The Nominations Committee met for an all-day meeting on Tuesday, the 24th of November, to construct the slate of candidates for all open AAA positions, with the exception of open positions on the Nominations Committee. All members of the Committee were in attendance, along with Section and Governance Coordinator, Kim Baker (the Committee’s staff liaison), and Executive Director Bill Davis. Secretary-elect Deborah Martin was also in attendance, in a shadowing capacity.

The Committee had a pool of 56 candidates to fill a total of 32 slots for 16 open AAA offices. This pool of candidates had been obtained using a revised online form, with the changes designed, at the direction of the Executive Board, to produce greater certainty that candidates were willing to serve in any office to which they might end up nominated. The Committee judged that the revised form had not had any noticeable negative impact on either the overall size of the pool, or on the number of candidates available for any particular office or committee, while apparently serving well the objective of the revised form.

It should be noted that in the particular way AAA offices are staggered, it happens that once every six years, the Nominations Committee must nominate candidates for both the position of president-elect and the position of Secretary. This was the case in 2008. By contrast, 2009 was a much less demanding year for the Nominations Committee, in that neither of these positions were open—a situation that results every three years.

I want also to note that over the past several years, the Nominations Committee has developed a two-part agenda for its annual meeting. In the first portion of the meeting, the Committee works on filling the two open slots for each office, taking each office in turn, and thereby producing a draft slate. Then, in the second portion of the meeting, the Committee systematically reviews the overall or aggregate slate, for the purposes of asking whether the overall slate reflects, as much as possible, the important (and diverse) dimensions of diversity of our discipline. In concrete terms, we examine the overall composition of the slate in terms of a large number of variables, including: gender; disciplinary quadrant; racialized/minoritized status; kind of employment (academic/non-academic); kind of employer, for candidates in academic positions (public/private; undergraduate college/research university/community college); source of nomination (individual/section and, if a section, which section), and so on. This self-conscious examination of the slate as an aggregate has become increasingly thorough over the years, and it has now, in effect, been institutionalized as part of the Committee’s received practices. Doing this allows the Committee to judge whether efforts should be made to revise the overall slate before forwarding it to the EB, to insure that the discipline, in all of its complexity, is well represented on the slate. This is, in my view, a nuanced and deliberative process, rather than a mechanical or shallow one, and my own judgment is that it is serves the AAA quite well.

I am pleased to be able to say that, for the first time in my years as Secretary, I know of no breaches of the confidentiality of the slate after it had been forwarded to the Executive Board.

As the outgoing Chair, I welcome the opportunity to thank Kim Baker for her exceptional professional support for the Committee this year, as in the past.
I must add, as well, that it has been my great good fortune to have chaired the Committee for three years when the Committee’s members showed extraordinary diligence in preparing for the committee and exemplary collegiality in committee deliberations, even when there were strong, principled disagreements among us. I could not have asked for better colleagues on this Committee. I am grateful to all of them.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel A. Segal
Past Secretary, the American Anthropological Association