anthropology educational outreach.

5. It was agreed that AEC members who rotate off appointments may continue to serve if so desired in informal support roles and would lend an experienced core to a developing Interest Group. It may be possible to develop an Interest Group in addition to the official AEC in the committee structure. Future development of an Interest Group may in fact solve some of the scope issues noted before. The continued efforts of Guven Witteveen as a dedicated ongoing informal supporter after serving as a member demonstrates that this informal support role may serve well in the future.

6. It was agreed that the AEC should continue to develop its role as the organizational unit of the AAA best suited to form linkages to global anthropology education organizations. Our initial experience with this role came last year with the Royal Anthropology Institute of Great Britain whose leadership sought to communicate, share and form links with the AAA through the AEC after viewing the AEC description on the AAA web site. After some deliberation with the AAA leadership, it was determined that the AEC should send a member to the RAI annual meeting, followed by the AAA hosting representatives of the RAI. The result was an excellent learning experience gained from AEC member Guven Witteveen’s attendance at the RAI meeting, followed by an equally positive experience at the AAA with three members of the RAI. This year, Hillary Callan of the RAI continued the process by attending the AEC Invited Session at the 2008 meeting and serving as an active participant in the discussion of anthropology educational outreach. Following this experience, we recommend that the AEC continue to seek linkages with other global anthropology education organizations to share ideas, programs and activities.

7. Co-Chair Lewine reported that he is continuing discussions with Yolande Moses to develop educational outreach plans for the AAA Race Program so that each city that has the experience of the Exhibit will have supportive materials and plans to continue race and diversity education from sound anthropological sources geared to different levels of education. We agreed that we should continue supporting this opportunity to help the Race Program serve to raise the level of discourse in the U.S. concerning race and diversity issues with a core involvement of anthropologically based educational materials. We further discussed the possibility that a global dialogue might result from sharing the concept of this excellent program with our global partners.
8. Members in attendance at our AAA 2008 AEC official working meeting were:
   a. Bev Chiarulli, CoChair and Mark Lewine, CoChair
   b. Catherine Emihovich, member
   c. Clara Martinez (prospective member invitee) camtz@fone.net
   d. Jackie Lewis-Harris, (prospective member invitee) jalh@umsl.edu