Report of the Section Liaison Subcommittee (SLA)

Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publications
CFPEP

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I. Introduction

Background
The section liaison subcommittee was created with the inception of the Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publishing (CFPEP) in December, 2006. As an active working group, it formed in the spring, 2007, comprised of Carol Greenhouse (subcommittee chair), Alisse Waterston (CFPEP chair) and Lee Baker (Allocations subcommittee chair). The section liaison subcommittee envisioned its work as a combination of questionnaires and interviews among leadership of sections with publications about the goals of their programs and experiences with AnthroSource in aid of informing CFPEP’s forward planning process. This report is a digest of those exchanges.

Summary
The main issues in this report involve sections’ experiences with AnthroSource (AS). The issues raised by sections were impressively consistent, and it is fair to say that the themes of this report emerged conversationally. The report is divided into four main sections: (1) sections’ experiences with AS in terms of AS functionality, its financial impact (including the allocations formula); (2) long-range planning, including issues of information flow, and communication (3) sections’ experiences with Wiley-Blackwell (WB) under the terms of the contract with AAA—still new as of this writing; and (4) governance within the AAA. The conversations were wide-ranging, and the report is both a record of sections’ recent experiences and an account of their goals and concerns for the future. In each section, we summarize our findings (highlighting convergences and diversity of experience and perspective); we also provide selections from the questionnaires and interview notes indicative of the substance and range of responses under each rubric, and a digest of issues—distilled from the questionnaires and interviews—for further consideration. The full digest appears at the end of the report. We do not consider ourselves to be in a position to assess sections’ specific concerns, but we are confident these issues warrant a coordinated evaluation process (and possibly action) by appropriate bodies within AAA.
Our main findings are:

- **AS** has now been thoroughly incorporated into sections’ publication programs, and is central to sections’ publication initiatives.

- The impact of AS on sections extends well beyond publication to include financial management, membership outreach, relations with other sections and with the AAA. The recognition of common interests among sections is high, and accounts for many sections’ concerns with information flow, communication and governance.

- To date, sections’ experiences with AS have included sustained financial strain – even crisis, dominating the agendas of nearly all sections. Sections are cautiously optimistic that the contract with WB and the new allocations formula will have positive effects.

- The sustained focus on financial problems over the past few years has had the effect of professionalizing the internal governance of sections – making experience, institutional memory, relevant expertise, and collaboration key criteria sections bring to their recruitment of leadership.

- One major index of effective leadership during these early years with AS is that no sections folded – although nearly all were subject to serious financial (and other) strains. Section loyalty is high – as is the value sections place on the AAA as a “big tent” for exchanges across sections.

- The AS environment creates common interests across sections that did not exist previously, as well as common concerns with equity, accountability, transparency and mutual support.

- Information flow and communication are prominent among the concerns of sections, going forward – both across sections and between sections and the AAA.

- Governance is also prominent as a major concern going forward. AAA’s governance of the publication program, as currently constituted, may not be optimally adapted to contemporary realities – i.e., the sections’ new sense of common interests, the managerial sophistication of their leadership, new by-laws, and the new AAA/WB contract – specifically in omitting any constitutional responsibility for the sections in the collective management of the portfolio.

- By virtue of their experiences with AS and demonstrated effectiveness, section leadership are well qualified to undertake such responsibilities.

Each of these issues is detailed in the following pages.
2007: A dynamic and difficult year in retrospect

From its inception in late 2006 and through February, 2008, CFPEP’s efforts focused on a review of the allocations formula (i.e., the method for determining how revenues produced by AnthroSource might be returned to sections) and a recommendation for its revision. As CFPEP’s allocations subcommittee discussions unfolded over the spring, 2007, the section liaison subcommittee expected that its work, too, might concentrate on the allocations issue. The dynamic circumstances of the publication program in 2007 overtook that expectation, effectively redirecting and broadening the conversation with sections. The section liaison subcommittee decided to postpone active conversation with section leadership until the situation stabilized at least somewhat—deferring its work until late summer, 2007.

The chronology of events in 2007 involved the following major developments:

- February-May: CFPEP’s development of a set of principles to guide the allocations formula process: diversity, fairness, sustainability;
- April 16: Competitive RFP process initiated, yielding nine proposals from publishers.
- May: CFPEP’s decision to recommend that the AAA retain the incumbent allocations formula for FY 2008, and defer revision of the formula to the planning cycle for FY 2009 to allow for fuller deliberations of alternatives;
- June 4: Resignation of the AAA’s publications director;
- July 24: EB selected Wiley-Blackwell, resulting in a new contract with WB;
- Following the announcement of the new WB contract, broad controversy over the shift to a commercial publisher (primarily involving open-access concerns) and the process itself (primarily involving governance and communications issues);
- late August: appointment of new publications director, Oona Schmid;
- September-October: Oona Schmid organized and participated in a series of teleconferences with individual section editors and WB staff to clarify the terms of the WB contract – very different from those of UCP;
- Late November (annual meeting of AAA): Group meetings of editors, WB representatives and AAA staff; full meeting of CFPEP to plan a process for reviewing the allocations formula (among other issues);
- December: Resumption of CFPEP deliberations over the allocations formula, continuing until February 24, with a recommendation to the Committee on Scientific Communication (CSC).
- December 31: Termination of the AAA/UCP contract.
Our subcommittee’s outreach to sections was from the midst of these events. We developed a questionnaire for distribution to section presidents in late summer and early fall, gathered responses (from presidents and/or others at their invitation) in December, and conducted interviews in January (again, with presidents and/or others are their request). Meanwhile, section leadership and Section Leadership Advisers—a new ad hoc governance group—were involved in consultations with the AAA’s consultant (Alma Wills of Kaufman-Wills) and CFPEP’s deliberations over allocations models. Suffice it to say that this report should not be read as a canvass of opinion regarding the selection of WB or allocations formula. For sections, the timeframe of their concerns was longer than either of these developments, and (as already noted) substantively broader—since the events of 2007 followed three years of uncertainty (including fiscal uncertainty and for some, outright hardship) under the UCP contract and the previous allocation formula. Those circumstances appear to have drawn every section we interviewed into close and on-going assessment of their mission, priorities, and internal management as well as in relation to other sections and the AAA. Indeed, this is a point to emphasize as a major finding of our project. Overall, this report should be read as a rough guide to sections’ priorities with respect to publications amidst a range of other concerns honed by sustained circumstances of uncertainty and instability.

