Society for Cultural Anthropology  
Section Annual Report for 2010

Names and Email Addresses of Section Officers through the Annual Meeting:

Ex-Officio:

Danilyn Rutherford, President  [druther1@ucsc.edu]  
Brad Weiss, Treasurer  [blweis@wm.edu]  
Jean Langford, Secretary  [langf001@umn.edu]  
Anne Allison and Charles Piot, Journal Editors [aaa@duke.edu, cpiot@duke.edu]  
Michelle Stewart, Student Caucus Representative [mlstewart@ucdavis.edu]

Board Members:

Cori Hayden [cphayden@berkeley.edu]  
Brian Larkin [blarkin@barnard.edu]  
Peter Redfield [redfield@unc.edu]  
Kath Weston [kmw7j@eservices.virginia.edu]

Status, Activities, and Accomplishments

1. Membership

The membership and subscription reports provided by AAA show that SCA and its journal, Cultural Anthropology, remain healthy. The Board continues to monitor membership trends, both in light of the current economic climate and the increased burden on membership fees given the move to Anthrosource. In 2002, we had a total of 1,665 members, our highest to date. At the close of 2009, we were down to 1,388, our lowest number over the past ten years. At the close of 2010, we experienced a rebound in membership up to 1,630. Our membership always increases in the years when we have the SCA spring conference. But other strategies seem to have been successful as well. We now offer multiple categories of membership. We dropped the student rate $12.50 and launched an email outreach campaign to students in advance of the AAA. And we have carried forward a variety of promotional initiatives: membership drives, email blasts, new workshops, a new prize, and, this year, a new field trip at the AAA annual meeting. SCA hosted a wine and cheese reception for our journal at the European Association of Social Anthropologists conference in Maynooth, Ireland, which helped us attract more international members. In the past, we have discussed the possibility of requiring those who submit to our journal to become member; this is not a measure we have yet taken. There seem to be two possible models of membership for the SCA and other sections – the country club model – where one must join to participate – and the public radio model – where one joins because one feels an affinity to the group. So far, the latter model has worked well for us, but we are aware of the need to continue to think creatively about membership in these changing times.

2. Financials
Our overall net balance remains very strong (up to $237,332) as of November 2010 from $226,583 over the previous year). Continuing a trend dating from the first Wiley-Blackwell contract, subscriptions revenues from *Cultural Anthropology* dipped in 2009 from $43,927 to $38,326, a change presumably due to the journal’s bundling with other humanities and social sciences journals in the packages offered to libraries. At the same time, revenue from rights and permissions increased from $13,641 to $27,912 over the same year. Notwithstanding this rosy picture, we are concerned about what the future holds for SCA’s financial health as academic publishing moves towards new models. As in prior years, we remain eager to receive more detailed information on our journal’s production costs and revenues. Although we have taken a conservative approach to our finances in prior years, we feel that it is time to put these resources to use in expanding the scope and nature of what SCA offers its membership and the public at large. We are planning to make significant investments in new initiatives in 2011. (See below.) We plan to update and expand our on-line presence through a new website that is home to both the journal and the society. We are also investigating the possibility of funding a quasi-endowment for our book prize, and other new programs.


a) Invited Sessions

Given SCA’s mission to advance interdisciplinary work across our field, our hallmark panel, “Culture@Large,” annually features a scholar from outside the discipline in an author-meets-critics format. http://sca.culanth.org/meetings/aaa/cultureatlarge/cultureatlarge2010.html. This year’s event with David Theo Goldberg on “The Militarization of the Social” proved a noted success.

Additional invited sessions included: “Empire, Multitude & Commonwealth: Anthropology of the Global and the Radical Political Philosophy of Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt” (with AES), “Deleuze and Anthropology,” “African Futures in Crisis” (with AFAA),” and “History, Memory, Globalization: In Honor of Michel-Rolph Trouillot” (with AES.

b) Innovent

This year, we undertook a new initiative in organizing a field trip, “SCA@Large,” which dealt with the themes raised in our “Culture@Large” event. Shannon Dawdy, a noted archeologist of New Orleans who studies questions of race and place and participated in post-Katrina reconstruction efforts, coordinated our visit to Jackson Barracks and the historic neighborhood of Holy Cross. Colonel Tommy Ryan, who served in the National Guard during Katrina, and Abraham Santa Cruz, an anthropology student who has struggled on behalf of his family and community in the wake of the disaster, shared their perspectives. Interest in this field trip ran high, and participants seemed very enthusiastic about the experience. We are exploring the possibility of organizing a similar field trip in coordination with Culture@Large in Montreal.
c) Special Events

Through the offices of our journal, we sponsored “New Digital Horizons for Cultural Anthropology,” an Editorial Intern Meeting, and an Editorial Board Meeting. We organized five Graduate Student Mentoring Workshops, described below. Following our Business Meeting and Prize Ceremony, we continued our annual tradition of co-sponsoring a cash-bar reception with the AES.

4. Spring Conference Activities

Our biannual conference, “Natureculture,” which was held from May 7-8, 2010 at the La Fonda Hotel in Santa Fe, New Mexico, was strikingly successful. The organizers, Marisol de la Cadena and Brad Weiss, reviewed 240 submissions. A total of 135 people appeared on the program, which featured twenty-four sessions, each with roughly five presenters. SCA has continued to experiment with new conference formats. This year’s conference included a film screening (Sweetgrass) and a food tasting (“The Multispecies Meal”), as well as more conventional presentations. SCA received a total of $4,710 in registration fees before and during the conference.

Following SCA’s interdisciplinary profile, Donna Haraway (UC Santa Cruz) presented the David Schneider Memorial Lecture in conversation with John Law. The program also featured plenary presentations by Debbora Battaglia, Deborah Rose Bird, Judith Farquhar, Stefan Helmreich, and Sarah Whatmore.


