Submitted By:
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Question 1
Please list your Committee, Commission, or Task Force Objective and Responsibilities as stated in your Group's charge:

1. Committee, Commission or Task Force Objectives and Responsibilities as stated in group’s charge.

Objectives:

The Committee on Ethics is a standing committee of the Association, which is responsible for the design and implementation of the Association’s ethics education and advisory program. The objectives of the ethics education program are:

  ● to increase the number of candidates for all degrees in anthropology receiving training in ethics before graduating
  ● to provide ongoing education in ethical issues for all AAA members
  ● to provide advice to AAA members facing/raising ethical dilemmas

Responsibilities:

  ● Work with the long-range Planning Committee and others, formulates visions and goals for the AAA ethics education and advisory program, consistent with the Association’s long-range goals
  
  ● Continually assess members’ ethics education needs and interests
  
  ● Provide advice to AAA members who are facing/raising ethical dilemmas
  
  ● Assess progress toward attaining ethics education program vision and goals
  
  ● Develop policy recommendations for the ethics education program
  
  ● With the Ethics Contributing Editor of the Anthropology Newsletter, develop ideas for the Ethics column and materials for the AAA Ethics Page on the website
Sponsor an ethics-related session at the AAA annual meeting

Administer and award Ethics Small Grant Program

Question 2
Please identify one or more of the AAA Long Range Plan (LRP) 12 main objectives, that your Group is organized to support.

Describe your Group's activities and accomplishments/products for the designated period, and how they support the achievement of LRP objectives. Account for any ways in which your Group has fallen short of supporting the achievement of these objectives. Activities of your Group that do not relate to the LRP objectives should also be mentioned and indicated as such.

2. Group’s goals, activities and accomplishments/products for the designated period in relation to the AAA’s long range plan.

The Committee on Ethics is especially well positioned to support the following Long Range Plan objectives:

2. Foster discussion of social and policy issues in society and bring anthropological perspectives to bear on current events

4. Foster engagement with ethics

7. Promote professional development at annual meetings

11. Make resources available for public use

Activities undertaken in 2012:

1. The Committee sponsored two successful events at the 2012 AAA meeting. One was a regular session entitled “Compliance in Practice: Creative Engagements with Regulatory Ethics Regimes”. The other was a roundtable entitled “Beyond the IRB: Social Responsibility and Ethical Praxis”. These conference activities served Long Range Plan objective 7.
1. The Committee responded to queries from AAA members regarding ethical issues they were engaged with. One asked about a problematic position he felt placed in regarding the mandate to Do No Harm during his fieldwork. While conducting research on a minority group, he learned about activities members of the group were engaged in that could bring harm to others, yet dared not reveal this lest they themselves become subject to oppressive action by the country’s majority. Another query came from someone teaching at a design school who was preparing to conduct research and supervise students overseas in partnership with a local group. She felt uncomfortable doing this without IRB oversight and sought the AAA CoE’s input on how she should proceed. Finally, we had a query from someone employed by a health company of some kind who was developing an ethics code for her organization and sought feedback from the AAA CoE on her draft code. Over the course of the year the committee piloted a new approach to responding to queries in order to better support the objective of helping AAA members grapple effectively with ethical issues, as opposed to offering them our judgments. Instead of providing a single summary response, the person inquiring would receive a compilation of redacted anonymous comments from those committee members (and/or Friends of the Committee on Ethics members) who gave feedback. Responding to member queries about ethical issues they are facing serves Long Range Plan objective 4.

1. As it did the year before, the Committee solicited and reviewed applications for the Ethics Curriculum Grant. This is a $1000 grant to support the development of educational material that can aid in the teaching of anthropological ethics. This year the committee received three thoughtful applications. Constructive feedback was offered to all three applicants. The title of the project chosen for funding is Research Ethics Learning Modules for Medical Anthropology and Ethnography. Awarding the CoE’s ethics curriculum grant supports Long Range Objective 11.

