Committee on Ethics Responsibilities: (1) Work with the long-range Planning Committee and others to formulate visions and goals for the AAA ethics education and advisory program, consistent with the Association's long-range goals; (2) Continually assess members' ethics education needs and interests; (3) Provide advice to AAA members who are facing/raising ethical dilemmas; (4) Assess progress toward attaining ethics education program vision and goals; (5) Develop policy recommendations for the ethics education program; and (6) With the Ethics Contributing Editor of the Anthropology News, develop ideas for the Ethics column and materials for the AAA Ethics Page on the website; (7) Sponsor an ethics-related session at the AAA annual meeting” (as per the charge adopted by the Executive Board)

1. What activities did the Committee or Commission do in relation to your stated Charge as given you by the AAA Executive Board?

1a. Instatement of Friends of the CoE

In January of 2009, the Friends of the Committee on Ethics was finally convened (mission statement, Appendix I and roster, Appendix II). The first query was sent to them in February of 2010; Damon Dozier, liaison for the Committee, is keeping a record of communication sent to and received from the Friends in response to requests.

1b. Ethics Textbook Award

The CoE’s proposal to have an award for textbooks on ethics (actually a motion to the AAA executive committee) was approved several years ago, and finally implemented in 2009, with the award amount set at $300.00. There were periodic announcements about the award on the AAA homepage, the announcement went out in the e-news letter of the AAA, and beginning in February of 2009, there was a standing description on the AAA site (http://www.aaanet.org/about/Prizes-Awards/Award-for-Presentation-of-Anthropological-Ethics.cfm). The Committee received three nominations, none of which fell within the parameters of the criteria developed (Appendix III). (see planned activities for an update.)

1c. Ethical Currents: Anthropology News 2009

The CoE contributed to AAA publications in terms of addressing ethical concerns. These included the following Ethical Currents columns for AN.


(g) Laura Gongaware, Laura Short O’Halloran, “Ethics in Archaeology and Anthropology: Interrelated or Inherently Different?” \textit{AN} 50:9, December 2009 p 23.

1d. Cases to the CoE

A very few queries came to the CoE, the majority of which concerned the code of ethics, and so those queries were forwarded on to the Task Force which is reviewing the code.

1e. CoE-Sponsored Sessions and Workshops at Annual AAA Meetings 2009

There were no CoE sponsored sessions at the 2009 Annual AAA Meetings (though there was a Task Force sponsored session at the meetings).

2. What activities are planned for 2010?

There wasn’t a quorum present at the 2009 Committee on Ethics meeting. Planned activities for 2010 were established during the Committee’s first teleconference in January of 2010. I report them here though they weren’t part of the 2008-2009 year.

2a. Ethical Currents \textit{AN} Contributing Editor

The CoE reappointed Liam Frink as \textit{AN} Contributing Editor for the Ethical Currents column. As was adopted in 2006, each member of the Committee will contribute a column or recruit an author to discuss an ethical issue or dilemma.

2b. Ethics Textbook Prize
The idea of a prize for an ethics text was revisited, with plans to approach the project, and achieve the goal of increasing awareness of ethics issues, a bit differently. Barbara Rose Johnston and Steve Striffler were appointed to work further on this.

2c. IRB portal on the CoE webpage

To add to the resources about IRBs already on the Committee’s webpage, the CoE will generate material / content for an electronic, easily revised and updated portal on issues and resources in Anthropology and IRBs. Dena Plemmons and Lise Dobrin were appointed to work on this.

2d. Webpage Review and Update / Interactive Ethics Blog

A review of the Committee on Ethics webpages will be undertaken, as will exploration of an interactive and dynamic format for ethics conversations with members. Lise Dobrin will take the lead on this, with assistance from Leith Mullings and Dena Plemmons.

2e. Anthropologists’ involvement in Japanese internment camps in WWII

Barbara Rose Johnston brought this issue to the committee for discussion and vote on whether to send an official recommendation/ advise the AAA leadership that a formal apology be issued on behalf of the AAA to the descendents of those held in internment camps, and that other options for meaningful redress be considered; no actions taken as of this report.

2e. Annual AAA Meeting Sessions:

The CoE will organize two roundtables, and one special event session.

2f. Chair Appointment

Barbara Rose Johnston was appointed co-Chair, along with Dena Plemmons, by the Executive Board. Lara Deeb was appointed co-chair elect (she will serve with Barbara Rose Johnston) by the Committee.

