Annual report, 2007, Society for Psychological Anthropology

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1. Status, Activities and Accomplishments. What has your section accomplished in 2007? The following are suggested categories of activities and accomplishments.

I might say overall that for a mid-size, not very large Section, the SPA does a lot of things and thanks to the work of many of our members, continues to sustain them well.

The SPA recruited new members for the three prize selection committees we sponsor. This is an off-year for SPA elections.

The SPA awarded the Stirling Prize for the best paper in psychological anthropology, the Condon Prize for the best student paper, and the Boyer Prize in psychoanalytic anthropology.

Grants made to the SPA

The SPA was very fortunate in receiving a grant from one of its Board members, Robert Lemelson, to further the goals of the SPA. The Board approved two initiatives over the next three years: The Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund, and The Lemelson/SPA Student Fellowships: The Lemelson/SPA Fellows. This program has begun. Dr. Lemelson made his first of three contributions of $50,000 to the SPA. Three SPA conferences have been funded for 2008-2009. Several students will also be provided with summer research awards. [See below for additional information.]
The SPA publishes the journal Ethos. [from the editor’s report.]

Janet Keller and the Ethos board have worked hard to improve the journal, and submissions, special issues, a larger size, and website improvements all occurred this past year; we redesigned the Ethos cover and developed a new and much-improved website for Ethos. Submissions to Ethos are holding steady, and subscriptions are holding steady as well.

- Membership numbers (for 2007). List any factors you think may be affecting Section memberships.

Membership
Current membership (as of September 30, 2007) is basically the same as 2006 – 559 members, a 1.4% increase. We would like to increase further, but have not seen the declines that some other sections have.

- Financial balances for both Section budgets and publication sponsored budgets, if applicable (for 2006). List any factors you think are affecting finances.

We have weathered the transition to Anthrosource very well. In fact, AAA had budgeted $35K more in expenses than we have incurred to date. Ethos is alive and well and holding steady financially so far. The 2007 biennial meeting cost about $3000 more than budgeted, but we have made up for the expenses with increasing membership, increasing Ethos royalties and permissions.

Net assets at the beginning of the 2006 were $44,987. Net assets at the beginning of 2007 were $42,924. The loss in 2006 was due to expenses from Anthrosource. We are currently in good stead financially, and we expect to do well next year.

Summary of Finances
The SPA had its Biennial meeting in Los Angeles, California in March 2007 (see below). Although the meetings ended up losing about $3,000, this was due to the fact that we did not take up enough hotel rooms to meet our contracted quota. In other respects, the SPA finances are doing pretty well.

- AAA meeting highlights.

The SPA sponsored three invited sessions at this year’s Meeting. Their titles are listed as follows:

Thursday, 10:15 am - noon  Assessing Violence and Traumatic Stress: Intradisciplinary and Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Cultural Difference and Inequality. Faith Warner, organizer

Friday, 8:30 am -10:45 am  Forgetting Anthropology: Implications of Forgetting and Memory for Self Understanding and Social Integration. Jason Danely, Edward Drott, organizers
This year's process ended up eliminating all of the individually proposed papers that had been assigned for evaluation by the SPA. When the overall process for assigning of slots becomes as competitive as it was this year there is very little way for individually volunteered papers to find acceptance. This is because the process requires the review committee to organize volunteered papers into artificially constructed sessions first, and then those newly created sessions must be evaluated against the already organized sessions. They are unlikely to compare favorably due to their artificial construction.

We are therefore recommending that SPA members be told that to have any chance of having their papers accepted for presentation at the AAA meetings, they should be sure to organize themselves into sessions prior to the evaluation process. It is getting to be less and less possible for individual papers to be accepted.

**SPA Biennial Meetings, Los Angeles, California March 2007.**

Over 200 people attended these meetings this past year – one of the largest SPA meetings we have had. Highlights included awarding Prof. Robert Edgerton of UCLA the Distinguished Research Award at the banquet. The conference had several new formats in addition to the standard symposia and individual papers. We introduced discussion panels, where organizers made brief opening statements and then there was a general conversation. We had several invited speakers rather than one plenary session, and these were quite successful. We organized an evening out at the home of Robert Lemelson, who hosted some 130 or so guests at a memorable party at his home! About 40% of all papers/attendees were students/postdocs. We encouraged participation from Los Angeles-region colleges and universities who are not usually attendees at SPA but where there are members, and had representatives from many state universities, community colleges, and other UC and private universities attending.