1. The Committee held discussions to clarify confusion about the role and functioning of the Friends of the Committee on Ethics. We realized this was a problem when some members of the Friends thought that the advisory body had been disbanded. The Friends’ mission statement was redrafted in order to formalize the new understanding that this group of former CoE chairs (and potentially others) would continue to serve as a resource on ethics for the CoE and AAA members. AAA member queries were forwarded to the Friends according to this new understanding, and one member of the Friends initiated a discussion about the history of the CoE using the new Friends listserv. The final step in this process will be posting the new Friends mission statement to the AAA website. Reinstituting the Friends of the CoE serves Long Range Plan objective 4.

1. The Committee provided a full slate of Ethical Currents columns for publication in Anthropology News. As the AN moves toward online submission and publication the committee’s procedures for providing/finding authors for columns may change, but the committee remains committed to its role in supporting the publication of these
1. As the AAA transitioned to adopting a revised version of its Code of Ethics, the Committee agreed to steward the new “Principles of Professional Responsibility” and maintain it online. The current plan is to integrate these with a Committee on Ethics Blog. This activity is an enormous responsibility and will entail a new level of organization and effort on the committee’s part. Issues surrounding the infrastructure needed to implement this commitment are discussed below. Stewarding the online presence of the AAA’s Principles of Professional Responsibility serves Long Range Plan objectives 4 and 11.

1. The following committee-internal activities took place at the end of 2012: Lise Dobrin took over as committee chair. Pamela Stone was voted in as chair-elect. Morag Kersel agreed to continue for another year in her role as Ethical Currents coordinator. Barbara Rose Johnston resigned from the committee.

Question 3

Provide plans for the coming year in relation to existing or recommended new goals/activities and relationship to the Objective in the committee, commission, or task force Charge and Long-Range Plan (if not self-evident). Identify if they represent significant changes or elaborations on existing goals, objective activities, charge etc.

3. Plans for the coming year in relation to existing or recommended new goals/activities and relationship to the Objective of the committee charge and Long-Range Plan. Identify if they represent significant changes or elaborations on existing goals, objective activities, charge, etc.

The main change to the committee’s charge this year—and in future years—will involve the posting and maintaining of the AAA’s revised ethics code, the Principles of Professional Responsibility. The Principles of Professional Responsibility was intended to be a “living document”, one that will be responded to and updated in an ongoing way. For this reason, the committee believes it makes the most sense to present the Principles online within a blog-like framework in order to create new links and capture the responses and commentary that readers provide. Although this activity falls squarely within the purview of the committee’s current objectives and responsibilities, and although it supports the AAA’s Long Range Plans, it nevertheless constitutes a significant addition to the committee’s current set of obligations. For this reason, the committee requests that a systematic CoE “Student Intern” position be created to work with the chair or other relevant committee members, in rotation as appropriate, to support the committee’s efforts in designing, monitoring, and updating the Principles and the CoE Blog. The position does not need to be paid, but we do feel it is important that it be formalized as official, with a title and brief job description so that the students who occupy it can properly claim the service on their CVs. For reasons of expediency we do not wish to prescribe how the position should be filled. The most likely candidates will be students with whom the committee member in charge of the
Principles that year has an effective and convenient working relationship. Creating this role will also serve Long Range Plan objective 3, promote the teaching of anthropology, through the cultivation of student engagement with practical and professional ethics.

Question 4
Identify and upcoming requirements for additional resources and explain how these funds would be used if approved. (Please note that formal requests for funding must be included in the annual budget proposal, to be considered with all other requests.)
N/A

Question 5
Do you propose any changes to the Charge (Objective, Responsibilities, or Products/Outcomes) of your Committee, Commission or Task Force? If so, list the proposed changes, the rationale for the change, and additional funding that may be needed.
N/A

Question 6
Are there issues you would like raised or recommendations you would like to make to the AAA Executive Board related to the work of your Committee, Commission, or Task Force?
N/A