The section liaison project
The questionnaire (see appendix 1) was co-authored by Alisse Waterston and Carol Greenhouse, in consultation with Lee Baker (on leave), and distributed to the leadership of the 27 sections with current or archived material on AS in October. Our purpose in distributing the questionnaire was primarily to help leadership anticipate our interview questions in time to discuss them with membership at the AAA annual meeting. We received eleven completed surveys representing ten sections (one of which responded again after the annual meeting and a change in leadership); in addition, we received written comments (but not a completed survey) from one section. We began the process of follow-up contacts in mid-January, to arrange telephone interviews; all sections were contacted at least twice. Sixteen sections were interviewed—including eight sections that had not responded to the initial survey. Along with two sections that provided written responses and one that supplied written comments, this report is based on responses from twenty-one sections:

ABA – Dana Ain Davis (President) – survey
AES – Don Donham (editor) – interview and survey
AFA – Susan Hyatt (editor) – interview
APLA – Bill Maurer (president) – interview
Archaeology Division – Cathy Costin (editor) – interview and survey
C&A – Ben Blount (President) – interview and survey
MES – Bill Beeman (President) – interview
NAPA – Dennis Wiedman (President) – interview
The respondents represent diverse sections in terms of size, publication type (journal or newsletter) and goals. The sections that did not respond are similarly diverse. These were:

CAE
GAD
SACC
SHA
CSAS

The interview process coincided with leadership rotations, complicating outreach. If future liaison subcommittee projects involve interviews, we suggest planning these for spring, summer or early fall—but not in the period spanning the annual meeting.

Our outreach contacted all sections with publications programs in one or more forms—electronic archives, newsletter or bulletin, small and large journals on various publication schedules. Some aspects of some sections’ publication program went into suspension under the financial strains (or unknowns) of the early AS years, and others held off on new initiatives, pending the stabilization of AS as a platform. We did not contact sections without material on AS or interest groups regarding their publication plans; we are not aware of new journals in the planning stages but we are not in a position to know. Be that as it may, the publications portfolio—for these various reasons—should be regarded as dynamic, not fixed to its present profile.

As already noted, this report is a double freeze frame that captures sections’ experiences as of October-December and (even more so) January. This was not a long interval in terms of time, but it was punctuated by several developments crucial to sections’
perspectives: the annual meeting, the termination of the UCP contract and the beginning of the WB “era”, the creation of a new ad hoc advisory group (the Section Leadership Advisers) to advise the allocations formula revision, and the consultant’s recommendations. These developments may account for some (but not all) of the range of responses we gathered. Again, we emphasize that readers should not look to this report as a canvass of opinion on any single issue (such as allocations) per se, but rather as the record of open-ended conversations among colleagues with common concerns and commitments to anthropological inquiry and exchange through their sections and the AAA as a whole. The report was circulated as a confidential draft to all respondents for review and comment; we received responses from ten individuals (representing eight sections). This report incorporates those comments.

**Scope and aims of this report**
The primary work of CFPEP in the winter and spring, 2007, was the articulation of key principles as the basis for any new allocations formula: to support the intellectual diversity of the sections through their journals, as well as their sustainability and capacity for innovation. The Executive Board endorsed these principles as the parameters for deliberations over the allocations formula. Heading into the project, our primary aim was to add concreteness to these values commitments through fact-finding about the diversity of sections’ experiences with AnthroSource as a publication platform, AnthroSource’s major forms of impact on sections’ goals and planning around journals, as well as the relevance of journals to sections’ broader missions as membership organizations.

The project has indeed allowed us to grasp more clearly the range of sections’ publishing accomplishments and goals. At the same time, all respondents took the occasion of the interviews to raise additional issues they associate with their experiences with AnthroSource—introducing concerns with governance, the organization and function of the publications office, and more generally, the status of accountability, transparency, communication and information flow between sections and the AAA. Some of the specific concerns with costs and communication may reflect the former contract scenario, but nonetheless are part of the baseline for sections as they now look ahead—and they remain relevant as the context for their broader analysis of their current situation and prospects. We are not in a position to assess the merits of sections’ concerns or to propose recommendations for addressing them in substantive terms, but we are confident in marking them for attention and urge CFPEP, the CSC and EB or other units (as appropriate) to make their own assessments and address them in a coordinated way.
II. Section Experiences with AnthroSource

All responding sections\(^*\) have incorporated electronic publishing into their programs and/or forward planning. For most sections, AnthroSource (hereafter AS) was their initiation into electronic publishing. Initially, some welcomed it as an advantage, others saw it as a disadvantage, others accepted it but remain neutral—based on diverse goals (including issues of open access), expectations, resources, and reactions to the process by which AS was established as a feature of AAA’s publication program. Assessments of AS’s contribution to sections remain divided for various reasons—including but not limited to those just mentioned. The questionnaire and interviews focused on experiences with AS once it was operational. This section is divided into three parts: AS as a tool, AS and section finances, AS and long term planning—respectively reflecting sections’ current assessments of the main positives, negatives and neutrals for their section and/or for the AAA as a whole.

Sections view the positives primarily in terms of access to journals: archives, indexing, download features, and outreach to new readers. In general, AS gets high marks as a tool from the standpoint of individual users, less so (but still generally positive) from the standpoint of its service to sections in relation to their missions. Reservations about AS involve limitations of functionality, market strategies based on (selective) bundling, and above all its cost under the AAA/UCP arrangement. AS affected sections publication programs differently—ranging from one section that stopped publishing so as to protect its budget from unpredictable costs, to another that opted to go all-electronic, to yet another that would have preferred all-electronic but was required to retain print, to yet others (most) that concentrated section resources on maintaining print journals as their main section activity. As for AS’s relevance to sections’ planning, all have dealt extensively with AS-related issues, with most sections reporting having discussed little else since AS was announced.

Although at least one section had explored the feasibility of an electronic platform prior to AS, and several had considered on-line archiving, it is safe to say that the advent of AS was the beginning of a new era—a significant “before and after” for all sections by their own accounts. In practice, the AS era has involved section leadership and membership in an on-going process of self-evaluation and prioritizing—a more or less constant process of crisis-management beset by unknowns under the rubrics of expenses and information. The AS era can be properly understood as one that transformed sections’ management. Whereas their missions have not fundamentally changed, section management has responded to the challenges of the AS era with substantially more attention to AAA and other sections. Judging by the outcome to date (i.e., the survival of the sections and all but one active publication programs, as noted above) their internal management of the stresses associated with AS to date must be rated a success.

\(^*\) Here and throughout, except as noted (or as is clear in context), sections refers to section representatives responding to the questionnaire and/or interview.
The dedication, creativity and sheer work of colleagues who have stewarded their sections through this period cannot be overstated—nor their achievements in keeping sections not only afloat but alive as intellectual communities. Respondents affirm the value of AAA, as well as the other sections, to their own section missions, and are pragmatic as they look forward. In discussion of potential allocation models, for example, most sections accept the necessity of some redistributive mechanism to sustain overhead as well as smaller sections, so long as the formula does not undercut their ability to run their own programs. Most are cautiously optimistic about WB in view of the guaranteed revenues, editorial services, individualized marketing plans, and openness to innovation. Most appreciate the personal roles of AAA staff in this difficult year, although they also express some structural and managerial concerns. Most agree that the recent period of uncertainty and transition has been bruising for all concerned, but regard the central issues going forward in terms of equity, transparency and participatory governance rather than economic competition or (as one respondent put it) “zero-sum antagonisms.” Indeed, ad hoc collaboration runs high among sections, and respondents are especially appreciative of opportunities AAA provides for cross-section cooperation and exchange. “People identify much more closely with sections than with the AAA,” one respondent said, “but this could change in a good way.”

