National Association of Student Anthropologists (NASA)
2003 Annual Report to the AAA

Submitted by Eric Haanstad, President (Outgoing)

Membership and Finances:
According to the latest available figures (September 2003), NASA membership stands at 807, nearly identical from last year's average of 808. One possible explanation for the lack of continued growth in membership is the high number of lapsed memberships (496) that are typically renewed during on-site annual meeting registration in November. The budget for 2003 was prepared by NASA President-Elect, Chad Morris and President Eric Haanstad. NASA's elected Secretary-Treasurer was replaced by Executive Committee appointment due to inactivity. Frank Mannix is now serving as appointed Secretary-Treasurer until the next formal election. NASA's primary expenditures continue to be travel and award monies, including the Carrie Hunter Tate Awards and the Travel Awards, used largely to offset the cost of annual meeting attendance for members. NASA, in accordance with our bylaws, offers travel monies to all incoming and outgoing officers who: a) attend the annual meeting, and b) certify that their trip hasn't been provided via another source of travel monies (i.e. university grant, other travel award, etc.).

AAA Meeting Activities
For the fourth consecutive year, NASA Program Editor, Lori Johns, organized an impressively diverse number of activities at the AAA Annual meeting in Chicago. The 2003 NASA program represents the strongest group of sessions, workshops and special events ever organized by our section, and Lori should be commended for her hard work. NASA sponsored a number of invited sessions including "Motivating Students, Motivating Ourselves: The Spirit Within Anthropology" (A roundtable discussion format regarding the state of passion within our discipline between students, faculty, and practicing anthropologists, Penny Owen, Laura Nader, Chad Morris, John Van Willigen, Jill Boncek, Mark Lewine, Philippe Bourgois, co-sponsored with the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges). We also sponsored many other sessions, "In the Turbulence of Peace: Social Transformation in Postwar Highland Guatemala," "Teaching Peace: Transforming Anthropological Education to Teach Methods Which Serve Others," (co-sponsored with the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges) "Resolving Conflicts in Heritage Tourism: A Public Interest Approach," and "Crafting Peace and Prosperity Through International Development: The 50-Year 'Crash' and the Reconstruction of Discourse, Theory, and Practice"

NASA sponsored a Poster Session and the Third Annual NASA/AAA Mentor Workshop, which continues to be a successful way of pairing students with faculty from a variety of fields. This year, NASA held the second annual "Student Representative Open Forum," which is an opportunity for free discussion about student issues within AAA, academia, or our own communities. The forum brings together student representatives from across AAA sections as well as student leaders from other student anthropology associations. Finally, for the first time, NASA offered a "Student Orientation to the AAA Annual Meeting: Insider Perspectives," which gave students who are attending their first annual meeting a chance to learn how to get the most from their time in Chicago.
At the NASA Business Meeting, the Carrie Hunter Award Chair, Rory McCarthy presented two graduate Carrie Hunter Tate Awards to Jennifer Wies (U Kentucky) and Jessica Cattelino (NYU) and the undergraduate award to Christina Dorsey (U Nebraska-Lincoln). The award committee felt that presenting two graduate awards would be appropriate because both candidates embodied the spirit for which the award was originally intended and, thus, were equally deserving of recognition for their efforts in student anthropology. Frank Mannix, Chair of the NASA Travel Award Committee presented Travel Awards to Mary Gray (UCSD), Maria Hicks (Western Washington U), Joy Rosenberry Chase (Wayne), and Jonathan Reed (U Oregon).

Communications
NASA Editor, Tara Hefferan continues to create an exciting monthly AN column. The column is a well-rounded mixture of section announcements, research and items of interest from members, and insights from the editor's own fieldwork. NASA maintains a listserv of more than 400 members that is also used as a communication tool in addition to e-mails to the entire membership provided through AAA lists. In addition, NASA publishes an opportunities list through the listserv, which is a digest of opportunities for student awards, jobs, resources, and calls for papers compiled from the web. The opportunities list is an important benefit that NASA offers its members and we hope to maintain and build it as a resource in the future. A continued problem with the listserv is the lack of non-advertising-based hosting space available. Yahoogroups currently offers a variety of features, but the number of ads makes a private AAA-based listserv based on current membership enrollment vastly preferable. We encourage AAA to explore the possibility of offering private listserv hosting and would welcome an opportunity to assist in establishing such a resource.

Outreach Efforts
NASA continues to search for ways to cooperate and share ideas with other like-minded AAA sections, journals, clubs and associations. The Student Representative Open Forum, for example, brings together student leaders from across the association. We hope that this event will continue to grow and encourage much more cross-section cooperation in the future. In addition, NASA has continued its long-standing efforts for creating student representation in the association and section-wide governance of AAA. From the section's origins more than a decade and a half ago, NASA has been instrumental in stressing the importance of student participation throughout AAA. In its student members, AAA has an enthusiastic and creative resource for the future and we are working to create opportunities for increased student participation wherever possible. We also approached several sections without student representatives about the possibility of including students in their governing boards as well as offered assistance to all sections in identifying candidates for existing student representative seats. NASA Program Editor, Lori Johns, was instrumental in creating a student representative seat in the Society for Linguistic Anthropology (SLA), and President-Elect Chad Morris encouraged the Central States Anthropological Society (CSAS) to revive its vacant student seat through NASA assistance.

