American Anthropological Association
Committee Annual Report
Nominations Committee

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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.

The NomCom chair, with instigation and excellent support from Kim Baker, sent out several calls for nominations and follow-up emails: to all AAA members (3 emails), AN contributing members, the EB (2 emails) and Section Presidents and Representatives.

Because we had too few nominees for some positions, the deadline for nominations was extended. We did manage to have a bare minimum of nominees for some positions, while we had more than enough for others.

The November one-day meeting went very well. Everyone had come prepared and ready to work. Executive Director Ed Liebow was a guest for most of the meeting, and was able to explain some of the committee issues expected in the coming year.

We had 76 total nominees from whom we selected 34 candidates for 17 positions.

The slate was approved by the EB, but only after a challenge about one of the nominees who was not selected as a candidate (see Part III).

The biggest problem this year was the (over)abundance of nominees for most committees and the scarcity of nominees for EB and NomCom.

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.

The NomCom will have its fall meeting at the AAA meeting in Washington DC to put together a slate of candidates for the 2015 ballot.

A small committee consisting of myself as NomCom chair, Karen Nakamura, and Kim Baker, are discussing possible solutions for a better articulation of the Nom Com and the EB.

A suggestion was made to include on the nominations application a box asking whether the (self-)nominee would consider being appointed to an AAA committee or otherwise serve in a leadership position.

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.

6.1.2 The AAA Secretary will communicate to the membership how to participate in AAA governance annually. S/he will work with the section leadership structure to encourage broad participation in the democratic process (i.e., nominations and voting).

I, as AAA Secretary/NomCom Chair, posted the Call for Nominations on the elections page of the AAA website; a Call for Nominations was also sent to all AAA members and was highlighted on the AAA website. I also sent emails to Section Presidents and Representatives, to AN Contributing Editors, and to EB members to encourage nominations. At the AAA meeting in Chicago, I attended the business meetings of the Bio and Linguistic sections (the two subfields for which we had very few nominees) and was given a few minutes at each to encourage nominations for next year.

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.
At the fall 2013 EB meeting, there was a motion, a second, and several votes to reject the slate of candidates the NomCom proposed in order to include one nominee who had not been selected as a candidate. The discussion revealed a disconnect between (some of) the EB and the NomCom about the rationale for not approving the slate of candidates put forth by the NomCom. According to the AAA bylaws: “The Executive Board shall prepare slates of potential nominees for vacancies on the Nominations Committee, for the Executive Board’s consideration.” But what counts for “consideration” is left to interpretation: should individual candidates be challenged (i.e., a line-item veto), or should the entire slate be challenged? And if a challenge is made, how should it be resolved, especially if the EB does not have access to nominees’ files? A committee (Margie Buckner, Karen Nakamura, and Kim Baker) was appointed to look at the “disconnect” and propose solutions by February 2014.

Among the responsibilities listed in the Charge, the NomCom is “to utilize the specific guidelines established by the Executive Board when making recommendations.” I am not aware of those guidelines, though perhaps the EB once provided them. Such guidelines would perhaps reduce potential disagreement.

Finally, I would like to remind the EB that finding enough (good) nominees is not the job of the NomCom. That job falls on AAA as a whole, and the EB in particular. The dearth of nominees (particularly for EB and NomCom positions) is a problem the EB needs to address.