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Membership:

Provide the most recent membership numbers.
Number of Members: 683

List any factors you think may be increasing or decreasing your Section membership.

Our membership hit a new high water mark in April and June of 2012, when we had 700 members. We expect that it will probably increase again in April, when we hold our biannual Spring conference in Pasadena, Ca from April 11-14. We have had a strong response so far in terms of the numbers of people organizing panels and proposing papers, but of course we will not get up to date numbers which reflect that response for several more months.

As a general pattern, membership in the SAR has grown over the past few years, and is now regularly about 100 members more than it was last year, when the lowest number was 545 members in May 2011. The membership has been over that in every single month in 2012, with the lowest numbers recorded again in May (when it was 627). I think that reflects increasing interest in the section and in the topic of religion. I have also become aware of the fact that an increasing number of our members are anthropologists who teach in Religion departments, so there is a new cross disciplinary trend which is also significant.

Finances:

Provide the most recent financial balances for Section budgets (and publication sponsored budgets).

Financial Balance: 53,981.31

Publication Sponsored budgets.

We have no journal, so this is not applicable. We do have a books series with Palgrave but this does not seem to generate any revenue for the section.

List any factors you think are affecting your Section's finances.
Our section depends very much on membership dues for its revenue. We have tried to keep those dues modest, however, since that encourages new people to join the section. Our membership has increased modestly (by about 100 people, or 15%) over the past year.

Our biennial meeting has the greatest impact not only on membership but finances. We plan to charge the same registration fee in 2013 that we charged in 2011, since we did get a good response at that time and we need to cover our costs. We realize that this is hardly ideal from the point of view of attracting early career scholars and graduate students, who make up about one third of our members. The main hurdle in terms of finances for the biannual meeting is the cost of equipment, especially LCD projectors, since everyone now expects to be able to show images and this is an expense that appears to go up continuously. What we are trying for the Pasadena meeting is borrowing LCD projectors: We will borrow three of them from Fuller Theological Seminary (which is very close to the meeting site) and two others from USC (which is about an hour drive away). We may try to find some other sources (like UCLA or UCSD) of other projectors, but it is a very complicated matter, and will require a certain amount of picking up and dropping off at the last minute.

We may try to do some more workshops which can help to generate revenue for the 2013 AAA meeting, since that proved to be a good strategy in the past. It is also possible that we should ask those authors who wish to submit a book to be considered for the Geertz Prize to register to become members of the society (although this might be complicated for the person supervising the Geertz prize submissions).

Sessions:

List the titles of your Section's AAA meeting invited sessions, co-sponsored sessions, and any special events your Section sponsored or in which it participated.

Session Type: Invited
Session: 3-0775 RELIGIONS AND THEIR PUBLICS: CROSSING BORDERS IN A POST-SECULAR WORLD

Session Type: Invited
Session: 5-0640 SHAMANIC COMMUNITIES DEFENDING AND BRIDGING BORDERS

Session Type: Other
Session: We received 21 panel submissions, eight more than last year. The panels were ranked by the SAR program committee. The AAA program committee eventually scheduled 18 of these. In addition to the panel submissions, we received 46 individually submitted papers, most of which were accepted and then grouped into seven panels. This was six papers less than last year. Out of these seven panels, five were scheduled in the final program. It is more likely to have your paper accepted if it is part of a volunteered panel; individually submitted papers may end up in less coherent panels, which are ranked lower than more coherent and thematically relevant ones.

Awards

List awards presented this year on behalf of your Section.
Award: Geertz Prize
Date: 11/17/2012
Recipient: Julia Chu
Affiliation: Anthropology, University of Chicago

Project/Paper/Accomplishment: SAR has awarded the 2012 Clifford Geertz Prize in the Anthropology of Religion to Cosmologies of Credit: Transnational Mobility and the Politics of Destination in China by Julie Chu (Duke University Press, 2010). In her monograph Chu, an Assistant Professor of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, crafts a masterful depiction of the cosmology of aspiration in Fuzhou, China. She focuses on Fuzhounese efforts to recast their social horizons beyond the limitations of peasant life in China. Transcending utilitarian questions of risks and rewards, she considers the overflow of aspirations in the Fuzhounese pursuit of transnational destinations. Chu attends not just to the migration of bodies, but also to flows of shipping containers, planes, luggage, immigration papers, money, food, prayers, and gods. By analyzing the intersections and disjunctures of these various flows, she explains how mobility operates as a sign embodied through everyday encounters and in the transactions of persons and things. The prize was awarded at the general business meeting of SAR during the annual meeting of AAA.

Meetings

Did your section request a meeting registration waiver or community engagement grant?
Yes

If granted, who/what was it/they used for?
We requested a meeting registration waiver for a scholar from Vietnam, and it was granted, but unfortunately the scholar was still not able to come, so the waiver was not used.

List spring meeting activities
We will hold our Biannual Spring meeting in Pasadena from April 11-14 2013. The deadline for paper and panel submissions is in a few days, so we do not yet know how the numbers will shape up, but there seems to be a lot of interest in the topic.

