Annual Report – 2008

Culture and Agriculture Section

The main activities of the C&A Section for 2007 were (1) the successful search for a new editor for the journal, *Culture & Agriculture*, Kendall Thu; (2) resumption of print publication of the journal; (3) activities to increase the visibility of the section, including the inauguration of a new student paper award, the Robert M. Netting Student Paper Award in Culture and Agriculture; (4) efforts to increase membership in the Section; and (5) the appointment of an AAA Task Force on the World Food Crisis, jointly with the Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition.

Status, Activities and Accomplishments

1. Membership numbers were stable in 2008, for the first time in the past 10 years. Although this is a one-year pattern, it appears significant in relation to the losses of recent years, especially 2004-2005 (-9.2%). The number of members for 2008 per month was 239 +/- 5. An increase in membership continues to be a top priority of C&A. Although C&A cannot be certain about factors that led to the apparent stabilization, a number of activities (described below) were undertaken to increase Section visibility and membership.

2. Financial Balances
   - In previous years, C&A struggled financially to produce issues of *Culture & Agriculture* and to retain one year of operating budget in reserve. In 2008, the finances of the Section improved dramatically, due primarily to the new AAA contract with Wiley-Blackwell. Whereas publication costs for the journal were $14,058 in 2007, the YTD publication revenue (less expense) for 2008 was $6,442. The change in expenses and income in the past year placed the Section in an improved financial situation.
   - The net assets of C&A (end of September 2007) were **$36,204.70**. This was an increase of $12,167.80 from 2007 ($24,036.90). Despite the improved financial situation, C&A recognizes that an increase in number of members and thus subscribers to *Culture & Agriculture* would provide additional financial security.
   - The budget for 2009 is not substantially changed from 2008. Expenditures will remain essentially at the same level, although C&A efforts to increase membership, if successful, would slightly increase revenues.

3. AAA 2008 Invited Sessions/Special Events
   - Invited sessions included:
     - Global Processes, Local Places: Redefining Marginalized Foods
     - “Locating the Factory in the Farm”: Forms of Industrial Agriculture in the Contemporary United States
   - Special events included:
     - Reception for Culture & Agriculture and the Society for the Anthropology of Food and Nutrition (co-sponsored)

4. Spring Meetings: NA
5. Mentorship efforts: None sponsored by C&A

6. Additional outreach efforts
   • Joint membership in the AAA Task Force on the World Food Crisis
   • Co-sponsored lecture and reception, with SAFN
   • Solicitations online for student papers in the Robert M. Netting Award
   • Distribution at the San Francisco meeting of C&A lapel buttons and tote bags

7. Awards
   • Robert M. Netting Student Paper Award in Culture & Agriculture ($500, and for all ‘winners,’ a certificate and a one-year membership in the AAA and C&A)
   • Brian J. Burke and Jessica Piekielek, University of Arizona (co-winners); “Cooperatives, Politics, and Development in rural Paraguay”.
   • Karen Kirner (honorable mention), University of Florida; “Perspectives among Farmers and the General Public of the Economic and environmental Impacts of Biodiesel and Ethanol Developments in Carlisle, PA”.
   • Awards presented 20 November 2007 at the Business Meeting of C&A at the San Francisco AAA meetings

8. The C&A listserv home site was relocated from the University of Texas San Antonio to Southern Utah University, remaining under the supervision of James McDonald. The website was moved from UTSA to Kent University, under the supervision of Michael Fischer. A webmaster, Murray Leaf, was appointed to be in charge of the revision and updating of the website. Current student Board member, Milan Shrestha, was appointed to assist in web development.

9. No Changes in bylaws or governance structure.

**Future Plans or Activities in the Next 3-5 Years**

1. C&A continues to have increase in membership as a primary goal, with special emphasis on increase in student members. Activities toward those ends will include:
   • Continuation of the Netting student paper award.
   • An arrangement to publish graduate student research reports in C&A
   • Letters to previous or ‘lapsed’ members inviting them to rejoin the Section
   • Maintenance of visibility through Section news in the Anthropology Newsletter

2. Plans are underway to expand the number of types of publications in C&A. In addition to adding research reports, the editor (Kendall Thu) plans to increase the number of book reviews, and he has appointed a book review editor (Suzanne Russell).

3. C&A cooperates with the Society for Applied Anthropology to organize sessions and present papers at their annual meetings.

4. The C&A Board has discussed the possibility of merging with other sections, SAFN in particular, but no specific action has been taken.
Concerns and Issues

1. C&A has no particular issues to bring to the Section Assembly.

2. C&A has no particular issues to bring to the AAA Executive Board, although we wish to report again that the number of subscriptions to C&A could be expanded considerably if there were a mechanism for subscription independent of membership in the AAA and C&A. Among AAA Sections, C&A would be in the forefront of interests internationally.

3. C&A has no particular issues to bring to the AAA staff.

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