Annual Report – 2007

Culture and Agriculture Section

The main activities of the C&A Section for 2007 were the search for a new editor for the journal, *Culture & Agriculture*, and plans for increasing the visibility and membership of the section.

1. Status, Activities and Accomplishments.

- Membership numbers continued to decline slowly. The loss in the past decade, however, has been substantial. Membership in 2000 was 331, declining to 244 in 2007, approximately 25 percent. The sharpest declines were in 2002-2003 (9.5%) and 2004-2005 (9.2%). Reasons for the decline are difficult to discern. The drop in 2004-2005 may have been due to a membership dues increase (from $15 to $35 in 2004) and a decision to provide copies of the journal electronically rather than in print, but neither of those factors could have been responsible for the drop in 2002-2003.

- C&A struggled financially to produce two issues of *Culture & Agriculture* in 2007 and to retain one year of operating budget in reserve.
  - Publication costs for the journal were $14,058, exceeding the publication revenues by $6,429. When all revenue and cost factors are taken into account, the annual loss is projected to be $955. The net assets at the end of November, 2007, were $23,645.91, but an estimated $7,374 cost for publications has not yet been deducted from the account. The year-end assets are expected to be approximately $16,300.
  - The budget picture for 2008 is much rosier than it has been in previous years, thanks to the new publication contract with Wiley-Blackwell. They will provide $6,442 to cover production and mailing costs for *Culture & Agriculture*. The amount contributed in subsequent years will depend on the distribution formula recommended by the Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publishing (CFPEP) and adopted by the AAA.

- An extensive search for a new editor for Culture & Agriculture, chaired by Dr. Glenn Stone (Washington University), was concluded at the end of November, with Dr. Kendall Thu (Northern Illinois University) appointed as editor for a three-year period, beginning in December 2007. Dr. Thu replaces Dr. James McDonald (University of Texas at San Antonio), who provided 10 years of service.
Notable activities at the AAA meetings in DC included appointment of a new AN editor, a new program chair, symposia and sessions, and discussions and plans at the Executive Board and business meetings.

- A new editor was appointed for the Anthropology Newsletter, Dr. Ronald Rich (Henry Ford Community College), to succeed Dr. Lois Stanford (New Mexico State University).

- A new program chair was appointed for the 2008 meetings, Dr. Todd Crane (Wageningen University, Netherlands), to replace Dr. Lisa Markowitz (University of Louisville), who provided three years of service.

- The highlight of the C&A sessions at the DC meetings was an invited symposium “Farm Bill Conversation,” featuring three discussants, Charles Hanrahan (Congressional Record Service), Steph Larson (Acting Policy Director of the Community Food Security Coalition), and M. Logan (Sustainable Agriculture Coalition). In addition, C&A co-sponsored a Presidential Session (with Food & Nutrition), “The Public Interest and the American Food Enterprise,” followed by a Policy Panel on the same topic. C&A also had seven sponsored sessions (one invited).

- Considerable discussion at the Board and Business Meetings was devoted to the need to increase membership in the section through increased visibility and service to the membership. Several activities were planned, including development of a new website, increased interaction with other sections, especially The Anthropology of Food & Nutrition, resumption of regular columns in the Anthropology Newsletter, and the possibility of a name change for the section to reflect the interests of the membership more broadly and to attract new members. The possible consideration of a name change is discussed further below, in future plans.

- The major outreach efforts were continued publication of the journal and the maintenance of a listserv. In addition, sessions were sponsored jointly with other sections of the AAA at the DC meetings, including sponsorship of a social/cash bar and lecture, by Warren Belasco, with Food & Nutrition.

2. Future Plans or Activities.

- One planned activity is currently underway, development of a new webpage on a new website, to be based at the University of Kent and maintained by Dr. Michael Fischer.
Increased use of the listserv will be made: (1) to encourage current members to recruit new members, and (2) to keep the membership abreast of new and planned activities. One activity will be discussion of the possibility of a name change and solicitation of ideas and perspectives by the membership.

C&A will offer a prize for a student paper, effective in 2008. A committee, chaired by Dr. Lisa Markowitz, has been appointed to develop the criteria and plans for the prize.

3. Other Items.

One issue that concerns Culture & Agriculture is the discussions at the Section Assembly to address questions about sections whose membership fall below 250. The issue continues to be raised, even though it was tabled once with an implicit understanding that it would remain off the agenda. C&A is not one of the sections exempted for low membership, and even though we remain near the 250 threshold, we hope that future discussions within AAA will promote flexibility on this matter.

C&A encourages CFPEP and the AAA to adopt a policy on an allocations formula to distribute income received by AAA from Wiley-Blackwell that follows the principles of fairness, diversity, and transparency & inclusiveness.

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