American Anthropological Association
Committee Annual Report
Committee on Ethics

Submitted By:
- Pamela K. Stone - pks86@hampshire.edu
- Damon A Dozier - ddozier@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.

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

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:

Objectives:
- 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:
- To work with the long-range Planning Committee and others, to formulate the 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 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.

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 2013:
- The Committee sponsored one successful event at the 2013 AAA meeting. This event was a regular session entitled “Do the Right Thing: Ethics in Anthropological Practice”. Conference activities served Long Range Plan objective 7.

- 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
Objective: The committee charge and Long-Range Plan. Identify if they represent significant changes or elaborations on existing goals, objective activities, and 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.

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.

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.

- 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 six thoughtful applications. Constructive feedback was offered to all six applicants. The committee chose to fund two of the six grants. The first grant was funded $400.00 and is titled: Evaluation of research Ethics Learning Modules for Medical Anthropology and Ethnography. The second grant was funded $600.00 and is titled: Beneficence and informed consent: Lessons from and ethnographic study of citizenship and language socialization. Awarding the CoE’s ethics curriculum grant supports Long Range Objective 11.

- 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 columns. Publishing on ethical issues in Anthropology News serves Long Range Plan objectives 2, 4, and 11.

- As noted in last year’s report, the Committee agreed to steward the new “Principles of Professional Responsibility” and maintain it online, as part of the AAAs adoption of a revised version of its Code of Ethics. The integration of these revised codes with a Committee on Ethics Blog has been in progress, but this activity is an enormous responsibility and entails a new level of organization and effort on the committee’s part. Continued evaluation and test-driving the 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.

- The following committee-internal activities took place at the end of 2013: Pamela Stone took over as committee chair. Steve Black was voted in as chair-elect. Morag Kersel agreed to continue for another year in her role as Ethical Currents coordinator. Mary Anglin was added to the committee as the appointed member by the AAA president.

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As part of the committee’s new charge beginning in 2012 has been the implementation and (slowly evolving) the posting and maintaining of the AAA’s revised ethics code, the Principles of Professional Responsibility. The Principles of Professional Responsibility intended as a “living document”, one that will be responded to and updated in an ongoing way, is now being presented as an online 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, last year the committee requested 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. This position was filled with a AAA intern – Saul Schwartz graduate student from Princeton University – who us currently working with the outgoing CoE chair, Lise Dobrin, on the new blog format for the CoE and on the “living document” created for the Code of Ethics for the AAA. Thie role also serves Long Range Plan objective 3, promoting the teaching of anthropology, through the cultivation of student engagement with practical and professional ethics.

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.
Not Applicable