American Anthropological Association
Committee Annual Report

Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology

Submitted By:
- Shalini Shankar - sshankar@northwestern.edu
- Emilia Guevara - eguevara@aaanet.org

Question 1
Please report on the activities your group undertook during the year. Indicate how these activities correspond to the group’s charge (objectives and responsibilities, provided above). If there has been any shortfall in accomplishing those objectives, please explain.

The CMIA underwent a significant revision based on Chair comments and EB recommendations. Due to this shift, the committee was not as productive as it hopes to be, but nonetheless began to make productive headway in several areas.

- The CMIA reviewed 29 applications for its annual fellowship. It recommended a winner (Karen Williams, The Graduate Center, CUNY) and a runner up (Rosa Ficek, UCBerkely), who were honored at the 2013 AAA meetings.
- We began to collaborate with the Taskforce on Race and Racism in order to slowly absorb their agenda and consider how to implement suggestions emerging from the survey data.
- We initiated conversations with Lee Baker of the TFRR about mentoring, in hopes of developing a collaborative mentoring strategy for minority graduate students and early career faculty.
- We have requested a second dissertation fellowship for minority students, one that might be open to Dreamers and other racialized non-U.S. citizen minorities.

Question 2
Please indicate your group’s plans for activities in the coming year. If they represent significant modification or elaboration of the stated objectives and responsibilities, please explain.

- Strategize ways to develop additional forms of mentoring for young racialized minority professionals, including a panel/roundtable at the 2014 AAA meetings.
- Clarify and streamline the CMIA Fellow selection process with the assistance of the AOC.
- Make recommendations to the Executive Board regarding the recipient of the Minority Fellowship Award and develop additional forms of mentoring young racialized minority professionals, including working with the TFRR to develop and launch a mentoring program for graduate students and early career faculty.
- Work with the TRFF to further develop pragmatic and measurable indices for examining progress toward meeting the above objectives, including monitoring statistics on racial/ethnic diversity.
- Develop a plan to include Dreamers and non-US Citizen minorities into mentoring activities.
- Identify members of ALLA, ABA, and AIA to recommend for appointment to the CMIA board as the current members rotate off.
- Develop ways of interacting with US and other interested department heads at the AAA meetings and by email to share information on the importance of diversity for faculty, staff, and graduate students and the best practices for achieving such diversity.
- Disseminate results of activities and findings in organized events at the Annual Meeting and in the Anthropology News to educate Association members and the general public.
- Develop a way to assess the impact of the CMIA dissertation fellowship and track the progress of recipients.

Question 3
This question refers to any specific tasks or activities in the current Strategic Implementation Plan. They are briefly reported separately so that they can be reviewed by the appropriate staff. If your unit was not assigned any activities in the current SIP, please skip Part II.

Please briefly report on how you have fulfilled, or plan to fulfill, those specific tasks or activities, whether new or ongoing, that appear in the current Strategic Implementation Plan. Please refer to each one by their item number.

5.2  Role of the Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology (CMIA)

5.2.1  The AOC will ask the Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology (CMIA) to consider its charge and rationale in its 2013 Annual Report to the EB, in order to evaluate the best mechanisms for supporting and fostering programs that bring underrepresented sectors of the wider population into the Association and the discipline.

Response: In August 2013, I responded that I was in favor of the CMIA being radically
transformed from its current state, in the areas of a revised charge, a smaller committee size, and formal linkages to ABA, ALLA, and AIA. I worked with Leith to refine these points; these points were ultimately approved by the Executive Board in August. I subsequently presented the revised charge via email to the membership at the time, and we discussed it at our annual meeting. All current members are aware of the revised charge.

5.2.2 By September 2013, the AOC will suggest how to award and evaluate the impact of the AAA Minority Dissertation Award and how to collect information on the subsequent careers of previous recipients.

Response: With the help of Emilia Guevara, the CMIA has begun to collect data on past recipients and is working on revising the survey for past fellows and a mandatory progress report of current fellows. We are also thinking about ways to keep track of these scholars and continue to offer support during their early career. There is more work to be done here, but we have started the process.

**9.5 Enhance and expand fellowship opportunities for members**

9.5.1 AAA staff will create by September 2013 an online application process for Minority Dissertation and AAA Leadership Fellowships.

Response: We are in the process of revising the criteria by which we select the fellow, developing a rating system that would balance various factors more consistently, including how "need-based" the fellowship should be, and other criteria on which the fellowship should be evaluated. We have appointed a subcommittee to do a first pass at the applications to be sure these criteria are carefully considered.

9.5.3 AAA staff will prepare, in close consultation with the Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology and other key stakeholders, by June 2014, a grant application to support expansion of the Fellowship Program, pending AOC review of the Leadership Fellowship Program and recommendation to that effect.

Response: The CMIA is thrilled at the possibility. These new funds may also enable us to include Dreamers and other racialized minorities who are not US citizens.

**Question 4**

Please comment on any issues or recommendations you would like to bring to the special attention of the Executive Board. These might be problems in fulfilling group objectives and responsibilities or in fulfilling tasks listed in the SIP, the need for additional resources, recommended changes to the group charge (objectives, responsibilities, products/outcomes), and recommended changes to the committee structure or membership. Any problems or recommendations listed here will be discussed by the Association Operations Committee and then considered at the EB meeting for possible action.

As the EB well knows, this has been a troubled committee, and the reception of the revised charge was mixed at best. As such, some members have expressed their discontent about what they perceive to be a “top-down” change, paying no heed to the broader point that AAA committees are constituted and dissolved at the discretion of the EB, and that is non-negotiable. We do, however, have a handful of very engaged and thoughtful members, and we are working through our list of action items generated during the rather contentious meeting held at the 2013 AAAs. As I’ve notified Kim Baker, we do not need to fill any more seats via general election, since we just had 2 elected seats filled (2013-2016). As members rotate off and we don’t replace them immediately, the committee will shrink in size (as prescribed by the new charge), and in the next year or two, members from other AAA units will be asked to join. I think we can expect a much more productive committee at that point, and in the meantime, we are doing the best we can with what we have. Tempering expectations of what the CMIA can accomplish, especially as it absorbs the recommendations and remaining agendas of the TFRR, would be appreciated during this transitional time.