American Anthropological Association  
Committee Annual Report  
Committee on Gender Equity Issues in Anthropology

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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.

This year the committee fulfilled and exceeded in one of the activities it had planned and did not fully accomplish the second activity it set out for itself. In addition the committee also engaged in three other additional activities that were not explicitly noted in the 2012 CoGEA annual report. The fulfilled activities are in congruence with the committee’s objective as stated and correspond to points 1, 3 and 4 of the committee’s responsibilities.

Activity 1 (outlined in 2012 CoGEA annual report)

CoGEA organized two sessions at the American Anthropological Association meetings in Chicago which were both consistent with the committee objectives and responsibilities. For the 2013 meetings, CoGEA organized a Panel Workshop on Sexual Harassment and a session that contributed to the scientific program on Gender Justice. This first session relates to LRP Objective: 2.1.2, EB may charge committees to host events at the annual meeting. The Both sessions relate to LRP Objective 5 as both sessions advocated for an improved understanding of diversity in society and promoted equitable treatment of all anthropologists.

Activity 2 (outlined in 2012 CoGEA annual report)

CoGEA plans to continue administer the CoGEA Award (formerly the Squeaky Wheel Award), a tradition started in 1997. In 2013 the decision was made not to make an award because nominees did not fit the criteria expectations.

Activity 3

Award subcommittee engaged in the re-writing of the CoGEA Award Call for Nominations and Award description to reflect the change in charge, objectives and responsibilities as the committee transitioned from COSWA to CoGEA.

Activity 4

The committee chair compiled a short report on the organized panel Getting to Zero Incidence of Sexual Harassment in the Discipline that includes initiatives or projects that could be explore by CoGEA and the EB as the association plans to be proactive in reducing the incidence of sexual harassment in the discipline (the report is attached). Full report attached below.

Activity 5

An extra telephone meeting took place on 01/13/14 to discuss outstanding items: finalizing the meetings/program subcommittee and its charge, discussion of the getting to zero session, and discussion of the committee’s final report. The disjuncture in leadership for CoGEA- as no eligible members are able to take on the role of chair for 2014- has been passed on for discussion at the AAA Executive Board level.

Report from the Getting to Zero Incidence of Sexual Harassment in the Discipline Session

Friday, November 22, 2013, 12:00 PM (M. Gabriela Torres, Organizer). Panelists: Keri Brondo (University of Memphis), Julienne N Rutherford (University of Illinois at Chicago), Jane Henrici (Institute for Women's Policy Research), Naomi Quinn (Duke University - Department of Cultural Anthropology), and M. Gabriela Torres (Wheaton College, MA)

This session arose in response to survey findings reported in 2013 and 2009 show an astronomical prevalence of unwanted sexual behaviors and assaults directed at women in Anthropology. The persistence of sexual harassment in our discipline and a brief outline of its effects has been recounted by CoGEA committee member Rita Wright in her 2003 article “Gender Matters- A Question of Ethics.” (In Zimmerman, L.J. et al. Ethical Issues in Archeology). According to an official statement issued by the AAA in April of
this year, the association does not have “adjudicatory authority” but the association does have clear expectations for behavior in our
ethics code that should preclude sexual harassment behaviors. This session was put together in an effort to explore what other
initiatives the association might undertake to support its “zero tolerance for sexual harassment in academic, professional, fieldwork or
any other settings where our [AAA’s] members work.”

Starting with a presentation by Keri Brondo that contextualized the data collected through COSWA’s 2009 survey on Work Climate,
Gender and the Status of Practicing Anthropologists. While the 2009 and the 2005 surveys discussed did not explicitly ask about
sexual harassment much of the comments provided by participants discussed sexual harassment. From this data it is clear that there is
consistent under-reporting and that LGBTI persons are particularly vulnerable to discrimination of this type.

Julienne Rutherford then presented the data from the 2013 study of anthropological field work she co-authored with Kathryn Clancy,
Katie Hinde and Robin Nelson. This survey reported on in Scientific American through co-author Kathryn Clancy began as a survey
of biological anthropology field experience and has expanded to include cultural anthropologist’s field site experience in the months
that it was open for respondents.

Briefly, the authors surveyed 666 respondents at the time of the presentation in November 2013 and had completed 26 follow up
telephone interviews. Of those surveyed, 26% of women and 6% of men experienced unwanted physical contact in field sites. Most
of the unwanted physical contact for women was perpetuated by superiors which differs from the men who reported that their peers
were the instigators of more than half of the unwanted physical contact. The survey was covered by Science Insider, the Scientist,
Scientific American, our own Anthropology News. As a result of their work, Clancy was selected by as one of Nature’s 10 for 2013,
and made both Live Science’s and Business Insider’s top ten scientists who made a difference in 2013.

Jane Henrici presented on the relationship between “chilly” work climates and sexual harassment policies and the incidence of both
in academic and non-academic workforces. She particularly stressed as did the two previous presenters that lack of clear sexual
harassment policies and appropriate reporting mechanisms are strongly tied with increased incidence of both sexual harassment and
chilly work climates in the business world where this has been most studied.

Naomi Quinn long time work on sexual harassment in academe shaped her presentation of why departmental and institutional
structures? and in particular the reporting and redress practices employed? result in the cyclical reappearance of sexual harassment
behavior even after arduous and hard won campaigns to curb faculty members’ particular behavior. Using a specific ethnographic
example as her grounding Quinn describes how in dealing with issues “behind-the-scenes” administrations often allow for the
erasure of what are long histories of sexual harassment by individuals who seem to repeat the offensive behavior once scrutiny
wanes.

