SOCIETY FOR ANTHROPOLOGICAL SCIENCES
Section of the American Anthropological Association
2009 ANNUAL REPORT (1/1/09–12/31/09)

Names and Email Addresses of Section Officers (during 2009)

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Status, Activities, and Accomplishments

1. Membership numbers.

SAS was granted “provisional section” status by the AAA Executive Board on June 21, 2007. In early April, 2008, John Gatewood requested a one-year extension of the “provisional” status to allow more time for SAS to reach the [old] 250-member threshold, and the request was granted. By June, 2008, however, SAS’s membership exceeded the 250-member threshold and became a “regular” section. Subsequently, the AAA Executive Board lowered the minimum threshold to 225, and although SAS’s membership has slowly declined a bit during 2009, it remains above that new threshold. The tables, below, show the month-by-month membership tallies for the Section’s entire history.

2007 – June thru December:

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While it is gratifying that SAS has surpassed the minimum membership necessary for full section status, there is clearly room for us to grow, and that is our intention. For instance, when SAS was an “interest group,” we had 563 AAA members.

Lack of information concerning a section’s membership is one impediment to recruitment. Sections do not routinely receive the names and contact information for their members, just the monthly head-counts and financials. One can obtain such information by special request to Richard Thomas at the AAA Office, but these “dues-paid” lists change on a day-by-day basis, making it difficult to assemble and maintain the appropriate email lists.

Recommendation: At least for the smaller and/or newly-formed Sections, it would be really sweet if AAA sent an additional monthly spreadsheet – one that contained the names and email addresses for both (a) current section members and (b) “lapsed” section members. And, this new spreadsheet should include the membership category of current members (e.g., student versus professional).

2. Financial balances.

Prior to 2009, SAS did not really have a budget, in the sense of both revenues and expenditures. Rather, we just slowly accumulated money from dues (“slowly” because each member’s $10 section dues are released to SAS over twelve months, i.e., at a rate of 83¢ per member per month.) This year we did have some expenditures as well as revenues, because we re-instituted our “Student Paper Prize and Travel Subsidy Competition.”

SAS’s net assets at the beginning of 2009 were $2,320.95. Our account balance as of November 30, 2009, was $4,649.16. Presumably within the next month of two, the student paper prize and travel subsidy awards (totaling to $800.00) will be debited from our account, which would leave something close to $3,900 as the initial balance for 2010.

3. SAS sessions and events at the 2009 AAA Annual Meetings.

Peter Peregrine (SAS, President-Elect), David Kennedy, and Roslyn Negron Goldbarg served as the section’s program committee for the 2009 Annual Meetings in Philadelphia.

Invited Sessions:
- Consensus Analysis: Applications, Advances, and Adjustments (Robert Schrauf and Madelyn Iris, organizers; seven presenters)
- The Continuing Legacy of Melvin Ember (Peter Peregrine, organizer; six presenters)
- Perceptions of Knowledge Production in Cultural Anthropology – Epistemological Traditions and Shifts in the 20th Century (Tamara Neubauer and Murray Leaf, organizers; six presenters)
Workshops:

- Text Analysis: Systematic Methods for Analyzing Qualitative Data  
  (Clarence Gravlee and Amber Wutich)
- Introduction to Social Network Analysis  
  (Jeffrey Johnson and David Kennedy)
- Field Methods in Ethnoecology  
  (J. Richard Stepp)
- Cultural Consensus Theory  
  (Susan Weller)

4. Spring meeting activities.

For the fifth consecutive year, the Society for Anthropological Science held joint winter meetings with the Society for Cross-Cultural Research, an interdisciplinary organization. The SASci portion of the 2009 program – organized by Eric Jones, Amanda Stronza, and Thomas Abel – consisted of 8 paper sessions with 38 presenters and 1 workshop. Session topics included kinship and systems modeling, information transmission, contributions of David Kronenfeld, methods in cognitive anthropology, change in culture and change in science, and relations among psychology, anthropology, and cognitive science.

5. Mentorship efforts.

SAS’s principal mentoring efforts are the “methodological” workshops we routinely sponsor at professional meetings. For instance, SAS-sponsored workshops at the AAA Meetings in Philadelphia constituted 10% of all the workshops given there.

The majority of these workshops are funded by NSF and offered in several venues each year, the principal audience being anthropology graduate students, but also professionals who want to broaden their data collection and analysis repertories. (For further information, see the following “Methods Mall” websites: http://www.qualquant.net/training/scrm.htm, and http://www.qualquant.net/training/.)

6. Additional outreach efforts.

The joint winter meetings with SCCR (see #4, above) are an outreach effort in the sense of helping to reaffirm the central role of anthropology in cross-cultural research. Although SCCR was originally founded by anthropologists, over the decades that organization’s membership has become increasingly dominated by cross-cultural psychologists and education researchers. Thus, by holding joint meetings with SCCR, SASci is bolstering the “anthropological content” of those interdisciplinary meetings and reaching a number of psychologists, educators, and sociologists interested in cross-cultural work.

