January 31, 2005

TO: American Anthropological Association  
FROM: Leanne Hinton  
President, Society for Linguistic Anthropology

RE: Annual Section Report for the SLA

**Officers for 2004**

The officers for 2004 were as follows:
**President:** Leanne Hinton  
**Secretary-Treasurer:** Betsy Rymes  
**Members at large:** Niko Besnier besnier@ucla.edu and Bambi Schieffelin  
**Nominating committee:** Stanton Wortham <stantonw@gse.upenn.edu> until summer 2004  
new chair starting summer 2004, Kathryn Woolard ; Debra Spitulnik ; new member: Alexandra Jaffe  
**Program chair for the 2004 meetings:** Asif Agha  
**JLA editors (til Aug 2004)** Mary Bucholtz <bucholtz@linguistics.ucsb.edu> and Elizabeth Keating  
**JLA editor (starting Aug 2004):** Asif Agha  
**Editors of SLA column:** James Stanlaw and Mark Peterson  
**Student rep:** Lori Johns (Horsman)

**Current Officers**

**President:** Leanne Hinton  
**President Elect:** Joel Kuipers  
**Secretary-Treasurer:** Betsy Rymes  
**Members at large:** Niko Besnier besnier@ucla.edu and Bambi Schieffelin  
**Nominating committee:** chair: Kathryn Woolard ; Debra Spitulnik ; Alexandra Jaffe  
**Program chair:** Stanton Wortham <stantonw@gse.upenn.edu>  
**JLA editor:** Asif Agha  
**Editors of SLA column:** James Stanlaw and Mark Peterson  
**Student rep:** Lori Johns (Horsman)

1. **Accomplishments**

• Membership numbers
Betsy Rymes, SLA treasurer, reports that we have 662 members of the SLA as of October 2004. This is down by 4 from last year's figure of 666, which shows a stabilizing from the year before, where about 30 members were lost. The low 2003 numbers may reflect the fact that a related group, the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas (SSILA), who had been meeting in alternate years with the AAA and the Linguistic Society of America (LSA), had decided to meet only with the LSA in the future. The fact that the numbers had stabilized this year was a good thing, and I had hoped we would now see the membership moving upward again. However, the November 2004 figures just came out at 649, a loss of 13 members in one month. I can only think that this was a direct result of the difficulties with the change of time and venue for this year's AAA meetings. Certainly it is likely that more SSILA members who are also AAA members have dropped out of the AAA because of this.

**Financial balances**

At the time of the SLA Executive Board meeting in Atlanta, the SLA fund balances were projected as follows:

Fund balance (actual) as of 1/1/04 $5,723.57

Fund Balance (projected) by 12/31/04 $1,400

Fund Balance (projected) by 12/31/05 $2072

The November 30 statement from the AAA (which arrived January 20, 2005) shows revenues and expenses to date along with projected expenditures:

Net assets at Beginning of year $5,723.57
Revenues through 11/30/04 $17,760.03

Expenses through 11/30/04 $7333.69

Change in Net Assets $10,426.34

Net Assets as of 11/30/04 **$16,149.91**

November 30 statement of Activities:
For the *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*:

Dues revenue allocation (from above, $7333.69) + subscriptions, royalties, etc.

$13,333.12

Expenditures to date (Nov 30) (printing and management expenses)

$13,333.12

Since the second issue of 2004 will be published in January, another major expense will occur then without a major increase in revenues.

There was a scare in the fall when the AAA executive board contacted us to say that the SLA fund balance was projected to run a major deficit and that the journal would go broke in 2005. But this turned out not to be the case, as JLA editor Asif Agha and Betsy Rymes were able to determine after further discussions with the AAA. Nevertheless, with declining membership and increased expenses due to the new costs imposed by having the JLA on *Anthro Source*, it is important for us to discuss the funding situation and see if there are ways to increase our revenue.

- **Journal of Linguistic Anthropology**
  
  Mary Bucholtz and Elizabeth Keating stepped down in August after their term as editors of the JLA. We are extremely grateful to them for doing an excellent job with the journal. They are succeeded by Asif Agha as the new editor.


  12 manuscripts were submitted, 7 accepted and 5 rejected. Average time from submission to acceptance: 3.8 months. 32 books were received for review, and 9 were assigned for review. All materials were sent to the new editorial office in early September.

  Measures for meeting rising costs and restoring the SLA Fund Balance to a healthier balance need to be discussed, as well as getting more submissions to the journal.

- **SLA column in Anthropology News**
  
  James Stanlaw and Mark Peterson continue to do fine columns for
the SLA in *Anthropology News*.