3. Do you view your Responsibilities and Objectives of your Committee/Commission as having changed?

No

(To answer questions 4 and 5, I will include here some of what was written in the 2006 annual report of the Committee on Ethics, as it bears repeating and remains relevant.)
4. What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the Long-Range Planning Committee?

“Some individuals and groups still think that the CoE is a juridical body with adjudication functions. Hence, some make requests for retributions and chastisement of colleagues and supervisors. Since the CoE’s mandate is one of education, there must be a concerted effort on the part of the AAA, not just the CoE, to inform the membership and the public of this mandate and CoE functions. This should be carried out in a variety of formats (emails, AN notes/articles, AAA publications and reports, web pages, etc.).”

While there is a bit more awareness among the membership of the function of the CoE, there is not as much as there perhaps could/should be, and awareness doesn’t equal acceptance or agreement. I would suggest that the AAA find ways to make clear the reasons that we are not an adjudicating body at this moment, which would of course include the financial and legal realities, but which would also allow and encourage a sustained and reflexive dialogue about what kind of organization we want to be.

5. What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Executive Board?

“5. The CoE’s mandate is an educational mission and its model is to use explanation and case studies. It does not have adjudication functions and does not adjudicate cases on particular ethnical dilemmas. We see this as the CoE’s public face and it is vital to ethical issues and needed. However, the message has not gotten out to all of the AAA membership yet, even though this has been the mandate for many years… Annual memos to the AAA listserv, notation on the AAA and CoE webpages, and mentioned in AN would help (other suggestions are welcome).”

This will, I suspect, be helped somewhat by the Friends of the Committee on Ethics now being an active and viable resource, but the issue remains a difficult one. It would be helpful for the EB to consider how / where to make statements about the educative mission of the CoE, rather than leaving that to the CoE to make on a case by case basis.
APPENDIX I

In 2006, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban and Kathleen Martin, both past Chairs of the AAA’s Committee on Ethics, proposed the creation of Friends of the Committee on Ethics, an ad hoc consultative body that could provide expertise, informal consultation, and resources and information to the Committee on Ethics (CoE) members regarding matters of ethical practice. Simultaneous with discussions of this proposal by the Committee on Ethics, in early 2008, the Executive Board of the AAA instructed the Committee on Ethics to discuss the advisability of “setting up a permanent mode of member counseling on ethical dilemmas, and what form such counseling might take.” The following is a proposal for just such a mode of member assistance, expanding on the ideas found in the initial Friends of the CoE proposal to include the membership at large.

2008 Mission Statement of the “Friends of the Committee on Ethics”

Drafted by: Alec Barker (CoE Chair 2007); Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban (CoE Chair 2005); Dena Plemmons (2008 acting CoE Chair)

The Friends of the Committee on Ethics will be an ad hoc consultative body of anthropologists who have agreed to serve the membership in an advisory capacity on questions about the ethical implications of research and practice decisions/choices/issues. The benefit of such a body to the membership is the availability of a dynamic and diverse network of practitioners who can provide multiple viewpoints on both broad and specific issues that concern the membership regarding ethical considerations in anthropological research and practice. They complement the Committee on Ethics by providing continuity and institutional memory, as well as bringing to bear their own experience, professional expertise and contacts with practitioners representing a tremendous breadth of theoretical orientation, methodological approach, fieldsites, disciplinary focus and research experience. The Friends of the CoE will not be a standing committee of the AAA, but rather a committed group of anthropologists with relevant experience and willingness to share that experience as needed. In many instances the Friends can address the implications of ethical issues based on their own experience and competency; in others they can offer access to a broader group of contacts with relevant training, experience or concerns.

The Friends will be comprised of past presidents of the Committee on Ethics; as this body is being newly formed, all past presidents who are members of the AAA will be invited to become part of the group. In the future, the immediate past president of the CoE will automatically become part of the advisory body; should a past president be unable or unwilling to be part of the advisory body, he/she should make a request of the sitting Chair of the CoE to have his/her name withdrawn.