**AS as a tool**
Sections give high marks to AS as a tool: as an archive, a tool for comprehensive searching and indexing, for broadening access to research and the dissemination of ideas, and for its potential in terms of supporting innovative publishing ventures and supplements to print (sound, video), as well as additional functions outside the publication program.

“AS is a tremendous asset for members whether students or colleagues… there are only positives.”

“It’s a great teaching tool… very positive for scholars and practitioners.”

“Access to knowledge is the key thing.”

“AS has increased both access and search capabilities, and this has been positive for AAA overall.”

“The effect on circulation [for the section journal] has been positive; the effect on finances has been negative.”

“It has increased downloads.”
“It has increased readership [and] search capabilities.”

“I have personally found it convenient on a few occasions.”

“Plausibly [AS] can help our journal reach new readers within and outside the discipline.”

“It’s easy to use [non-English] fonts and diacritics.”

“There’s no limit on page length as there is with print journals.”

“Print still has a function.”

The main reservations about AS functionality have to do with its concentration on anthropology as a discipline, as a professional community, and as a primarily U.S. enterprise. Sections with strong interests in interdisciplinarity, in reaching out to students or professionals and practitioners in other fields, and/or in internationalization feel AS as a limitation. This makes the interface of AS with other indexing services an important issue. Specific indexes mentioned include Medline, PsychInfo, Ovid, Lexis-Nexis, Endnote, Refworks—and J-STOR (the most frequent comparison to AS). Some sections express a need for AAA support with what one respondent called “web stuff”—referring to the section’s website and interface with AAA.

Additional significant reservations about AS as a tool have to do with the unknowns in its future development in relation to sections’ goals. Issues mentioned by sections include: its capacity for presenting sound and video, its serviceability as an arena of direct communication among members, and its availability for posting papers (e.g., by students) and other information (e.g., current news, job notices of special interest to section members) outside the journal/newsletter format. Some sections have hired their own web designers to create space for these functions, at least one with significant investment, and these sections now wonder whether and how their websites will interface with AS. At least one section that is not currently publishing plans to launch an on-line journal, but reports having been repeatedly advised by the Publications Office to wait until “Phase One” was over to initiate a new electronic publication that remained in the wings for several years.

“I think it does not interface well with the large citation management software packages – Endnote, Refworks, etc. Nor has it contributed to AAA journals being more frequently indexed in the major indexing services.”

“Will AS improve scholarly access to journals beyond the old print days?”
“AS promised an electronic board for membership. This hasn’t happened but it could.”
“[With AS] we were supposed to be more inclusive for international scholars. Has this dropped out of the mix? CFPEP could create some accountability on this score.”

“Personally, I think the changes in effectiveness have been negligible. Some of us [in respondent’s section] still wish a better J-STOR or similar method had been adopted because it would have been cheaper and given us a large percentage of the accessibility imagined and hoped for by AS. I think [the section editor] would have other views…”

“It may become a positive aspect of AAA’s professional presence but we still have doubts about the speed and breadth of uptake of AS nationally and around the world. Even priced artificially (and some say disastrously) low, the start-up of library adoptions seems to have been too sluggish. But perhaps that will remedy itself.”

“[Our journal] publishes on-line book reviews and we were told they would be archived and accessible via AS but it has never happened [in over two years].”
“Is AS now stable enough to take on new directions?”

Perhaps the most immediately pressing unknown is the relationship of AS and WB’s Blackwell/Synergy engines, mentioned by some sections as a major question affecting their long-range planning. Several sections have the understanding that AS will eventually be wholly absorbed by WB—a source of uncertainty and anxiety from a planning standpoint.

**AS as a resource—for further consideration**

(1) Clarify:
- the long term relationship of AS and Blackwell/Synergy;
- guidelines for sections and interest-groups interested in developing a new electronic presence;
- guidelines for interface between section websites and AS;
- timetables for digitizing archival materials including book reviews;
- functional capacity of AS relative to sound and video, space limitations, publication in languages other than English, as well as other forms of communication outside the journal/newsletter format.

(2) Address the specialized indexing issue with the sections which regard it as pressing in relation to their mission of outreach to communities outside of academic anthropology.
Include all sections (even if they are not currently publishing) in communications regarding the development of AS and publications policies, as some have (or may have in the future) active plans for publishing initiatives.

AS and section finances

If AS is generally appreciated as a tool, its impact on section finances and overall vitality is generally assessed in negative terms—neutral at best. We should stress that sections’ responses to questions of financial impact were with reference to the UCP contract—in some cases also extending back prior to AS. Thus, the timeframe around costs concerns varies, except to the extent that there is general (if guarded) optimism that the AAA/WB contract begins a period of financial recovery and accounting transparency. Still, the diversity of sections’ experiences is relevant to an understanding of their goals and planning for the future. One section, in view of the unknown costs and limited resources at the beginning of the AS era, ceased publishing so as to maintain control over its resources—but may now return to publishing. Several (three among our respondents) ceased publishing print under the AAA/UCP contract, but continue to publish regularly through AS. Another section would have opted to drop its paper journal, too, but was required by AAA to maintain (and pay for) the print version on the grounds that it attracted subscribers to the AAA portfolio on AS; they might now wish to revisit the question of dropping print. At least one section ascribes its present financial straits to developments that pre-date AS; there may be others, too, but since section leadership did not have access to complete financial data until a shift in AAA’s reporting practices to sections just a few years ago, budget histories prior to AS are not clear to most sections.

The details of sections’ incorporation into AS are also diverse; some are reported here because of the financial implications. At the time of our questionnaire and interviews, the AAA/WB agreement had been announced and a memorandum of understanding (MOU) circulated to sections; however, experiences with AS reported here refer to the effects of the AAA/UCP arrangement. Sections continue to feel the effects of the AAA/UCP contract as a deep bite—even wipe-out—of section reserves. Some (about half of those interviewed) express concerns with membership as a consequence of AS—about evenly divided three ways among those who say they are doing well, worried but vigilant, or suffering losses they ascribe to AS. It is important to note that notwithstanding regular budget reports from AAA, sections for the most part find these opaque, with the result that they feel they lack adequate understanding of their own membership figures (among other things). Information flow is discussed separately, below.

Responses from sections relative to expenses focused on two main issues: UCP’s fees for services and AAA accounting. UCP’s fees are no longer relevant to sections’ planning, although they remain very relevant to their understanding of their own financial histories and assessment of cost-benefits with
respect to AS. From an informational standpoint, sections are not in the best position to disaggregate UCP’s impact on finances from other effects of AS. For these reasons, even though the contract with UCP has now terminated, we include examples of responses re UCP here. Allocations issues are grouped separately, later in this section.

“We feel very aggrieved that money has been taken away from us that cannot be accounted for, and still has not been accounted for.”