**SPA Website**

**2007 AAA Program Report**
Steve Leavitt, Union College

**SPA Web Site Report**

The statistics regarding the usage of the SPA web site indicate that the site is a resource for people looking to get information about the Society. First-time visitors continue to make up more than 80% of the hits on the home page of the web site. The patterns of monthly traffic show that there is significant use of the web site during the weeks that people are preparing abstracts for the upcoming AAA meetings.
We also receive a significant surge in visitors after the announcement of the Lemelson Fellows and Research Conference Programs were announced in September of this year.
Oct-Nov. 2007 First-time Visitors to SPA Web Site

SPA Web Site Hits for 2007, by month. "Unique" visitors are visitors who have not accessed the web site within the previous 24 hours. First-time visitors are those who have never accessed the site since we began gathering statistics last year.

Total Unique Visits in two years, since November 29, 2005: 9666

- Changes in bylaws or governance structure (if applicable). None

2. Future plans or activities (3-5) year time frame including efforts to increase membership
- What projects does your Section have underway? None currently

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over the next three years: The Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund, and The Lemelson/SPA Student Fellowships: \textit{The Lemelson/SPA Fellows}.

\textbf{The Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund}

The SPA is providing support to its members to fund conferences on significant topics in the field of psychological anthropology. Members can apply to the Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund to organize a conference at their home institutions. The fund will support requests for department meeting expenses to host the conference, and travel and housing expenses and honoraria to bring outside speakers to the conference. The Fund encourages student participation in such conferences, and will consider requests for funding for students from the host institution to assist in organizing the meeting, and funding to bring limited numbers of students to attend from other institutions. Applicants can request funds to defray costs of preparing, editing and submitting the papers from conferences for publication, including honoraria to authors. The Lemelson/SPA Conference Fund does not provide support for meetings associated with the SPA Biennial or AAA, since one of the goals of the fund is to bring such events, and the intellectual energy that goes with them, to member faculty and their institutions throughout the country.

The Lemelson/SPA Conference awards will be made by a committee appointed by the President of the SPA, with the advice and approval of the Board of the SPA. The specific requirements for the submission of applications by SPA members, such as the timing of submissions, duration, amounts, accounting, expectations of awardees and their institutions, and other considerations in implementing the Lemelson/SPA Conference awards will be developed by the President, President-elect, and the SPA Board, with suggestions from the SPA membership at large, prior to implementation. Normally, institutions cannot receive more than one such award. \textit{Three such conference awards have been made for 2008}.

\textbf{The Lemelson/SPA Student Fellowships: The Lemelson/SPA Fellows}

Graduate students in the field of psychological anthropology will be selected for research training awards each year: \textit{The Lemelson/SPA Fellows}. These awards can be used for field research funding to encourage initial fieldwork, exploratory research for planning dissertation research, methods training to prepare for dissertation research, and pilot studies to prepare for more extensive research applications. Lemelson/SPA Fellows will be recognized at each SPA Biennial Meeting and at the SPA Business Meeting at the AAA each year. Fellowships will include travel and expenses to attend the AAA meeting and the SPA Biennial Meeting. The Lemelson/SPA Student Fellowships will be awarded by a committee appointed by the President of the SPA, with the advice and approval of the Board of the SPA.

The specific requirements for the submission of applications by students, such as the timing of awards, duration, amounts, accounting, expectations of awardees and their institutions, and other considerations in implementing the Lemelson/SPA Fellows program will be developed by the President, President-elect, and the SPA Board, with suggestions from the SPA membership at large, prior to implementation. Normally, students will receive awards after their first year of graduate training, and prior to full dissertation fieldwork. Students cannot receive more than one
such award. Up to five awards will be made in each of the next three years, and awards will be made in the range of $5 - 7,000 each. _Several awards are in the process of being made for 2008._

**SPA Book Series**

The SPA has a Book Series with Palgrave Press. Alex Hinton is the current Editor. The series is in good health.

- What (if any) collaboration is your Section doing with other Sections or outside groups on these projects? None

- Do you have any plans for membership and for new or changing publications? None

- Do you have any plans for making your section more inclusive? We are always trying to make SPA more inclusive.

3. Other Items. Please tell us what your chief concerns and issues are, especially if they are not previously noted.

- What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the Long-Range Planning Committee?

The AAA should first and foremost, above ALL other issues, be concerned over the intellectual projects of its members and should focus on ways to insure that those intellectual projects are sustained. Those projects are largely, though not exclusively to be sure, happening within Sections. In my view, the SA publications and members currently are the heart of the intellectual life of the AAA.

It was unfortunate in our view, that the SA did not support the reorganization plan proposed at the 2007 AAA meetings. As it was well said to me after that meeting: “The SA certainly is not a deliberative body.” It is not currently set up to meet once a year, and at other times only via email or a listserv, and deliberate and decide matters very well. I hope that another plan that can get the support of a large majority of sections, and can avoid politicization and divisiveness, can eventually be devised and approved by the EB.

What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Executive Board?

(See comments above.)