AOC 2009 Annual Report

Katherine A. Spielmann, Chair, AOC
January 29, 2010

A. 2009 Activities

I. AAA officers

The AOC approved the motion to change the bylaws so that the ED of the AAA cannot be treasurer.

II. AAA Committees

COPP: In the spring of 2009 the AOC considered the adoption of a new charge for the Committee on Public Policy (COPP) and a change in how its membership is determined. The draft of the new charge was developed by Charles Briggs following an EB conference call that included discussion of the COPP. The AOC made a motion to the Executive Board that was approved.

CfHR: At the Spring AOC meeting, the AOC discussed whether committees such as the Committee for Human Rights (CfHR) should have the authority to send advocacy letters without review and approval by the Executive Board (EB). The committee agreed that the EB had a responsibility to sign-off on any letters sent in its name. With regard to sections, the AOC directed Mary to go back to SAEC to inform them of the action taken by the EB and ask for suggestions from them for a similar policy on letters from sections that take into account intellectual autonomy as well as legal autonomy.

The AOC approved a motion that was later approved by the EB 1) affirming that advocacy and policy statements developed by AAA committees, commissions, interest groups, or task forces must be reviewed and approved by the AAA President before public distribution, and 2) establishing a review procedure for draft statements.

Five Year Committee reports

The AOC reviewed and discussed five-year reports from the following committees:

Finance Committee: The Finance Committee was reauthorized with no change to the charge.

Resource Development Committee: The Resource Development Committee was reauthorized with no change to the charge and with a commendation for their resource development and resourcefulness on behalf of the AAA.
The AOC reviewed, discussed, and approved requests to reauthorize the following interest groups:

- SOYUZ: Postsocialist Cultural Studies
- Melanesian Interest Group

The AOC reviewed, discussed, and approved the requests to establish the following interest groups:

- Music and Sound Interest Group
- NGO’s and Non Profits Interest Group

The AOC reviewed the revised Protocol Governing Creation and Maintenance of AAA Interest Groups, made several revisions involving publications and advocacy positions, and accepted the revised protocol with the additional revisions.

The AOC reviewed a proposal from the SAEC concerning Associate Member dues, made revisions, and passed the Associate Dues proposal with the revisions. The EB made revisions to this proposal in their subsequent meeting.

IV. AOC Charge

Much of the AOC’s December meeting focused on expanding the AOC’s’ charge to include in their annual spring meeting the review of the annual reports of the AAA commissions and committees. Such a review would provide a formal mechanism for regular engagement with the issues raised in the annual reports, for ongoing consideration of inter-committee, commission, and section relations and synergies, and to respond to each committee and commission with regard to issues raised in their annual report. The AOC is now also to review final reports of commissions. The AOC reports to the EB on their reviews of these items.

V. Relations between Committees and Sections of similar focus

The AOC discussed the relationship between the Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology (CMIA) and the Commission on Race and Racism (CRR), and made recommendations to these two entities that were to be communicated to them in their joint meeting that was taking place the day following the December AOC meeting.

The AOC also discussed the relationship between the Anthropology and Education Committee (AEC) and the various sections whose concern is partly or wholly with anthropology and education. For the AOC Spring 2010 meeting a working group of AOC members will reconsider the AEC charge and composition, and its resources, and will talk with past members of the committee.
Overall, it was recommended that the relationship between committees and the sections relevant to their charges be one of collaboration rather than liaison.

VI. External relations of the AAA

One of AOC’s charges is to oversee the external relations of the AAA. The committee, however, does not have a good sense of what these relations are and how well they are working. Prior to the Spring AOC meeting Elaine Lynch will create a list of external relationships, and who is the liaison for what. Kate Spielmann will then write each of these liaisons and ask for a summary description of what they do.

VII. “What is Anthropology” statement

Prior to the AOC meeting, a draft statement for immediate posting on the AAA website was circulated among the EB members. The AOC discussed the statement at its December meeting, provided suggestions for editing it and for taking other paths. The outcome of this discussion was a portfolio of possibilities discussed in the subsequent EB meeting:

1) For quick posting (due to the expressed interest of teachers that there be a statement they can send students to): use the existing draft statement with suggested edits. This was agreed to at the EB meeting; statement has been posted.

2) For near-term posting (in a month or two) have a small group work on the question-format statement and circulate to the EB for comment via email.

3) In the longer term: have a longer term small group work on a more nuanced statement about anthropology.

B. 2010 Planned Activities

We will be working to understand the nature of the AAA’s current external relations as mentioned in item VI above. As part of that review we will be discussing models for reciprocal relations with other scholarly societies.

We will review and discuss the annual reports of the AAA committees and commissions with an eye towards whether their membership and resources are sufficient for the activities they have been charged with. As part of this discussion we will consider whether, now that the CEAUSSIC has ended, the AAA needs a body of its members tasked with addressing issues related to the armed forces, as they arise.

We will consider various recommendations for membership dues for retired anthropologists and meeting registration fees for the conference registration of family members.

C. Have our responsibilities and objectives changed?

Yes, to some extent, as discussed in item IV above.
D. Issues Raised/Recommendations to the EB

It would be helpful for the Board to consider whether it would be possible for the student member of the EB to serve on both the AOC and the ACC (sequentially) over the course of their tenure on the EB.