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1 The “Society for Anthropological Sciences” has two legal identities: (a) SAS, a section of the AAA, and (b) SASci, an independent and international non-profit organization. All members of SAS are automatically members of SASci, but SASci’s membership also includes dozens of people who are not members of the AAA, such as European anthropologists. Technically, the joint spring meetings are between SASci and SCCR; hence, both revenues and expenditures for those meetings are strictly separate from SAS’s AAA-administered budget.
7. Awards presented on behalf of SAS.

2009 SAS Student Paper Prize:

Shane J. Macfarlan (Washington State University)
The Logic of Labor Exchange in a Dominican Village

2009 SAS Travel Subsidy Awards:

Adam H. Boyette (Washington State University)

Michelle J. Escasa (California State University, Fullerton)
In-group Biases of Opposite-sex Religious Members in Trait Rankings in Urban Philippines

Meredith A. Jackson (University of Alabama)
Measuring Cultural Consonance with a Model of a Good Pregnancy in Jalisco, Mexico: Do Women Behave like They Think They Should and How Does It Affect Their Stress Levels?

8. Status and use of Section internal communications.

Michael Fischer (University of Kent, U.K.) maintains the SAS/SASci website [http://anthrosciences.org/] and the Anthro-Sciences listserv [anthro-sciences@jiscmail.ac.uk].

Beginning with the February 2008 issue, SAS has published a monthly column in AN. Stephen Lyon (Durham University, U.K.) is the contributing editor.

By contrast, direct email communication with members has been a problem. The Anthro-Sciences listserv is by subscription and pretty much reserved for discussing substantive topics by members. In October, 2009, John Gatewood asked Richard Thomas (AAA Office) for a special spreadsheet containing not only “current” SAS members, but also “lapsed” SAS members. This is now our mail channel of communication for the section’s “official communications and announcements,” such as announcing our 2009 Student Paper Prize and Travel Subsidy Competition. Of course, both these direct email lists will have to be updated every six months or so (e.g., in April and again in October), because AAA memberships change on a day-to-day basis.

9. Changes in bylaws or governance structure.

None. In a related vein, however, at the SAS Executive Board meeting on December 4, 2009, we reaffirmed our “flat rate” dues of $10 for both professionals and students. (A triennial a review of our section dues is mandated in our bylaws.)
Future Plans or Activities in the Next 3-5 Years

1. Plans aimed at increasing Section membership.

The first recruitment strategy rests on being able to contact individuals via direct email, as well as broadcast communication through AN or the SAS/SASci website. Now that we have the necessary email lists assembled, we will send out announcements to all current and former members concerning the SAS Student Paper Prize and Travel Subsidy competitions. By holding these “student-centered” competitions, we hope to reward students engaged in scientific research and entice more students (and their faculty supervisors) to join SAS.

A second recruitment strategy is to continue sponsoring and advertising the sorts of methodological workshops that we have done in the past.

A third strategy involves working with other, closely related Sections (e.g., EAS, C&A, A&Env, etc.) to encourage even greater cross-membership.

The fourth strategy is to start an online student network. Christina Pomianek, a newly elected student member of SAS’s board, worked on this during 2009 and has about 80 anthropology students involved in the online network.

2. Plans aimed at creating new forms of scholarly communication.

No “new forms” at this time. SAS/SASci is already advertising several e-journals and involved in an Anthro-Wikid project [http://anthrosciences.org/wikid/index.php/SASci_Wikid].

3. Other projects Section has underway.

None.

4. Collaborations with other Sections, Interest Groups, or outside groups.

The only formal collaboration at this time is the joint meetings with the Society for Cross-Cultural Research, discussed above. But, given the high degree of member-overlap between SAS and the Evolutionary Anthropology Society, Culture and Agriculture, and Anthropology and Environment, perhaps we should think about holding jointly sponsored sessions with these kindred-spirit sections in the future.

Concerns and Issues Not Previously Noted

1. Issues for the AAA Executive Board.

Perhaps it is time to reconsider the AAA’s historical practice of “annual” membership being defined on an individual-by-individual basis. It would certainly make Section memberships clearer (more stable lists, less day-to-day variance) and AAA accounting easier if all AAA
memberships were defined with respect to the same calendar dates, e.g., January 1 thru December 31, July 1 thru June 30, September 1 thru August 31, etc. Other professional associations work on a common calendar on this sort. Why not the AAA, especially in light of the increasing role of Sections within the larger organization?

2. Issues for the AAA Staff.

In addition to the monthly financials and membership counts, could Sections also be sent spreadsheet files containing the names, addresses, and emails of their members?

Also, and perhaps this would be just once or twice per year, could Sections be sent spreadsheet files of their “lapsed” members.

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John B. Gatewood
President, SAS (during 2009)
January 31, 2010