**Prizes**

**Sapir Book Award.** The biennial Sapir Book Award was awarded this year to Robert Bringhurst and his posthumous co-authors Ghandl and Skaay, for the three-volume work *Masterworks of the (classical?) Haida Mythtellers*, and honorable mention given to Dennis Tedlock's *Rabinal Achi: a Mayan drama of war and sacrifice*. Jane Hill and Laura Graham were the committee that reviewed the 13 books submitted for the prize.

**Student Essay Prize.** Members-at-large Niko Besnier and Bambi Schieffelin served as the committee to judge papers submitted for the 2002-2003 SLA Student Essay Prize, but decided not to give a prize this year. Announcements for the 2004-5SLA Student Essay Prize have been publicized in the SLA, Ling-Anth and SSILA email lists, and in *Anthropology News*, as well as on the SLA website.

**SLA Website**

The website was updated at the end of 2004, so it reflects current offices, deadlines for the prize competitions etc. However, it has become clear that the SLA by-laws are out of date, something we hope to change in the coming year (see below).

**AAA Meeting Program**

An able job was done by program chair Asif Agha, and the 2004 program for the AAA meetings had approximately 18 sessions on linguistic anthropology that were part of the SLA program. As everyone knows, due to the labor problems in San Francisco, the time and venue of the meetings were changed and the AAA met in Atlanta in December instead of San Francisco in November. This meant that the majority of people who had planned to go to the meetings cancelled instead, and most of the sessions were either cancelled, met elsewhere, or were decimated. Four of the SLA sessions met at Berkeley in November, and one session met at the Canterbury Hotel in San Francisco in November. To accommodate the sessions, the Linguistics Department at Berkeley held a *Miniconference on Linguistic Anthropology*.

5 sessions were officially cancelled for the AAA, and 8 did take place at the meeting, but often with only a few of the originally-slated papers. The good news is that with so few papers, presenters were able to take more time and there was time for long and fruitful discussions with the audience.
• **Executive Board Meeting and Business meeting**
Due to the problems with this year's meetings, most of the members, including members of the SLA executive board, could not attend. The executive board met, with only three people present (the SLA president, president-elect, and secretary-treasurer).

The Business meeting did occur, attended by about 25 people (and up to 35 toward the end of the meeting, constituting a quorum). The members who were present voted overwhelmingly that if labor disputes caused a similar dislocation in future years, the SLA should try to hold a separate meeting, like CAE did last year.

• **Nominations**
SLA has had good representation on the AAA committees, and we hope to continue this. The Nominations Committee, headed by Kit Woolard, submitted online nominations for the following candidates, who agreed to run and have submitted their materials.

AAA Executive Board, Linguistics Seat:

Monica Heller  
Bruce Mannheim

AAA Long Range Planning, Linguistics Seat:

Bonnie McElhinny  
James Wilce

AAA Long Range Planning, undesignated (or other vacancies)

Pamela Bunte

AAA Nominations Committee

Laura Ahearn  
Rupert Stasch

AAA COSWA,, undesignated seat

Jocelyn Ahlers

• **Relations with SSILA**
The Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas will continue to meet with the LSA in the future, rather than its old
tradition of alternating years between LSA and AAA. The AAA problems leading to the time and venue change of the AAA did not help in our attempt to develop closer relations with SSILA. However, we will continue to submit joint SLA-SSILA sessions, and run panels and sessions of interest to SSILA members. Certainly many SLA members are also SSILA members.

2. Future projects.

In 2005 we will need to have an election for Secretary-treasurer and one member-at-large. This will be done by a mail ballot on our own (not part of the AAA ballot) in keeping with our current by-laws.

The SLA by-laws are woefully out of date. We will be electing our new officers this year by our own mail-ballot, and I plan to work with the executive board to develop some resolutions to put on the same ballot, to amend the by-laws to make them reflect our current actual practices better.

Since key people from JLA and the SLA executive committee were not able to come to the AAA meetings this year, discussion about how to stabilize and increase funding was not able to take place at the executive meeting or the business meeting. We will need to do some serious discussion about this by e-mail instead.

The SLA needs to do more outreach for new members and subscribers. This is a long-term project, which we will be discussing both by email and in future meetings.

3. Other items

•AAA website.
Since many of the section and committee websites may be out of date, it is hard to trust the website on such items as the current officers of a section. I commend Kim Baker for the excellent AAA Section Leadership manual that she gave to the section chairs at the December meeting, where I at last found out how to get our own web pages updated! I would like to suggest that as part of the webpage design, there be a date on each page stating when the most recent update was - that would help us know if we are looking at current information or not.

Also relating to the website, the method for submitting papers and panels is very rigid and difficult to maneuver. Last year I also found that I could not access the panel composition and content (just to
read it) once I had submitted it. It would be very helpful if the website committee could re-examine the web-submission process and see if there are ways to make it more user-friendly.