SCA has carried over the conversations generated during the conference by featuring text and video from the proceedings on the Cultural Anthropology website. See http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/335.

Preparations are beginning for the next SCA Spring Conference.

5. Mentorship Efforts

SCA was among the first sections to introduce a voting Student Caucus representative to its full-time board. With help from Michelle Stewart (UC Davis), we again offered Student Faculty Mentoring Workshops at the AAA. Faculty members associated with SCA met with groups of students working on topics of shared interest over lunch in the conference hotel. See http://sca.culanth.org/meetings/aaa/roundtables/roundtables2009.html

Our journal’s editorial intern program remains an important avenue for mentoring our student members. Drawn from graduate programs around the country, our editorial interns have
produced virtual issues and supplementary pages providing additional content and teaching suggestions related to particular articles.

A recent virtual issue:

http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/376

A supplemental page:

http://www.culanth.org/?q=node/369

6. Awards Presented

SCA was pleased to present our ninth annual “Cultural Horizons Prize,” awarded each year by a jury of doctoral students for the best article in a given volume of CA, to Nancy Ries (Colgate College). See http://sca.culanth.org/prizes/horizons/horizons.htm. We presented our second annual Gregory Bateson Book Prize, for a distinguished monograph of interdisciplinary character, to Stefan Helmreich (MIT). See http://sca.culanth.org/prizes/bateson/bateson.htm. We are pleased to be expanding the field of book prizes in anthropology with the latter award, as publishers emphasized to how us how anthropology is underserved in comparison with other disciplines in this regard. http://sca.culanth.org/prizes.htm

8. Internal Communications

SCA runs an active Listserver with approximately 2000 subscribers. We limit email flow to approximately 20 messages per year, focusing on public section events. The website is in active use.

9. Changes to Bylaws

In the spring 2010 ballot, SCA proposed a number of bylaw upgrades to reflect best practices over past years. We looked to correct the term for CA editors (from four years to five); to routinize the tradition of having standing editors not vote for their successors, in order to keep the section as open as possible to new networks and new ideas; and to recognize the voting right of our new Student Caucus board representative. Having had an untimely resignation from the board a few years back, and waiting eighteen months before the board slot could be filled again, SCA was eager to institute the practice of turning to the candidate whom a resigning board member initially ran against, to start a new, full term, or a modified term that ensures the best rotation of board responsibilities. All three measures passed with large majorities. For the newly revised bylaws, see http://sca.culanth.org/bylaws.htm.

Future Plans or Activities
1. Increasing Membership

A small but very important campaign for us is to see our journal, which currently has the leading impact factor of all journals published by the AAA, properly indexed. We appreciate the efforts of the Publications Office and W-B to assist us in resolving this problem. But we feel that more could be done. This summer, the journal made it onto the Humanities International Index, but other applications submitted by W-B were turned down. We hope that the Publications Office and W-B will continue to work with us to ensure that *Cultural Anthropology* enjoys the same indexing coverage as other AAA journals.

2. New Forms of Scholarly Communication

SCA anticipates a number of new initiatives through our incoming Editors, Anne Allison and Charles Piot (Duke U). We launched our new Book Review section in the journal as of November 2009, creating another portal into the journal’s content. We established a Facebook page. Through our editorial intern program, we developed additional virtual issues supplemental pages on the *Cultural Anthropology* website touching on such topics as kinship, the anthropology of business, and cosmopolitanism. Our editorial interns developed a page on the *Cultural Anthropology* website devoted to the history of the Multispecies Salon, a multi-year interdisciplinary project involving SCA sponsored panels and special events at the AAA and our biannual meeting and a special issue of the journal.

In the coming year, we hope to build on these activities, which are creating links between the journal’s operations and the activities of the section as a whole. SCA’s major project for 2011 will be launching a state-of-the art joint SCA/*Cultural Anthropology* website, which will explore new venues and forms of scholarly conversation, from video of conference proceedings to short thought pieces on breaking events to online discussions of emerging topics and themes in the discipline. SCA plans to use some of its fund balance to finance website design and development. Discussions have been underway for several months on the best way to proceed. We hope to have a version of the new website up and running by May 2011.

3. Collaboration

SCA has worked to increase collaboration between our student representative and the student representatives from other AAA sections, who have exchanged information and announcements regarding upcoming events.

SCA also collaborated with other sections in the Section Assembly Publishing Advisory Group.

Finally, SCA collaborated with Robert Leopold of the Smithsonian Institute to establish an archiving program for the section.

**Concerns and Recommendations**
• SCA hopes for the Publications Office to be more of an advocate for our publishing concerns. We are grateful for efforts to expand our journal’s visibility by ensuring it is properly indexed in all the relevant venues. But we still feel that more could be done.

• SCA urges a more active role on the part of the Section Assembly and AAA Staff to make use of the Student Caucus. Graduate students can play a central role enhancing the vitality of the AAA and its programs.

*SCA urges the Executive Board to play a pro-active role in considering alternatives to the current AAA publishing arrangement. We understand the financial pressures that are leading to a renewal of the current Wiley-Blackwell contract. But we are eager to see the AAA leadership think creatively about alternative models. Libraries at our home institutions bear the cost of the current contract. So do our students and staff at public universities, who end up shouldering the burden of budget shortfalls through tuition hikes, furloughs, and lay-offs. Advances in technology are leading to changes in scholarly publishing that bear on the very nature and raison d’être of professional organizations like ours. We were pleased by the passage of a resolution in the Section Assembly calling for the establishment of a Section Assembly working group on this issue. We hope that the Executive Board will take seriously any proposals generated through this process.