

**GENERAL ANTHROPOLOGY DIVISION**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
**2007**

**Submitted by:** GAD President Susan Buck Sutton

**1. Status, Activities, and Accomplishments.**

The General Anthropology Division (GAD) is an evolving coalition of anthropologists interested in what unifies and cross-cuts the discipline. It stimulates conversations that span the subfields and provides a home for emerging interests and ideas. It raises broad questions, fosters the emergence of new areas of inquiry, and examines the structures and conditions that shape our lives as anthropologists. GAD is also the umbrella for several committees that examine particular cross-disciplinary issues, such as the history of anthropology, science and technology studies, anthropological teaching, and the nature of anthropology in small programs. GAD publishes both a bulletin (*General Anthropology*) and the FOSAP (see below) publication *Anthro-at-Large*.

While GAD's membership size dropped 9.6% this last year (from 1692 members to 1530), it remains one of the largest sections in the AAA. Much of the work of GAD is carried out within its committees, and all reported significant activities and growing membership during 2007. Of special note, the dormant Committee on the History of Anthropology sprang back to life after a hiatus of several years.

GAD's finances remained healthy. As of November 2007, GAD net assets were \$93,277.69, an increase of \$14,751.20 from the beginning of the year. This will enable GAD to increase its funding of the Forsythe Prize (see below), add to its prize for Exemplary Cross-Field Scholarship, and develop a more engaging website as well as a listserv for GAD members.

Both the *GAD Bulletin* and FOSAP's *Anthro-At-Large* have their own production budgets. The *General Anthropology* editors have asked to continue (in 2008) at the same level of support as in 2007, which was **\$4032.00**. *Anthro-at-Large* has a new budget of **\$1390.00**, which reflects increases in the printing and mailing expenses.

**GAD Programs at the AAA Annual Meeting**

GAD received proposals for 19 sessions and 33 individual papers/posters for the 2007 Annual Meeting. After a multi-stage review process, it recommended 28 paper sessions and 1 poster session, all of which were scheduled for the Meeting. GAD's four invited session slots (one less than 2006) were as follows:

- “Ontologies in the Making” (Stacey A. Langwick and Rachel E. Prentice)
- “An Investigation of Assessment: History, Language, and Socio-Cultural Practice” (Debra Picchi)
- “Constructivist Evolutionary Anthropology: Beyond ‘Nature versus Nurture’” (Emily Schultz and Agustin Fuentes) – co-sponsored with Biological Anthropology Section.
- “Strategies in Teaching Anthropology” (Patricia Rice)

GAD decided to try a new, more interactive format for its annual Distinguished Lecture, replacing it with a Distinguished Panel. In this panel, which was attended by roughly 100 people despite not being listed in the Annual Meeting program, ten anthropologists involved in internationalization initiatives on their campuses held an open discussion on the relationship between such initiatives and the discipline. There was resounding agreement that the discussion format was successful, and that GAD should alternate lectures and discussion forums in the future.

### GAD Committees

Committee on Anthropology of Science, Technology, and Computing (Chair: Chris Furlow). CASTAC membership continues to grow, in line with the growing interest in this science and technology studies in general. Their listserv is very active, as is their promotion of sessions at the AAA Annual Meeting. CASTAC also shares responsibility for awarding the Diana Forsythe Prize with the Society for Feminist Anthropology, alternating years. At CASTAC's urging, GAD agreed to add \$500. annually to the funds supporting this award, thus raising the amount that can be awarded.

Federation of Small Anthropology Programs (Chair: John Rhoades). The FOSAP Newsletter underwent a much welcomed name change to *Anthro-at-Large*, on the belief that it might be of interest even to anthropologists at not-so-small programs. FOSAP also activated its listserv, based on updating an older membership list to determine email addresses for all the names, add new ones, and eliminate those no longer active. The list now has about 400 names with surface mail and email listings. FOSAP reports that the listserv "has experienced a steady stream of comments, queries, announcements, concerns, and some complaints (about inbox jamming). The traffic was informative and useful (one participant at an institution with only a lone anthropologist expressed delight at being able to interact with anthropological colleagues)."

Committee on the Teaching of Anthropology (Chair: Mike Coggeshall). It was agreed during that the CoTA Round-Table discussions ("Conversations on Teaching") should alternate years with the GAD-sponsored Teaching Strategies session at the AAA Annual Meeting. The latter was scheduled for the 2007 meetings. CoTA thus worked with both the Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges and FOSAP to coordinate and promote AAA sessions about teaching.

Committee on the History of Anthropology (Co-chairs: Andrew Lyons, Harriet Lyons). This committee, which had been dormant for several years, came back to life through the work of its two co-chairs. At present, there are roughly 70 members, with plans under way to submit several sessions for the 2008 AAA Annual Meeting.

## **2.Future plans or activities**

While GAD will likely remain a loose, amorphous coalition, it is time to analyze its current membership in systematic fashion, to assess why the membership is declining, and to develop more effective ways of communicating with its members. To this end, we will examine the long-

term statistics on membership, as well as the degree to which GAD members belong to other sections or only to GAD. We will also devote resources to a more effective communications platform that will both convey what GAD is doing and develop greater dialogue among the membership. One of the at-large members of the Executive Board will be designated as the website and communications coordinator and will be supported by a graduate assistant in developing the communications platform.

GAD will also undertake an updating of its by-laws over this next year, as there are several clauses that now need revision.

Finally, GAD will continue to explore how it can best advance discussion of general issues within anthropology, in terms of both scholarly issues that cut across subfield and issues that get at the practice and conditions of our discipline. In this regard, the Executive Board also feels it is important to convey that the personnel and epistemological positions of GAD officers have changed significantly since the 1990s, and that it will make a concerted effort to bring anthropologists of various theoretical positions into its work. Finally, GAD has committed to working closely with the Practicing Anthropology Working Group in raising issues of anthropological engagement and application.

### **3. Other Items and Concerns.**

GAD remains very interested in greater coordination and attention to teaching throughout the AAA and stands ready to engage in conversation that will advance such efforts. Its Committee on the Teaching of Anthropology would like to be involved in such efforts as are under way. More importantly, GAD believes it is time to consider developing a journal on the teaching of anthropology, that might be spread across several AAA sections.