Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology
Preliminary Annual Report
Prepared by Michael Winkelman, CMIA Chair 07-08

The CMIA experienced a year of tenuous transitions. It began with the previous year’s chair disappearing without attending the final meeting or submitting a report, and it was heightened by the announcement last November 2007 that a newly formed Commission on Race and Racism in Anthropology would be undertaking a review of CMIA. The Commission however also “disappeared,” not responding to the CMIA’s repeated efforts to engage with the Commission and relevant AAA sections regarding how to revitalize the CMIA.

The CMIA has this year continued its responsibilities of vetting the applicants for the AAA Minority Dissertation Fellowship; sponsoring panels for the AAA Annual Meeting; and made efforts to enhance interaction with the sections that are representative of its primary constituencies.

The CMIA reviewed applications for the AAA Minority Dissertation Fellowship, deciding to give this years’ award to Kerry Thompson; Honorable Mentions were awarded to Laurette Ann McGuire and Aidé Acosta. As has become the recent tradition, outgoing members of the CMIA (Karen Nakamura, Michael Winkelman, Pearl Chan) and incoming members (Enrique Rodríguez-Alegría, Simon Craddock Lee) met with the awardee and honorable mention for lunch. As has also become the tradition, the CMIA members who attend this lunch are expected to pick up the tab for the awardee and honorable mention; unfortunately in the three years on this committee, it has not been possible for find any way to obtain support from the AAA to cover these lunch expenses. While it is apparent that the AAA has many fiscal pressures, it seems unfortunate that the organization has not been able to find a way to allocate $50 for this function in spite of repeated efforts on the part of committee members to obtain such support.

List Serve for Minority Anthropologists
In 2007 the AAA Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology created a list serve for minority anthropologists. The listserv is a tool for networking and building professional relationships. The list is used as a discussion place for a range of issues and topics of interest to minority anthropologists; to share funding and research opportunities; for mentoring undergraduate and graduate students as well as junior faculty; sharing publishing opportunities; posting upcoming conferences and calls for papers; and generally as a way to help us all 'lift as we climb'.

AAA Panels
Ananth Aiyer served as the CMIA Program Chair for the Annual Meeting sponsored sessions. Two sessions were provided:
The Cultural Politics of Exclusion, Fragmentation, and Disconnect


Meeting with CMIA and Section Representatives
In response to the “crises” of effectiveness of CMIA in recent years, and the obvious need to seek a more effective way of meeting both its functions and needs of its constituencies, the CMIA invited several of its primary constituent sections to send representatives to the CMIA meeting at the AAA meeting this year. This was designed to solicit input from the sections regarding how their needs might be more effectively met by an enhanced collaboration with the CMIA. These sections are very interested in having such a representative, and the CMIA has endorsed this plan. In attendance at our 08 Annual Meeting were the following representatives from the sections:

ABA: Raymond Codrington, Dana-Ain Davis
ALA: Vilma Santiago-Irizarry
SOLGA: Karen Nakamura
AIA: Valerie Lambert

These discussions among the CMIA and section representatives led to the following recommendations:

* The selection of AAA members to be candidates for the CMIA be focused more on obtaining individuals who have specific CMIA-related goals that they want to accomplish.
* That the selection of AAA members to be candidates for the CMIA include more candidates who are senior in terms of career stage and power within the AAA.
* That steps be taken to enhance the status/recognition/prestige of CMIA among the AAA membership.
* To enhance the visibility and efficacy of the CMIA in fulfilling its missions, there needs to be greater involvement of the sections, particularly on issues that cut across "minoritized constituency" Sections. Engagement with the sections provides opportunities for the CMIA and its activities to be a context for Section coalition-building.
* To that end, our discussion led to formal proposals for section representatives on the CMIA and that these section representatives be added to the CMIA listserve and participate in ongoing discussions. Sections should determine whether these representatives are selected by election or section appointment. In addition to the traditional minority sections such as ABA, ALLA, AIA and SOLGA, other particularly relevant sections such as Association for Feminist Anthropology, National Association for the Practice of Anthropology, and Council on Anthropology and Education ought to be solicited to send representatives to CMIA.
* That CMIA sponsored AAA workshops and sessions be organized with the sections, or at least to enhance section input into CMIA session development
* That the AAA find out more about how other professional societies address minority issues, including their formal organizations and functions, and implement their successful programs into AAA program development.
* That the AAA hire a Manager of Minority Issues
* That the CMIA and AAA collaborate to create a format for next years meetings that mirrors what the Committee on Practicing Applied and Public Interest Anthropology did at the 08 Annual Meetings to engage the sections to address minority issues.

The section representatives who will continue in an informal liaison status until formal mechanisms are established are:
ABA: Raymond Codrington
Commission on Race and Racism
During the CMIA committee meeting during the annual meeting, the committee was visited by Janis Hutchinson and Tom Patterson, Co-Chairs of the Commission on Race and Racism in Anthropology. They explained the slow process of meeting their charge and engaging with the CMIA in its reorganization. The committee also met with Joseph Jones, the new director of the Race Project and Yolanda Moses regarding the future plans for the Race Project exhibition.

Election of New Chair and Program Chair
Because of the absence of several incoming and continuing members of the CMIA from the meeting it was decided to postpone the election of the new chair until following the Thanksgiving vacations. An online discussion was used to vet candidates and elect Simon Cradock Lee as the new chair. Ananth Aiyer also agreed to continue another year as the Program Chair for the CMIA Organized Sessions at next year’s Annual Meeting.

Submitted by 2007-2008 CMIA Chair Michael Winkelman