Mentorship:

Mentorship efforts (at or beyond the AAA meetings) to any of the following (e.g., special activities, funding, awards, guidance/advising on professional matters, etc.)

Undergraduate and/or graduate students.
One of the most significant forms of mentoring offered through the society is our book series with Palgrave. The current editor, Laurel Kendall, solicits manuscripts at the business meeting and she does a superb job in providing feedback and shepherding manuscripts through the process of review, revision, and publication. However, after five years of superb service, she has now finished her term of office and so a major challenge this past year was the search to find a replacement for her. At the moment, we have found two accomplished somewhat younger scholars who will share the editorship. They are Don Seamon of Emory University and Tulasi Srinivas of Emerson University. Their appointments will be announced early in 2013 and they will come to the Spring Biannual Meeting to meet with younger scholars and solicit new book manuscripts.

We will also hold a special round table session at our Biannual meeting to address the
increasingly common situation of anthropologist now teaching in religion departments. This is a situation which may offer challenges to ideas of disciplinary boundaries, career trajectories and the tenure review process. The point of this round table session will be to explore these questions in greater detail.

**Early career scholars.**

The winners of the Geertz Prize are usually early career scholars (although this is not an absolute requirement), and this year---as in the past year---the winner was a first time author, whose book will gain in attention because it was a winner of the prize. The jury that evaluates these books is also made up primarily of early career scholars. We expect that about half of the participants at our Biannual meeting will be early career scholars.

**Independent scholars.**

Most of the activities already mentioned are equally open to independent scholars. We had independent scholars present talks at the biennial meeting, submit books for the Geertz Prize, and submit manuscripts to our book series. We encourage independent scholars to be part of all SAR activities, and they can register at a reduced rate (as compared to those with professional appointments).

**Outreach:**

**Additional outreach efforts (at or beyond the AAA meetings) to other sections, interest groups, and scholarly societies, government agencies, public education/community engagement, and underrepresented minorities.**

One perennial issue for scholars of both anthropology and religion is that the AAA meets at about the same time as the American Academy of Religion, so people have to choose which meeting to attend. This year, we made efforts to invite relevant scholars in Religious Studies to participate in the biennial meeting and hope to continue to work toward that goal. Our activities do include many underrepresented minorities and often also members of the community.

**Communications:**

**Status and use of Section internal communications such as a website, list serve, or newsletter (if applicable): Please list internal communication tools you use and what they are used for.**

We have a website (http://www.aaanet.org/sections/sar/) and webmaster, Jordan Haug. On the website we provide general information about the society (bylaws, officers and contact information), our Geertz Prize (especially information about deadlines and submission procedures, as well as a list of prizewinners, and a photograph of the winner receiving the prize at the AAA), the biennial meeting (including inks for registration, information on hotels and transport, and a preliminary program).

We also have a list-serve, that is used by members to post announcements about matters of potential interest: books recently published, conferences being organized, sessions for the AAA or the biennial meeting that seek additional members are especially common. Not all members of the SAR are on the list serve. People must contact our webmaster to be added, but the list-serve is our primary means of communicating with our members.

On the other hand, not everyone on the list serve is a current member. To contact members to remind them to vote or to register for the biennial meeting, we use both the list-serve and a blast from the AAA (which also does not end up going to all of our members).
Finally, we have a facebook page. Right now, people can merely "like" us. However, we plan to make use of it to post other relevant information, such as announcements of events, prizes, and similar information, including links to other relevant pages and materials concerned with religion.

 Governance:

 Changes in bylaws or governance structure.

 None. One suggestion from last year was to invite the President Elect to have a more formal role in the year before he or she assumes the office. This year, our President Elect Joel Robbins has volunteered to be the Program Chair for the Biennial meeting in Pasadena. At the present, this is a voluntary commitment, and not part of our by laws, but it could become more formalized in the future.

 Initiatives:

 What Initiatives does your Section have underway or planned for the coming year: membership, publication annual meeting, mentorship, other?

 Our webmaster is working now to upgrade the website and use new WordPress software, which should make it easier to update. We also hope to reach out more to anthropologists teaching in other departments and to religious studies scholars.

 Ask AAA:

 Please tell us what your chief concerns and issues are, especially if they are not previously noted.

 What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the Section Assembly Executive Committee (SAEC)? Please be specific.

 Last year, SAR President Margaret Wiener noted:

 We are concerned that sections such as ours that do not have journals are frequently ignored in discussions about section finances. We are often concerned about our budget. Our publication series serves those interested in the anthropology of religion but involves a considerable amount of uncompensated work. We want to keep such issues relevant as the Executive Committee proceeds with its work.

 These concerns remain relevant, since even though our membership has increased a bit, we still face many concerns about finances. It is unfortunate that the editor of the Palgrave series does not receive any compensation. We want to draw these continuing issues to the attention of the Executive Committee.

 What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Executive Board? Please be specific.

 The Executive Board is currently re-thinking its publications plans, and the whole revenue model that the AAA uses. We hope that a medium sized society like our own without a journal will be considered in these plans.

 What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Staff? Please be specific.
As an incoming President, I had some concerns about how to reach members who are not part of our listserve, since the blast messages from the AAA often seem to have lists of members which are not up to date.