“The effect on circulation has been positive; the effect on finances has been negative. Prior to AS, [our large section] was never dependent on section dues. Even in the new scenario, [our section] is dependent on dues.”

“The negative impact of AS was immediate. [Our section] was once self-sustaining, in the black. There’s been a dramatic difference.”

“We’re operating at a loss; we’ve had to draw on our reserves. Prior to AS, we were in the black, and there was never a deficit. The reserves were adequate; we’ve been good businessmen.”

“[Our journal] was viable because we were volunteers, and our labor was underpriced… In the past a subsidy was not needed, now it is.”

“Before AS we were more secure financially but on-line was a good move, even though there’s much that’s now beyond our control.”

“Like everyone else we worry about declining membership in the section when every AAA member has access to all AAA journals. Our membership [large section] has been declining, but slowly; we are watching the trend.”

“My sense is that it has been relatively neutral in terms of membership and revenue so far, but that there are some signs we could benefit from it, since we are a small section, but our articles are cited and downloaded with relatively greater frequency than the AAA as a whole… it is possible that AS has made our articles more visible than before because of the way it calls up “socio-citational networks”.”

“We have not started to see the positive side yet. It drove us almost to the ground because it ate up all our income plus the cash reserve we had. We think that [AS] was an unavoidable step… but we wish it had not been so painful. We spent a lot of our own money and put a
lot of time… discussing our situation with the AAA, but they explained there was nothing to do about it and we were plainly going broke. We hope things turn out differently with WB.”

“Our section was on the brink of folding, since we went broke with all the charges from the AAA in the name of AS. Since we were a middle-size section we did not get any of the advantages the bigger sections got and none of the help the smaller ones got. Comparing the categories of expense we were charged for, we seemed to have more items to pay for than any other section in the entire AAA… We had to suspend all our ongoing programs.”

“Positives are not yet clear. The uncertain (and to date rather negative) financial implications of AS continue to overshadow its potential benefits.”

“We’re running scared… We don’t want to expire because of costs.”

“All along, my sense has been that [our section and journal] have been in a good position to survive because we had assets … if you took a five- to ten-year perspective, we would come out all right… [But] mine is not a shared perspective [on the section’s board].”

“Every [section] activity – the only activity – over the past years has been to keep the journal afloat. The concern was only the survival of the journal.”

“I believe that overall, the decision to transition to AS will prove to have been the correct one, given the difficulties of the print/subscription model, crises in the market for scholarly publications, and the realities of publishing in a new technological environment.”

“Two years ago, [we] were mired down by concerns about how AS was bleeding the organization and fearful that we would go bankrupt due to unanticipated costs. However, by last year [2007] there seemed to be enough controls in place that we could focus on the more positive aspects of the journal. Further, due to changes in the publisher, we were able to make more accurate projections regarding financial issues.”
Allocations
The allocation formula was under active review at the time of the questionnaire and interviews, but by January the consultant’s report had been circulated to section leadership; thus the comments below refer to the various options in the report as well as experience with the previous formula. With the exception of one respondent who felt there should not be any allocations formula (preferring annual distributions based on the previous year’s performance), all sections were clear as to their priorities in terms of principles—even if they were perforce uncertain about how any particular formula would affect them, given communication problems over accounting. There is a lingering (and for some sections, strong) sense of grievance over the opaqueness of UCP’s fees—resulting in the perception that funds were taken from sections unilaterally by the AAA.

“Profit should not be central to the allocation model. Most journals are not aimed at producing revenue. Many journals would not exist if they depended on revenue. Revenue is not the measure of value. Our sense of value is not commensurable with money … it’s about the ideas.”

“We have high downloads but since we publish a serial in book format we’re not measured by ISI.”

“Because [our journal] was not on schedule it was decided [at the AAA] that it would not be included in AS for three years. They loaded legacy content … but refused to load anything new until December 2007. So the allocations formula based on usage was a negative for us.”

“The variety of relations gets closer to the value of a journal – e.g., the ratio of downloads to section size.”

“Downloads are better than other metrics” (such as revenue, impact).

“The current [i.e., former] allocations model works well for us, but it has produced imminent bankruptcy in [another section].”

“The flagship journals should be well funded, but not to the detriment of the smaller journals. Otherwise, where is our field?”

“The venture capital model is good.”

“We need clarity such that allocations reflect circulation in some way.”
“Re allocations – just come up with something we can live with. It shouldn’t be so hard, we all make compromises. The main things are: we should all get something in the distribution, there should be periodic review, and membership should be oriented to the understanding that it’s key to support smaller groups.”

“The principles are the key thing, and process is also key -- not the mechanisms of the formula per se… And we need to know the process for revising the formula.”

“One could live with the special status given to AA if revenues mirror revenues – the rest of us are subjected to a formula… [This is] a political issue… that no one wants to look at… CFPEP needs to look at this issue.”

“The AAA should be a partner in the risks we are taking, and the benefits we are to gain should be specified in the MOU.”

**Budgets and Allocations - For Further Consideration**

1. Communicate the allocation formula in writing (perhaps in the MOU) with a summary of the principles and process that produced it, as well as the process for revising it.

2. Most sections are aware that they will gain some security under the WB contract but they lack adequate information about the details; clarify MOU re costs and benefits.

3. Support sections’ efforts to return to long-range planning and programming with long-range information.

4. Review options for supporting individual sections’ initiatives in reaching out to new members as well as potential non-member subscribers, e.g., affiliate membership for individuals.

5. Consider a membership survey to learn more re aspects of AAA that members understand and value most/least.

6. Encourage sections to come forward with questions about their accounting history during the life of the AAA/UCP contract, in particular so they can identify for themselves trends in membership (for their own sections and in relation to others) pre- and post-AS.
III. Long range planning, information flow and communication

In response to our questions about long range planning, the consistent refrain was that this was hindered or effectively precluded because of the absorption of section boards in issues related to AS, the drain on section budgets, or lack of adequate (and/or clear) accounting information from AAA. Such plans as respondents mention include innovations in relation to their electronic journals, new forms of outreach to membership, as well as special events at the annual meeting of the AAA and/or conferences of their own. The projects are diverse, and the publication program should be understood as dynamic—not fixed to its present profile. Some sections referred to a collateral benefit of the new AAA/WB agreement as liberating boards to return to discussions of something other than AS for the first time in years. Some non-publishing sections are considering returning to publishing in the new WB environment.

The new terms of agreement with WB provide greater security to AAA and the sections, and this has yielded a mood of general if guarded optimism. These are very important gains, both for sections’ vitality and working relationships among sections, the publisher and AAA. Even so, they do not erase the collective sense that there are persistent communication problems between AAA and sections. Communication problems are also reported within sections (especially at times of leadership transition) and between them (for lack of information). We concentrate here on issues of information flow and communication between sections and AAA. In the next section, we consider related issues of governance. We should stress again that we regard our role as identifying issues to be addressed. We are not in a position to judge the merits of specific concerns, except to urge that they be evaluated as matters of high priority within the AAA.