This year, NASA nominated eight students for AAA positions including the undesignated seats on the Minority Affairs Committee and the Committee for the Status of Women in Anthropology. We feel that these nominations provide an important service both for the AAA and for our student members. We encourage the AAA to remain open to student participation in its committees and leadership structure.
Changes in the Bylaws or Governance Structure.
In 2003, NASA proposed a bylaws change to shorten the time currently served by the elected President-Elect/President:

"ARTICLE VII. Executive Committee
6. The terms of office of all Executive Committee members shall be two years, except for the President-Elect, who will serve one year as President-elect and two one year s as President. All terms of office will commence at the end of the Annual Meeting of the AAA."

Due to the mobility and changing circumstances of students, a three year term is often an undue burden for any incoming president. Furthermore, the proposal addressed the issue of the vacancy created by the two-year presidency/one year president elect every other year. The proposal allows for a President/President-Elect team every year promoting institutional memory and a smoother transition between each president. Finally, the shorter term makes it more likely that future NASA Presidents have experience in other NASA officer positions prior to taking office. This bylaws change was approved by membership in the spring ballots.

Future Activities

Although relatively informal, the following serve as a rough guide for future NASA activities:

I. Create greater institutional impact of NASA within AAA through networking and Student Representatives
II. Offer expanded membership participation/benefits
III. Increase membership
IV. Provide student communication networks and organizational transparency
V. Creation of on-line publication and website expansion
VI. Explore bylaws changes that may be necessary to make NASA effective

In 2004, NASA would like to work with AAA (through Lorie Van Olst) to add a student area to the AAA website. Also, NASA has begun an initiative designed to promote greater collaboration between student representatives. This initiative will be a primary focus in the coming year, as NASA seeks ways to more readily serve as a unified student voice within the discipline. In addition to this focus on student representative collaboration, NASA officers are planning ways to increase membership by providing useful communicative services for our constituency. We anticipate little additional expense associated with these initiatives.

NASA is working to compile a list of departmental contacts for use in attracting new members to AAA and our section. We've appointed four new students to open positions within NASA: Arleen Garcia aeg0@umail.ucsb.edu, webmaster; Anduamlak Meharie ameharie@yahoo.com, and Ryan Adams rtadams@indiana.edu, Nominations Committee; Rory McCarthy has been reappointed as Graduate Representative At Large. Finally, we're working with SACC, GAD, NAPA, and the Committee on Minority Issues on ways to generate a larger discussion on student mentorship.
Recommendations to the Long-Range Planning Committee.
Reprinted from NASA's "Long-Range Planning Input 2002"

* We would like the association to continue to make itself affordable and accessible to student participation. Student rates for association membership, annual meeting costs, publications and special events should always be kept as low as possible. One of our goals is to work towards student representation in all applicable sections. We would also like to see increased student representation in section and association-wide committees and task-forces. To this end, we would like the opportunity to participate more directly in AAA long-range planning by the addition of a student seat on the planning committee. If this seat was adopted by the AAA membership, NASA would be happy to provide a commitment to assist the nominations process by identifying a range of student nominees for the position.

* We would like to see the AAA expand its public engagement initiatives, not only in the area of government or public policy, but to wider public arenas as well. Encouraging anthropologists to contribute to public debates will increase the vitality and relevance of the discipline. AAA should continue to provide and increase opportunities for media training, popular publishing and community action among anthropologists. Public intellectual engagement is common outside of the United States and can be used as a model for American anthropologists who want to make greater public contributions.

* Beyond the ethics training goals of AAA (currently targeted only towards graduate students), the Association should explore methods of interaction with the agencies which currently regulate the ethics of research among students and professional anthropologists: institutional review boards (IRBs) on human subjects research. These boards are often based on guidelines for medical and psychological research which differ considerably from the methods most anthropologists employ. Moreover, these committees often seem to lack understanding of what most anthropologists do, and as a result, create unnecessary institutional obstacles to anthropological research. Finally, the research environment fostered by most review boards is more concerned with legal liability than the types of guidelines outlined in AAA's statement on ethics. Therefore, the discipline as a whole would be well served by an association-wide effort to interact with IRBs. This effort could be accomplished through the creation of a AAA statement addressed to IRBs which outlines how the federal guidelines for human subjects research relate specifically to anthropological research.

* Since the creation of sections within AAA, there seems to be a trend towards increased specialization and reduced interaction among them. Any effort to reduce the increasing exclusivity and specialization among sections should be encouraged within the Association. The attempt to find alternatives to sections through interest groups and alternate structures is a step in the right direction. NASA is in a unique position to benefit from increased section interaction, because we share a common experience as students rather than as part of a particular sub-discipline or world area.

* Similarly, as our members can increasingly expect to find job opportunities in anthropological practice, NASA is somewhat concerned that the actions set forth in the AAA long range plan may actually serve to further divide practitioners and traditional anthropologists -- particularly as the plan seemingly does not address possible AAA-initiated steps toward integrating practicing and traditional anthropology within the academy. NASA asserts that a strong future anthropology depends much more on institutionalized academic valuation of practice, as opposed to seeking out token practitioners to sit on committees. We highly encourage, for instance,
efforts toward AAA advocacy of teaching methodology and research design in anthropological graduate programs. Graduates of programs in which such practical skills are ignored are ill-prepared for changes in a discipline that is limited in academic openings, is growing in number of graduates, and is attempting to demonstrate usefulness in policy arenas to a multidisciplinary audience. *

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