Association for Political and Legal Anthropology

Submitted by John Bowen, APLA President, April 5, 2008 (For the Period January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007).

Mission  APLA is committed to promoting the critical anthropology of politics and law within anthropology, across disciplines, and in the broader public sphere.

Activities  During the reporting period, APLA published two issues of its journal, the Political and Legal Anthropology Review (PoLAR), held its annual student paper prize competition, welcomed new Board members, and published columns in the Anthropology Newsletter. We expanded our graduate mentoring activities, invited panels for the AAA meetings, and held several roundtables.

Finances  For several years, APLA has operated at a deficit, drawing from its general funds in order to cover annual operating expenses, however, this trend is expected to change in 2008. These deficit-budgets resulted from establishment of Anthrosource, which required initial investments from the AAA, but which failed to meet its original projections of returns on this investment. All of the sections faced the same problem: digital subscription revenues fell below original expectations.

APLA has been in better shape than many sections, however, as its membership base increased after the move to Anthrosource. The number of regular members increased from 336 in October 2006 to a high of 383 in October 2007—an increase of 18% over the past two years. During the same period, the number of student members fluctuated from a low of 164 to a high of 179, and at the end of 2007 was at 173. There are also 2 life members. The total number of APLA members in October 2007 was 558, a 10.5% increase from the October 2006 membership figure of 505. As noted above, this increase is striking, given that it occurred during a period when some other sections have experienced declines in membership and when the move to AnthroSource was expected to lead to a decline in sections membership for journal-producing sections.

Our expenses other than those for PoLar remain low: honoraria and prize money for students ($600), student travel ($800), and meeting food and space ($700). We have saved money by holding the board meeting off-site, and have used the savings to pay for the student meals at mentoring sessions. In January 2007, our net assets were $9,811. We ended 2007 with a projected deficit of $3,724 (depending on final PoLar calculations), but we are projected to add $23,307 to our fund balance in 2008 due to the publishing change, which would mean that at the end of 2008, it will be at approximately $29,000.

2008 Budget. We are projected to receive $11,957 in revenue from Wiley-Blackwell. At the business meeting we voted to keep dues at $30.00 (regular) but to lower student dues to $20.00 as part of our continuing effort to expand the student membership.

Our budgeted expenses in 2008 are as follows: $900 for travel expenses incurred by board members and/or the APLA student representative, $600 for the student paper prize ($300 in prize money and $300 in travel subsidy), and $700 for food at the AAA meeting. As noted above, the revenues from Wiley-Blackwell are projected to exceed the costs of producing PoLAR. As a result, we are projected to generate $23,307 in funds in 2008.
PoLAR Annelise Riles of Cornell University served as Editor through August, when she was succeeded by Elizabeth Mertz of the University of Wisconsin, Madison. The smooth transition meant that the expected two issues appeared on time, making up volume 29. The Fall 2007 issue featured a symposium on the “new bureaucracies of virtue”, continuing PoLar’s practice of combining regular submissions with edited special sections.

PoLAR’s individual subscriptions have increased with the APLA membership increases (virtually all such subscriptions are the result of APLA membership). We expect institutional print subscriptions to slowly decline as libraries turn to AnthroSource, and indeed they have done so. Beginning in 2008, AnthroSource will move from the University of California Press to Wiley-Blackwell. Wiley-Blackwell has guaranteed a minimum amount of revenues for the AAA, which has been divided among the sections. For APLA/PoLAR, this guaranteed revenue figure is $11,957.

It appears that the transition to Blackwell will ease the financial stress on APLA for the time being, as well as consolidate all issues of publicity and advertisement revenue under Blackwell’s oversight. Our revenue from subscriptions to PoLAR and to AnthroSource and from other PoLAR-related sources (such as royalties in 2007 was $13,440.39 at the end of November, 2007. This was a substantial increase in comparison to 2006, when we received $11,688.33 from such sources for the entire year. In 2007, the cost of producing PoLAR was projected to be $29,370. The revenues to cover these costs came from APLA membership dues and our general fund ($15,224 -- $13,300 from dues and $1,924 from our fund balance) and PoLAR-related revenues ($14,146). Additionally, the production of PoLAR is subsidized by the University of Wisconsin Law School, which provides computer support and about $8,500 a year to support PoLAR managing editor April Faith-Slaker at 10 hours per week, continuing the benefit received by Cornell University’s subsidies of salaried personnel, space and real costs.

Elections and Officers John Bowen served in his second full term as President during 2007 (3 ½ terms in total, as Bowen succeeded June Nash part-way through her first year). At the close of the AAA meetings in 2007 Bill Maurer began his two-year term as President. Susan Hirsch began her two-year term as President-elect at the close of the meetings. Mindie Lazarus-Black and Mark Goodale served the second years of their terms as Board members, and Justin Richland and Shonna Trinch their first terms. Kimberly Coles and Robert Hayden began their tenures on the Board at the close of the meetings. Board members serve two years; each year, a new junior and a new senior member are elected. Susan Coutin served as Treasurer, and Madeline Adelman as Secretary. Both finished their terms at the close of the 2007 meetings; Susan was succeeded by Kate Sullivan; Madelaine had been re-elected and so continues in her office.

These are APLA’s elected officers. At the 2007 business meeting we approved a proposal to change the by-laws so as to add an office of Treasurer-elect, so as to create continuity for this important post, and left it to the next President to set the process in motion.

The remaining officers are gratefully appointed by the President for indefinite terms. Elizabeth Mertz began as PoLar editor. Mindie Lazarus-Black and Justin Richland chaired the Nominations Committee, and Mark Goodale the Student Prize Committee.
Elizabeth Krause and Mona Bhan were AN Editors. Carie Little Hersh worked with Jason Cross as Graduate Student representative and planned the AAA Meetings mentoring activities.

**AAA Meetings** At the 2006 meetings, we sponsored a large number of sessions and continued to expand graduate student involvement in panels and other activities. We held four round tables and mentoring workshops. We met at nearby restaurants to mentor graduate student members of APLA, each with 2-3 faculty and 5-8 students, divided roughly by theme; we included roughly 50 graduate students. APLA pays for the meals.

**Student Paper Prize** Mark Schuller won APLA's annual student paper contest in 2007. Mark received a $300 scholarship toward travel to the 2006 AAA meetings and a $300 prize, and her paper was forwarded to PoLar to be considered for publication. (The prize papers always are published but they must go through normal review).

**AN Column** Mona Bhan continues as editor of the *Anthropology Newsletter* column.

**Issues for the AAA Leadership** APLA is in excellent shape in terms of finances, membership, the quality of its work, and the enthusiasm of its members. We are particularly proud of the active and prominent roles played by graduate students in all aspects of the organization. Over the next years we need to assure financial stability. We also need to develop web resources beyond AnthroSource that could provide information and opportunities for interaction among section members.

**Names and Email Address of Elected Officers During the Reporting Period**
John Bowen, President pro tem (for June Nash) through 2005; President through 2007, jbowen@wustl.edu
Susan Bibler Coutin, scoutin@uci.edu
Madelaine Adelman, Secretary, mad@asu.edu
Mindie Lazarus-Black, Board Member, mindielb@uic.edu
Mark Goodale, Board Member, mgoodale@gmu.edu
Justin Richland, Board Member, j.b.richland@uci.edu
Shonna Trinch, Board Member, strinch@jjay.cuny.edu