Information flow

In response to our questions about the trade-offs in sections’ experiences with AS, including various principles for allocations and their likely impact, the most frequent answer was “I don’t know”—due to sections’ lack of information on key points related to their own budgets. *We would point to this issue as an item for urgent attention.* Sections consistently complain of their inability to monitor their own performance with the information supplied by the AAA—not only hits, downloads, the basis of journal specs (such as page count), administrative fees, and so forth, but also—frequently—commented on their uncertainty as to how revenue is measured by WB and AAA. They are uniform in asking for clearer budget information for their own sections and comparable information for other sections; something closer to the full spreadsheet is essential, they feel, for monitoring the effects (and fairness) of the allocation model, and for improving collaboration among sections. They would also like to have information regarding AAA’s long range planning. Sections’ sense of need for information is strikingly consistent, structured around the performance-based criteria of the allocation model, including clear and timely statements of expenses (including any fees) and
revenues. This should facilitate any needed coordination between AAA and sections, especially if the allocations formula question is resolved—since it makes anticipation of sections’ information needs straightforward.

The comments reported here should be read for what they are—statements from individuals with long leadership experience in AAA in sections (including past service on the CSC and EB and other AAA committees), as well as departmental and university service. We have not included sections’ comments on information flow specifically related to the UCP-WB transition (e.g., re differences in software, or the transition itself including the resignation of the previous publications director).

“I always feel we’re partially in the dark.”

“The monthly reports are unhelpful.”

“I’m not sure where things stand.”

“How are these data collected?”

“Planning is impossible without information.”

“The AAA has contempt for sections – no respect. They fetishize language – e.g., “fees” versus “dues” – so if you use the wrong word you can’t get an answer. They should print a lexicon so communication doesn’t falter.”

“No one knows where to go to get information.”

“It would be useful to see W-B costs for producing and distributing publications, and for editors to list in-kind and actual costs for their work in producing the publication.”

“The way it stands now, the budgets are unclear and unwieldy, they don’t make sense, and they aren’t presented in a way that allows a section to make plans for the future.”

“We need more frequent budget reports, clearer and more detailed budget reports.”

“We don’t have enough information to plan – no sales information (though WB promises to be better); we’re operating on intuition. We’d like status reports on every variable in the allocation formula – and for all the sections. We’ll need information to sustain our business models.”
“What is revenue? We don’t know what counts.”

“We received download information for [our journal] for the first time in November 2007, for the previous three years—through a special request to Oona Schmid; other editors had apparently not received this information…[they] asked where we had gotten these… Following the 2007 meetings, our treasurer did get ‘historical data’ from Suzanne Mattingly… [but] further information is still needed to interpret this data; it is still unclear to us what in fact counts as a ‘page’ on AS.”

Communication culture
Sections experienced the combination of tensions over AS under the AAA/UCP arrangement and the transition process to WB as intense problems of communication, compounded by the resignation of the publication director in the midst of the process. The suddenness of his resignation reinforced the perception that sections were not being kept abreast of developments—a legacy his successor (along with others at AAA and WB) inherited. In this context, it should be said that sections approach the issue of communication with a distinction between individuals and their structural roles, and (perhaps somewhat less so) problems in the past and the opportunities for a fresh start in the present. They also recognize the heavy demands on the publications office, especially in the transition. The director of publications, Oona Schmid, is much appreciated for her mastery of a steep learning curve last fall (2007), her personal attention to editors, and her availability to section leadership (individually and collectively) to answer questions and register concerns about the terms of the new contract. Some sections express concern that she is (in the phrase of one respondent) “over-tasked” and that her office does not have the resources to delegate effectively. Some comment on high turnover in the publications office as a negative factor—by way of expressing the hope that she will be well supported within AAA.

As noted, the sections’ experiences with AS are colored by their perception of a culture of communication that predates her service—a perception that should not be read as a judgment of any one individual’s performance. The reality is that the AS portfolio has intensified sections’ needs for specific types of information as well as their needs for communication with each other. Sections complain of a lack of responsiveness to their needs for information (about their own section and others) and to their needs for cross-section communication. Describing their experiences with information flow, they refer to an impression of secrecy, access limited to piecemeal information, and the sense that their access to information is a personal favor.

When asked where they find their best information, several respondents indicated they turn to other section leadership; others indicate friendship networks with AAA staff. Some respondents report feeling dismissed and juvenilized, and regard AAA’s listserv and meetings as too controlled. Others
warmly welcome these initiatives. Some complain of feeling treated like amateurs, or low-grade employees, rather than professional colleagues with a stake in the AAA. They are critical when they perceive editors’ meetings as a one-sided forum for the AAA’s agenda (i.e., when editors are not invited to contribute agenda items or introduce new business), as dominated by AAA-section issues (rather than also allowing for cross-section communication) or as schedule- or goal-driven. Frustration and confusion were frequent keywords. Again, we stress that the timeframe around these concerns involves years (not just recent months). As one respondent said, articulating a view stated or implied by everyone who spoke about communication issues: “There’s so much hostility built up—but it’s not about individuals, it’s a structural problem.”

“Transparency is key … There’s a lack of transparency in the funding distribution; the exact mechanism should be in the MOU – [but] it should be easier now, to plan ahead.”

“[Previous publications director] essentially blew us off, perpetually indicating that he would ‘look into it.’”

“It seems that the publications office just isn’t there except as a penalizing body. It just isn’t there.”

“There’s no record keeping in the publications office [i.e., no institutional memory].”

“We have to depersonalize the conflicts.”

“AAA is very status quo – no support for initiatives. The private sector (WB) is more entrepreneurial; AAA is like the government.”

“The level of secrecy (who gets charged how much for what, for example) has been harmful; we should not have been charged for more items than other societies, only because we had some reserves. And the only way we found out was through our personal contacts with the presidents, editors and treasurers of other societies, since the AAA never sent us information on what other societies were being charged. The way things were conducted appeared to be completely discretionary on the part of the both the AAA or UCP, since we could never tell who was doing the expense allocation. We concluded, right or wrong, that the AAA was being charged a flat rate and then AAA staff allocated the expenses, so we came to distrust the AAA very much, since nothing was explained to us and our funds were completely drained.”

“[We’re all volunteers so there’s] a weird social dynamic in which everyone feels like they are contributing too much… people feel put upon.”
Information and Communication -- For Further Consideration

(1) Especially with respect to budget and accounting information, revise reporting formats and contents so as to be more user friendly – including clear information on all elements the allocations formula takes into account, as well as clear statements of costs and revenues and their basis.

(2) Consider giving sections access to each others’ performance data in relation to the allocation formula. Sections do not seem to regard this as private information.

(3) Clarify the information flow within AAA so sections know where to go for specific types of information; regularize lines of communication.

(4) Look for opportunities to deliver information collectively and proactively, so sections have the same information at the same time.

(5) Use the annual meeting for discussion and deliberation rather than presentations – as this is ordinarily the only opportunity for editors to gather off-line. More structured presentations can be reserved for web, e-mail, teleconferencing. “More discussion improves the discussion.”