CoGEA’s contribution (presented by M. Gabriela Torres) to the panel included an assessment of the current constraints placed on
CoGEA to effectively advocate for changes within the association and beyond. Currently the committee is suffering from a lack of
continuity of leadership and the elected members are burdened with many service and professional commitments that often precludes
proactive engagement in the committee’s charge to monitor gender equity in the discipline and educate the AAAs membership on
gender equity issues. The presentation also suggested to those present that the executive board is the body charged with making
association-wide changes on policy and that CoGEA only has an advisory role in this respect.

The session resulted in a number of concrete areas to be explored further:

1. How might we more regularly and effectively monitor the status of women and gender equity more generally in our
discipline? In this endeavor what role does CoGEA play and how can the Executive Board continue to spear head these
efforts?

1. Should the AAA’s meetings have a sexual harassment policy for its annual meetings? As part of these policies should the
association actively discourage “hotel room interviews”? Other disciplinary associations have them (eg. MLA’s annual
conventions).

1. How might our ethics or professional conduct code be strengthened to include specific language that targets sexual
harassment behavior? ASA, AHA and MLA all have such language as part of their professional codes of conduct. This is a
point that committee member Rita Wright made in her 2002 CoSWA report published in the SAA Archeological Record.

1. How can AAA better disseminate education on sexual harassment to its membership? Is the Chair’s breakfast an
appropriate venue for the dissemination of sexual harassment education?
1. How can the AAA and CoGEA collaborate with other associations and organizations that have undertaken sexual harassment policy monitoring to reduce the incidence of sexual harassment in our discipline?

1. Can monitoring of the status of women and gender equity more generally in be done through collaboration with sections such as AFA, AQA, NASA, and NAPA and committees such as CoPAPIA and the Committee on Ethics?

1. Should departments or institutions with problematic or non-existent sexual harassment policies and/or those with documented poor records on sexual harassment be ‘outed’ or made public in some way in AAA listings?

**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.

In the next year the committee has only agreed to complete three activities:

- Planning of a session for the 2014 AAA meeting on the national trend away from Women’s Studies departments to Women and Gender Studies or Gender Studies departments. (this will be taken up Rebecca Galemba, Marcia Ochoa, Laura Miller).
- A short revision of the CoGEA Award guidelines to preclude self-nomination and include an expectation of late career applicants (This will be taken up by Susan Seizer and Carol McDavid).
- And a commitment to better and more targeted dissemination of the award opportunity to members (to be taken up by Susan Seizer and Carol McDavid).

These activities do not represent a modification or elaboration on the stated objectives and responsibilities of the committee.

**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.

For the planned activities, the two subcommittees (Award and Program) have agreed to organize the session and rewrite materials as needed. They have been provided with past documents to ensure continuity and a liaison has offered guidance to ensure the continuity for both subcommittees. These activities support Objective 5 of the SIP.

In 2013, it became clear that sexual harassment of female anthropologists in particular is still a serious impediment to diversity in the practice of anthropology. Given that it is also clear a many of the alleged perpetrators of sexual harassment are anthropologists as well this issue is also one that needs reframing as part of our association’s ethical code. Because of the issues outlined in Part III, there are no activities scheduled for the committee to fulfill Objective 5 in earnest. The issue of sexual harassment is not by any means limited to anthropology as a discipline. A well-crafted and strategized plan to redress this issue in our discipline has the potential to also fulfill the Objectives 2 and 11 of the SIP.

**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.

**Recommendation 1:**

The committee would like to recommend to the executive board of AAA that AAA develop a plan to address the issue of sexual harassment in our discipline. As the Getting to Zero Incidence of Sexual Harassment in the Discipline session demonstrated, sexual harassment is a pressing concern that needs to be addressed in a way that coordinates efforts already underway within AAA and outside of the organization. It is a concern where, the committee believes, the AAA executive needs to demonstrate an institutional commitment. As stated earlier in this report, there is specifically a need for further monitoring, policy making and education within AAA, and thinking through our professional conduct code with sexual harassment specifically in mind.
The two outgoing members of the committee Rita Wright and M. Gabriela Torres would both be willing to be considered by the executive board to work on a taskforce or adhoc committee that would take on the issue of sexual harassment in our discipline.

**Recommendation 2:**

This year the committee suffered seriously from an inability to develop new leadership to take on the role of chair. All committee members who are currently serving on CoGEA are highly over-committed individuals and consider the role of chairing as one that requires responsibility, commitment and a time investment because of the position’s learning curve. As a result no eligible member was willing to take on the role of chair. The current chair and the member with the deepest institutional knowledge of the committee are both outgoing members.

At this point, the committee could use continuity in leadership that would allow for a more gradual development of practical leadership and institutional knowledge. It is clear that if the association wishes to engage in monitoring of the incidence of sexual harassment or to seek CoGEA’s advice on writing its own harassment policy for meetings, CoGEA will need to have stable leadership with institutional memory.

The committee would recommend that if CoGEA is being considered as a committee that would take on the tasks of monitoring or a policy advisory role on sexual harassment at this point that further resources (human and otherwise) be assigned to the committee.