Section Annual Report: Society for Linguistic Anthropology  
1/2007-12/2008  
Submitted by J. Errington

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Status, activities, and accomplishments
1. Membership numbers as of September 2008:
   Regular: 438, Student: 230, Life: 6
   Our stable membership total suggests that we have identified our natural constituencies.

2. Net assets for Section (as of 9/30/08): $63,978
   Income paid by Wiley-Blackwell for the Journal of Linguistic Anthropology represents an important
   new revenue stream; other costs and revenue sources remain largely stable.

3. AAA invited sessions:
   Global Flows: Hip Hop Cultures, Youth Identities, and the Politics of Language
   Doing and Being: Stance and Identity in Interaction
   Gossip, Rumor, and Scandal: Engaging in Public Matters

4. Not applicable

5. Not applicable

6. Outreach efforts
   --The SLA approved a resolution, proposed by Laura Graham, that issues of language should be
   introduced into the AAA’s “race matters” project.
   -- The addition of a digital media editor to our board makes it possible for SLA submissions to the
   AN newsletter to be posted on our website, and so making them accessible for readers beyond
   the AAA membership (see 8 below)

7. Edward Sapir awards presented for:
   Best book (biennial): Language and social relations, Asif Agha, U. Pennsylvania
   Best undergraduate essay: Fat birds and intercostals: ideologies of science and poetry in
   Bel Canto singing, Lauren Deal, George Washington U.
   Best graduate essay: The circulation of chisme and rumor: gossip, evidentiality
   and authority in the perspective of Latin migrants in Israel
   Alejandro Paz, U. of Chicago
8. Section internal communications

After the 2007 annual meeting, an ad hoc committee was assembled to explore the feasibility of and create an SLA website (http://linguisticanthropology.org/). This was designed by Kerim Friedman, one of our members, on a volunteer basis. At the 2008 meeting the SLA membership voted to establish the new, two year position of Digital Media Editor. Kerim currently serves in this position on a one year, pro tem basis.

Recent inquiries have brought to light discrepancies between those SLA members on our own listserv and those on the AAA list provided to me (see below).

9. Changes in governance structure

The post of Digital Media Editor was created; see 6 and 8.

Future plans or activities in the next 3-5 years

1. Not applicable
2. We will continue to develop the blogging and posting capabilities of the SLA website.
3. The SLA Executive Board needs to begin discussing and soliciting ideas for using a budget surplus which is already considerable, and likely to grow in the future.
4. See 6 above. In addition to the “race matters” initiative, members of the SLA are investigating the possibility of developing a parallel “language matters” initiative.

Chief concerns and issues

A. For the second year running, SLA members were severely disappointed by the results of panel review and scheduling for the 2008 meeting. There were two basic reasons:

1) 34 volunteered papers submitted to the SLA Program Committee were arranged in four panels (in addition to 32 pre-planned panels). All four were rejected by the AAA, despite having been ranked by the SLA Committee higher than several panels which were scheduled. Because no preliminary notice was given to the SLA Program Editor, these decisions could not be queried. Unless the AAA program committee now supercedes the SLA’s as arbiter of panel quality, a basic procedural error needs to be rectified.

2) The SLA program editor’s prior experience led her to seek to avoid scheduling conflicts between panels with overlapping themes by providing a spread sheet of suggested times for panels for all five days of the conference. Because some of those suggestions were ignored, one or two major panels were scheduled in such a way that four or five others were deprived of audiences they would have otherwise attracted. Members of the SLA expressed considerable frustration that they were obliged to choose between interesting but similarly themed panels.

B. Recent reviews show a significant number of SLA members to have email addresses which are not included in the current AAA list for the section (provided to me in 12/08). Besides allowing these names to be included in the AAA list, we would ask that the AAA verify that these persons names are in fact already on other important lists for receiving AAA materials (AN, ballot materials, etc.).