(6) Provide editors with timely opportunities to add new business or discussion items to any meeting agenda, and schedule sufficient time for these.

(7) Seek opportunities to build organizational trust around timely information and mutually shared values: democratic processes, transparency, mutual accountability and service.

(8) Prepare a clear user’s guide to the budget reports so leadership can learn the staff’s language, in the interests of improving mutual communication.

(9) Evaluate the publications office to maximize support for the director and her management resources.
IV. Wiley-Blackwell

In general, there is a very strong consensus that sections will be healthier under the new agreement with WB—both in terms of guaranteed revenues, and, as a consequence of improved finances, the freedom to plan concretely and creatively for the future. WB staff are appreciated for their availability and responsiveness to sections, although sections are critical when they sense they are being mobilized—such as the editor who said that a WB representative had reported him/her as “uncooperative” to the section president when the editor asked to reschedule their meeting. For the most part, sections are looking forward to learning more details about WB’s operations, as well as the individualized business models promised by WB. Some sections especially concerned with labor conditions at WB (especially for off-shore contract employees), report that WB has been forthcoming in those conversations.

Reservations about WB fall into two main categories—one being the long shadow of the AAA/UCP contract that sections found most bruising (not considered in this report), and concerns that WB’s tolerance for individualized business plans might prove to be limited. For example, some sections are very keen on marketing their journals through WB; others prefer to market themselves independently. Some are revenue-oriented; others are not. Sections especially appreciate WB’s readiness to help sections monitor their own performance—although some elements of the MOU remain unclear to sections (such as the implications of in-kind contributions from a host institution, and sections’ options for selecting (or declining) specific WB services). We detail some concerns and reservations that appear to arise mainly from what remain unknowns for sections at this point:

“What is the guarantee that WB will support small journals that don’t generate revenue, going forward?”

“Will WB be marketing [our journal] or AS?”

“We are in dialogue with WB – but we’re not sure whether we were talking about Synergy or AS.”

“WB will be a big improvement over UCP… [but] we don’t necessarily want all of their services.”

“Who controls copyright?”

“Production-wise they seem fine. I haven’t been impressed, however, with advertising plans – the reason we [i.e, AAA] apparently chose them. It may be that this will come later. All I have heard so far is that they are going to market [our large journal] to scholarly conventions.”
“The 2008 MOU indicates a maximum number of pages as XXX… [but] over its [long] history, the average page number for [the journal] is XXX+55. Nobody seems to know where the number XXX comes from and it does seem arbitrary.”

“I hear lots of optimistic and upbeat songs about the move to Wiley-Blackwell. I remain deeply suspicious and skeptical. I’ve heard those tunes too many times to believe anything [about] AS and software contracts in general… I will be requesting a copy of the WB contract to review it on behalf of [my section]. I expect resistance and perhaps even refusal based on ‘proprietary concerns’ or ‘confidentiality’ or other such nonsense. That is to be expected from software-academic relationships and it doesn’t inspire confidence.”

“I will be paying close attention to any contractual clauses that indemnify WB against any discrepancies between sales promises and actual performance or cost… Such clauses are precisely where budgets get wrecked and the whole enterprise can go pear-shaped without any recourse for the duped consumer.”

“[With WB] maybe the budgets will show simpler line items… It seems as if the numbers look good but unanswered is … what we’re saving [under WB] and what we’re earning, and how it compares [to before]. I couldn’t make a distinction [among these items].”

**Wiley-Blackwell -- For Further Consideration**

As WB works with individual sections, staff should strive to provide maximum flexibility with regard to journal specifications, recording these in the MOU -- as well as clarity in monitoring publications’ performance and advance notice and opportunities for comment on any planned changes in operations or procedure.
V. Governance

Sections’ experiences with AS include new relationships with (and awareness of) the various governing bodies within AAA charged with different aspects of the publishing program: the Publications Office, CFPEP and its various committees, CSC, EB, as well as ad hoc groups such as the consulting firm and the section advisers’ group—not to speak of the section assembly, AAA administrative offices and WB. Our questions about information flow led quickly to broader discussions of governance and the relationships between AAA and sections as a “social system” (as one respondent phrased it).

Within the AAA, the proliferation of governing bodies around publication is stratified along several different time horizons, most of which pre-date AS, the new by-laws, and/or the AAA/WB agreement. More recent developments include CFPEP (produced by the merger of two previous working groups) and the ad hoc groups just mentioned. Sections’ concerns with governance as a structural question are broadly three-fold:

(1) The borders between AAA and WB are unclear, and sections are working out their own ad hoc “go to” practices.

(2) The structural role of the AAA in relation to publications in the context of the new by-laws and the contract with WB is not clear to sections. Similarly, the structural role of the Publications Office is unclear; sections expressing concern with this issue see the Publications Office as an “interface” (to borrow from one respondent) with WB, a situation posing inherent management challenges.

(3) Within the AAA generally and the Publications Office specifically, the organization chart and lines of communication are not clear to some section leadership; some clarification of roles and reporting lines might be helpful. In addition, where AAA committees have overlapping responsibilities for publication, some streamlining of their alignment might be in order.

Sections also express substantive concerns with governance. Sections are sophisticated about the importance of executive discretion within the AAA and the necessary limits of consultation, but there is nonetheless a persistent sentiment that the AAA is a “top down” organization. This perception may be a consequence of a governance structure that is top-heavy with respect to publications. Within any budget cycle, the important questions require review at multiple levels and so must be kept moving, creating the potential for constant haste—a process opaque to most sections except as they are involved within a highly compressed timetable for notice, review and comment. These effects are compounded by the absence of a “constitutional role” (to borrow one respondent’s phrase) for the editors as a group in the management of the journal portfolio; their consultations (if
they wish to have them) appear to them to be regarded as encumbrances, rather than assets, in decision making.

Indeed, the consciousness of the AAA publication program as a portfolio is—from the sections’ standpoint—a relatively new development that is a major result of the AS era. Until the AS era, and under the old by-laws, publication programs were “housed” in silos connecting individual sections and AAA. AS bridged those silos, creating a collectivity—for sections—for the first time. This is perhaps a major difference of perspective between sections and AAA. The AAA has always managed publications from the standpoint of collective interests, costs and benefits; however, it is only recently that sections have become fully aware of issues such as overhead and the publication program as a whole. Indeed, prior to the AS era (including the incorporation of AA as a membership benefit), sections had little or no substantive reason to give primary attention to their role in the publication program as a whole. Sections recognize the need for subsidies to sustain the smaller journals, for example, but correspondingly a need for some voice in those decisions. Mid-size sections express concerns that they have been “left out” or “squeezed” by the way the disparities between large and small sections have been addressed.

