ANNUAL REPORT 2008
Association of Latina and Latino Anthropologists
(ALLA)
Submitted by Vilma Santiago-Irizarry, Past President

Section Officers, 2007-08
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    Paule Cruz-Takash, paulect69@aol.com (to 9/08)

Status, Activities, and Accomplishments
1. Membership numbers: As of October 2008, ALLA membership stood at 179, including
   100 regular and 79 student members. Although seemingly a reduction from last year's
   reported membership during the same period, when they stood at 195, a longer durée
   shows that these numbers are consonant with ALLA's membership trends, which have
   generally fluctuated between the 170s and the 190s. As far as I have been able to
   ascertain, ALLA's membership numbers have, for quite some time, remained under 200.

   Concerns regarding low membership numbers have been assuaged by the
   governance amendments recently approved by AAA members. The grant of permanent
   status as one of The Six historically underrepresented constituencies and the decrease in
   membership requirements to 225 give ALLA breathing space and allow it to reallocate its
   energies into programmatic development. We do not take our permanent status for
   granted but, as discussed at our 2008 business meeting, hope to begin investing resources
   into enhancing our resources through student recruitment and mentoring, both in the
   AAA and in our institutions and workplaces. This should minimize the impact of our own
   structural and disciplinary position as a racialized academic constituency whose ability to
   draw members has been circumscribed by our lack of control over institutional
   recruitment. As I reported last year, we have allocated a position in our Executive Board
to a graduate student representative to facilitate outreach and recruitment among rising student cohorts.

2. Finances: ALLA’s finances remain equally steady. The last figures at hand, from September 2008, show a net balance of $17,362.05. Expenditures have been kept modest, entailing only expenses to support our graduate board representative and the prize tokens given to the book award winner[s], typically, a pen and a certificate. As a non-publishing section, ALLA does not suffer the complications that sister sections do. I have, though, throughout my presidency, deliberately kept sections costs and disbursements low—e.g., I don’t draw on its resources for my own support, even for office-related activities—with the hope that we will eventually be able to develop publication projects.

3. Meeting Activities: Activities at the 2008 meeting included the following:

   ALLA-Sponsored Panels:
   
   Anthropologizing the Latino Life Course  11/19/2008, 12:00-1:45 PM
   Living and Learning in the New Latino Diaspora: Discourses of Differentiation in the New Borderlands  11/20/2008, 1:45-3:30 PM
   Performance, Memory, and Production in Transnational Expressive Culture  11/22/2008, 1:45 PM-3:30 PM

   ALLA Special Events:
   Mentoring Event for Students of Color 11/19/2008, 8:00-9:30 PM (with CAE)
   Board Meeting 11/20/2008, 6:15-7:30 PM
   Business Meeting 11/21/2008, 12:15 PM-1:30 PM
   Co-Sponsored Reception (ALLA, ABA, AFA, SANA, SLACA, SOLGA, CAE) 11/21/2008, 8:00-10:00 PM

4. Other meetings: ALLA does not hold meetings outside the AAA annual meeting.

5. Mentorship: In addition to designating an Executive Board position for a graduate student, ALLA regularly sponsors or co-sponsors mentoring sessions and activities for graduate students. For the past two years, we have co-sponsored one such session with CAE. We also supported graduate and undergraduate research efforts through individual member collaborations by facilitating networking among our members and circulating research collaboration requests.

6. Outreach: For the second year in a row, ALLA has co-sponsored a reception with ABA, AFA, SANA, and SOLGA. CAE joined this consortium this year. I also met with the Committee on Minority Issues in Anthropology (CMIA) and the Committee on Practicing, Applied, and Public Interest Anthropology (CoPAPIA) in an attempt, as far as
the first is concerned, to reconstitute a collaborative relationship us, and to initiate them with the second. I committed to remaining as liaison with CoPAPIA and proposed the reinstitutionalization of regular ALLA participation, ex officio, in CMIA’s work. The CMIA initiative included the presidents of ABA and AIA, while the CoPAPIA outreach effort included participants from AD, AE, ABA, APLA, CMA, NAPA, and SMA, bringing ALLA into networks involving a variety of sections.

7. **Awards:** We once again presented the ALLA Book Award, which had two co-awardees this year: Lynn Stephen, for *Transborder Lives: Indigenous Oaxacans in Mexico, California, and Oregon* (Durham: Duke University Press), and Diego Vigil, for *The Projects: Gang and Non-Gang Families in East Los Angeles* (Austin: University of Texas Press). Miguel Díaz-Barriga chaired this year’s committee, which also included Aide Acosta (our graduate student EB representative), Mariela Núñez-Janes, and Christian Zlolniski (last year’s ALLA Book Award honorable mention).

8. **Communications:** Unfortunately, ALLA continued to have problems with electronic communications. Turnover in AAA staff prevented us from establishing a new website and list serve for section members. Incoming president, Carmen Ferrada, attended the webmasters’ meeting to continue working on reconstituting adequate electronic means for ongoing contact among section members.

   AN submissions dropped with the unfortunate resignation, for personal reasons, of its two former co-editors. Fortunately, EB member Luis Plascencia volunteered to assume the section editor position and we look forward to regularizing our contributions.

9. **Governance:** The ALLA EB unanimously ratified the SAWG report and its recommendations. We also successfully elected Anahi Viladrich to the long-dormant secretary position.

**Future Plans or Activities in the next 3-5 years**

Now that ALLA enjoys permanent status, it should be able to redirect its efforts and energies toward institutionalizing a more diverse array of member activities and benefits. This doesn’t mean that it will not continue to deploy recruitment strategies to increase its membership, but that the burden of meeting an arbitrary numerical criterion will no longer drag down the section’s collective energies. Publication efforts remain under discussion, the ALLA book award has been successfully institutionalized, and we are committed to continuing mentoring and collaboration projects, as described above, as well as developing emergent initiatives with CMIA and CoPAPIA.

**Concerns**

I have no recommendations to make simply because, as a SAWG participant, I’m acutely conscious that we will be working with a new governance structure that will require greater and more energetic participation by all section leadership.