Questions about the ethical implications of research / practice will come first to the Committee on Ethics (as this has long been the case). Neither the CoE nor the Friends group will investigate or adjudicate complaints against individual members; as has also been the case for several years, the Committee has a common response* to concerns
submitted that are beyond the mandate of the Committee (individual disputes between scholars, tenure/hiring disagreements, legal issues). Questions which concern discipline-wide issues of ethical practice, responsibility, diligence and accountability, and which would benefit from review by the Friends, will be sent on to the Friends listserv; individual members of the Friends group may separately choose whether to respond to a given issue or topic.

In addition to working with the other members of the body, it is expected that each Friend will also rely on his/her own professional and personal network in addressing any questions or issues. **The Friends do not make determinations about practice or research;** rather, the Friends will offer, to the CoE and/or to individual anthropologists referred by the CoE, collegial advice and access to the views of a broader and more diverse range of constituencies and stakeholders.

The Friends will have quarterly meetings by conference call to have the opportunity to discuss questions/issues which have been sent to them. In the interests of transparency, it is expected that the Friends will write a quarterly column for the AAA noting the issues (anonymously, unless otherwise negotiated) that have come to them for response and to share with the wider membership the resources and opinions generated.

*That response has been as follows: “Thank you for contacting the Committee with your concerns about..... However, you should know that the Committee has an educational and advisory mandate, and is specifically prohibited from investigating or adjudicating grievances against individual members. The concerns you raise are troubling ones; our suggestion would be that you make use of any number of options and resources available to you, ranging from filing a formal complaint with the dean, the faculty ombudsperson at your institution, and the University chancellor to making associations of universities and higher education institutions aware of the situation, and perhaps further exploration of legal remedies and appeal to the popular press. While the Committee indeed takes such concerns seriously, our ability to address them does not include consideration of individual complaints or grievances, but instead focuses on discipline-wide issues of responsibility, diligence and accountability for all members of the profession.”*
APPENDIX II

Friends of the Committee on Ethics Roster

Dena Plemmons
Katie MacKinnon
Alex Barker
Anita Spring
Anne Pyburn
Carolyn Fleur-Lobban
Joe Watkins
James Collins
Ana Celia Zentella
Robert Alvarez
Kathleen Gibson
Alice Ingerson
Janet Levy
Rena Lederman
John Van Willigen
Richard Gould
Kathleen Martin
APPENDIX III

Award for Excellence in the Presentation of Anthropological Ethics in an Introductory Text

The American Anthropological Association is proud to announce a call for nominations for the **AAA Award for Excellence in the Presentation of Anthropological Ethics in an Introductory Text**. The award is to be presented to the author(s) of an introductory textbook in general anthropology or a specific subfield of the discipline based on the quality and depth of the presentation of ethical issues. The purpose of the award is to acknowledge and draw attention to enhanced presentation of ethical issues, effectiveness in the integration of ethical concerns with research and practice in anthropology, and success in communicating to students the fundamental importance of ethical issues and competence in anthropology. The award will be presented at the 2009 AAA Annual Meeting, based on a review of submitted texts by the AAA Committee on Ethics, and nominations are encouraged from textbook authors, publishers, and AAA members. Texts are eligible for nomination within three years of their initial publication or within two years of a new edition.

The nomination period will run from March 1st, 2009 to June 30, 2009, and nominee textbook titles and/or textbooks can be sent via electronic mail to ddozier@aaanet.org. Mailed submissions should be sent to:

AAA Excellence on Anthropological Ethics Nominations  
c/oDamon Dozier  
Director of Public Affairs  
American Anthropological Association  
2200 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 600  
Arlington, VA 22201

All submitted texts will judged by the following six criteria:

1. success in demonstrating that ethical considerations and competence in the field of ethics are integral to anthropological research, scholarship and practice;
2. presentation of both a historical approach to ethics and anthropology that includes examination of key ethical considerations that emerged in the course of the development of the discipline and the global/cross cultural aspects of ethical debates/Issues;
3. depth of discussion, as appropriate based on the scope of the text, of ethical issues and challenges confronted by anthropologists working in the various subfields of the discipline;
4. compelling examination of the unique ethical considerations that arise from traditional and emerging anthropological approaches to research and practice and approaches to responding to these challenges;
5. timely and practical consideration of current ethical issues, discussions and debates in anthropology, including the impact of ethics decision makers on anthropological research and practice; and
6. provision of “roadmaps” to resources for additional information about both
general ethical issues in research and issues, concerns, and approaches that are
specific to anthropology.