Sections note that AS has had the effect of “professionalizing” (as one respondent put it) section editorial offices, given the technical and coordination demands of AS. It is also clear that the past several years have been an intensive curriculum in journal management for all section leadership. All of this is to say that the time may now be ripe for an editors’ group with more substantial governance responsibilities and broad advisory authority to manage the aspects of the publishing program closest to their collective concerns and expertise. Whether and (even more so) how such a group might be constituted (especially the basis for section representation) are complex questions in relation to which sections are likely to come to the table from disparate positions. We note that section representatives responded generously to our request for interviews, and several noted the value of the interview itself as two-way communication.

“Along with an allocations model, we need a political model.”

“The AAA doesn’t have to manage all the communication between the editors – we’ve been interacting directly and communicate substantively.”

“Oona didn’t have enough time at the section assembly.”

“Editors weren’t even given a chance to add to the agenda at the editors’ meeting at the AAA [annual meeting] – so we met afterwards.”
“Will there be a system that all will employ for such things as adding an extra issue or increasing the number of pages or will decisions on this be by individual units? How will we do this?”

“Naturally we chafe under the necessity of submitting so many editorial and financial decisions to the press and to AAA policy. We worry, for example, about how the AS revenues will be distributed to sections down the road. Our ability to run our conferences, to maintain creative flexibility for the journal, and to support the activities of the board depends on a strong budget balance and a high membership. AS could end up pooling lots of resources at the center, or distributing too many resources to much less viable sections, which would work against [our] interests.”

“Who does one address [within AAA]? Responsibility allocation within the publications office is unclear… I’m often surprised by who replies to my e-mail, and I can never predict who is going to be cc’d.”

“AS benefited us by making us a lot more professional so we now have an editor [named] who has taken our publication to a whole other level. AS professionalized the journal, making it easier to bring in higher quality people to run the journal and higher quality submissions to publish the journal.”

“It would be great for editors to share information about their office set-ups.”

“Transparency and communication are the main things – discuss options beforehand, with more advance notice. More discussion would improve the discussion.”

“Who is the decision-making body?”

**Governance -- For Further Consideration**

(1) An internal review of governance (ideally with the help of an external consultant)—with special attention to the governance surrounding the publication program—might be timely now, in light of the new by-laws and the AAA/WB contract. Issues singled out for attention include streamlining, clarifying the borders between AAA and WB, and, in particular, involving section editors as a body in the management of the publication portfolio.

(2) CFPEP should consider the future of the section liaison, so as to articulate and regularize the selection, function and term of service for this “seat.”
VI. Conclusion

This report is a digest of section responses to the questionnaire and interviews—a process designed to expand CFPEP’s understanding of the diversity of sections’ experiences with AS, as well as the diversity of their goals for publishing within the mission of their individual sections. We found that publication is vitally important to most sections, and that most sections—faced with heavy pressures on their finances and internal governance during the early years of AS—opted to suspend other section activities for the sake of maintaining their publication. Even sections without active journals or newsletters at present have innovative plans for substantial electronic presence, and look forward to realizing these in the near future. AS is generally regarded as a positive for sections in terms of its functionality and potential for serving (and growing) membership. Costs (and uncertainties related to costs) are the most serious negatives, but the sections share an expectation that the AAA/WB agreement will put finances on a more stable and secure footing, and that long term planning will be relevant once again.

Still, important uncertainties remain and—pending clarifications of details of the AAA/WB agreement and their implications for section budgets—the costs and benefits of AS have not yet aligned as transparent trade-offs. While sections are clear about their problems arising from the past, they are largely consistent in looking optimistically (if guardedly) to the future under the AAA/WB agreement. The sections’ concerns with information flow, the culture of communication and governance seem likely to remain issues—but issues far more easily addressed (for all concerned) as conditions clarify and stabilize around new routines.

We have not interviewed AAA staff, and we recognize that many (if not most) of the issues we have raised for further attention are ones to which they bring their own experiences and perspectives. A full evaluation would necessarily take these into account. Even with this limitation, we hope the report will be constructive, even if it records some misunderstandings. Hence our enthusiasm for a process of internal review and our optimism with regard to the prospects for ameliorating issues identified in this report. In that spirit, we wish to emphasize that the sections’ responses were consistently predicated on the benefits of enhancing the partnerships of sections with—and within—AAA, and the value of AAA in fostering the intellectual vitality of anthropology, even as they look forward to change.

Respectfully submitted by the Section Liaison Subcommittee:

Carol J. Greenhouse, Chair
Alisse Waterston (CFPEP chair)
Lee Baker (Allocations Subcommittee Chair)
April 10, 2008
VII. For Further Consideration…

Digest

A. AS as a resource

(1) Clarify:
- the long term relationship of AS and Blackwell/Synergy;
- guidelines for sections and interest-groups interested in developing a new electronic presence;
- guidelines for interface between section websites and AS;
- timetables for digitizing archival materials including book reviews;
- functional capacity of AS relative to sound and video, space limitations, publication in languages other than English, as well as other forms of communication outside the journal/newsletter format.

(2) Address the specialized indexing issue with sections for which regard it as pressing in relation to their mission of outreach to communities outside of academic anthropology.

(3) Include all sections (even if they are not currently publishing) in communications regarding the development of AS and publications policies, as some have (or may have in the future) active plans for publishing initiatives.

B. Budgets and Allocations

(1) Communicate the allocation formula in writing (perhaps in the MOU) with a summary of the principles and process that produced it, as well as the process for revising it.

(2) Most sections are aware that they will gain some security under the WB contract but they lack adequate information about the details; clarify MOU re costs and benefits.

(3) Support sections’ efforts to return to long-range planning and programming and coordinate with AAA long-range planning.

(4) Review options for supporting individual sections’ initiatives in reaching out to new members as well as potential non-member subscribers, e.g., affiliate membership for individuals.
(5) Consider a membership survey to learn more re aspects of AAA that members understand and value most/least.

(6) Encourage sections to come forward with questions about their accounting history during the life of the AAA/UCP contract, in particular so they can identify for themselves trends in membership (for their own sections and in relation to others) pre- and post-AS.

C. Information and Communication

(1) Especially with respect to budget and accounting information, revise reporting formats and contents so as to be more user friendly – including clear information on all elements the allocations formula takes into account, as well as clear statements of costs and revenues and their basis.

(2) Consider giving sections access to each others’ performance data in relation to the allocation formula. Sections do not seem to regard this as private information.

(3) Clarify the information flow within AAA so sections know where to go for specific types of information; regularize lines of communication.

(4) Look for opportunities to deliver information collectively and proactively, so sections have the same information at the same time.

(5) Use the annual meeting for discussion and deliberation rather than presentations—as this is ordinarily the only opportunity for editors to gather off-line. More structured presentations can be reserved for web, e-mail, teleconferencing. “More discussion improves the discussion.”

(6) Provide editors with timely opportunities to add new business or discussion items to any meeting agenda, and schedule sufficient time for these.

(7) Seek opportunities to build organizational trust around timely information and mutually shared values: democratic processes, transparency, mutual accountability and service.

(8) Prepare a clear user’s guide to the budget reports so leadership can learn the staff’s language, in the interests of improving mutual communication.

(9) Evaluate the publications office to maximize support for the director and her management resources.
D. Wiley-Blackwell

As WB works with individual sections, staff should strive to provide maximum flexibility with regard to journal specifications, recording these in the MOU—as well as clarity in monitoring publications’ performance and advance notice and opportunities for comment on any planned changes in operations or procedure.

E. Governance

(1) An internal review of governance (ideally with the help of an external consultant) the governance structure specifically in relation to the publication program might be timely now, in light of the new by-laws and the AAA/WB contract—especially to assess possibilities for streamlining, clarifying the borders between AAA and WB, and involving section editors as a body in the management of the publication portfolio.

(2) CFPEP should consider the future of the section liaison, so as to articulate and regularize the selection, function and term of service for this “seat.”
VIII. Appendix 1
October 16, 2007

Dear Section President (replace title w/ individual name),

We are writing to ask for your help with a new AAA initiative. You may have heard of the newly formed Committee on the Future of Electronic and Print Publishing (CFPEP). CFPEP’s mission is to recommend policies to AAA’s Executive Board (EB) and Committee on Scientific Communications (CSC) as we transition to digital publishing with AnthroSource (AS). Our main goal – endorsed by the EB and the CSC – is to ensure a diverse, dynamic and sustainable publishing program. CFPEP has been at work for less than a year, and we have already been successful in developing mechanisms that assure not only the survival but also the sustenance of sections made financially vulnerable by the transition to AS.

Now that the AAA has found a new platform for AnthroSource with Wiley-Blackwell Publishers, we are entering a new phase of the digital publishing program. As we look ahead, it will be important to know as much as we can about the ways in which sections currently assess the digital publishing program. The sections that maintain journals are a diverse set of organizations with distinctive histories, goals, opportunities and problems. We hope that CFPEP can play a strongly positive role in ongoing communication between and among individual sections and the AAA. That is why we turn to you now, in a spirit of starting a wider conversation around the future of electronic publishing for your section and in relation to the association as a whole.

We will be contacting section leadership individually in the coming weeks to learn more about your publishing program and your experience with AnthroSource thus far. We offer you the attached sheet as an initial guide to our questions, both to give you time to develop your responses – perhaps in consultation with others in your section’s leadership group (present, past and/or future) and with membership, if you feel that is appropriate – and to encourage your early response. Our hope is that our interviews will give us a more nuanced understanding of how AnthroSource affects sections in terms of mission, planning, budget, outreach, and any other areas you consider relevant. While we are keenly appreciative of your limited time for such things, your written comments would be helpful to us as a basis for planning the interviews. We would appreciate hearing from you on or before November 15th; we also welcome any additional notes you might wish to add after you meet with your sections at the annual meeting.

We will be in touch by e-mail to set up a telephone appointment. We plan to compile your responses in the form of a report and circulate a draft report to section leadership. While we will not identify individual respondents by name in the report, we are likely to refer to individual sections – unless you prefer otherwise. You should not hesitate to let us know if you prefer that your section remain anonymous. The final report will be circulated to section leadership and to the AAA EB and CSC. We regard our main mission as supporting the diversity of AAA’s publishing program, but we will need your help to understand that diversity in practice, and in depth, in a forward-looking way.

We look forward to working with you in the coming weeks and months. We welcome your suggestions, and thank you very much in advance for any help you can give us.

Sincerely yours,

Alisse Waterston        Carol Greenhouse       Lee D. Baker
Chair, CFPEP          Section Liaison, CFPEP          Section Liaison, CFPEP
awaterston@aol.com          cgreenho@princeton.edu          ldbaker@duke.edu
awaterston@jjay.cuny.edu
October 15, 2007

Dear NAME OF SECTION PRESIDENT: Please answer the following questions which will help us better understand your section, its concerns, needs and goals. You are not obliged to answer any question you feel is inappropriate; you are also welcome to add questions and comments. Your responses will be very helpful to us as a basis for planning our upcoming conversation with you. While we are keenly appreciative of your limited time for such things, your participation is very important to us. Please type your responses and email the document back to Alisse (AWaterston@aol.com), Carol (cgreenho@Princeton.EDU) and Lee (ldbaker@duke.edu). We would appreciate hearing from you on or before November 15, 2007. If you prefer to send anonymous comments (perhaps as a supplement to your responses here) you are welcome to do so by letter addressed to any (or all) of us. Thank you very much, Alisse Waterston, Carol Greenhouse, and Lee Baker

I. Section identification:

1. Your section:
2. Your name and section office:
3. Your section’s publication title:

II. Publication:

4. Is your publication a peer-reviewed journal or a newsletter? (please circle whichever applies)
5. How long has your section been publishing this title?:
6. Is the mission of your publication primarily intended to benefit (a) section members, (b) readers in a particular specialty within anthropology, (c) anthropology as a whole, (d) interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary audiences? (Circle as many as apply and explain briefly below.)

III. Electronic Publishing

7. Does your section maintain both a print and electronic edition? Just print? Just electronic? (Please circle whichever applies; if your answer is “just print” please skip to question 12.)
8. When did your section initiate an electronic edition of its publication? (If AnthroSource [AS] was the beginning of your electronic publishing program, please just circle “AnthroSource” – otherwise, please give us the year, if known):
9. Some sections developed electronic outlets prior to AS. Did your section seek opportunities for electronic publication and/or archiving prior to initiation of AS? If yes, please tell us about that history – rationales, debates, outcomes, anything else you wish to share.

10. How has electronic publishing affected your section’s publication program, if at all? Some issues might be content, access, costs, editorial labor, and so forth.

11. Overall, how would you assess the effect of electronic publication on your publication’s effectiveness for its intended authors and readers, and/or in relation to your section as a whole? Positive, negative, both positive and negative, neither positive nor negative? Please circle one and explain below.

IV. AnthroSource (AS)

12. Leaving aside just briefly its impact on your section, in what ways, if any, has AS been a positive and/or a negative for AAA overall, in your view? Positive, negative, not sure, no basis for judgment. Please explain your response.

13. Turning now to your section, in what ways has AS been a positive and/or a negative for your section, in your view? Positive, negative, not sure, no basis for judgment. Please explain your response.

14. If your responses to Qs.12 and 13 were different, please explain (e.g., do you feel section and AAA interests are different? Are some sections in a better position to benefit from AnthroSource than others? Something else?)
15. What, if any, are the benefits of AS?

16. What, if any, are the problems of AS?

17. If you answered Q.16 affirmatively, we welcome your comments as to how the problems could or should be resolved.

18. Thinking back over the past few years of your section’s executive and/or business meetings, has AS been an issue for discussion at any time? Please elaborate.

19. What is your section’s long-range plan for making use of the web? Please be as specific as possible.

V. Section coordinates

20. Please describe the process by which you developed your responses to this questionnaire (e.g., consulted section records, worked from memory, spoke with past presidents and editors, etc.)

21. Are there others in your section whom we should contact?

22. Are you willing to talk with a subcommittee member by telephone to discuss your responses and raise any additional issues? Please provide the best way to contact you by phone and email.