

AAA President's report

December 2017

Alisse Waterston

AAA: Year of Challenges and Accomplishments

This report marks the close of my term as AAA president. I take this moment to thank AAA members for entrusting me with the important responsibility of guiding our Association over the past two years. It has been an incredible experience—definitely challenging, enormously exciting, and an opportunity to learn about and negotiate power and politics as well as affirming the importance of doing one's homework on any issue, and of *really* listening to and appreciating alternative perspectives. That said, I extend my deepest gratitude to the **dedicated professional staff** under Ed Liebow's capable management and to all the **anthropologists who volunteer** their time and energy to the Association. In my report last year I stated—and will repeat here—that I wish *all* AAA members could be flies on the wall to see staff and volunteers doing their best, day in and day out, coming to wise decisions on every internal and external issue after thorough study and deliberation, and enacting these decisions with care, energy and a deep sense of responsibility. Ed is our tireless Executive Director who makes himself available 24/7 to ensure the smoothest possible running of an association that I believe is essential to the sustenance and survival of the discipline of anthropology.

The new year began at the heels of the 2016 US presidential election and the ushering in of an administration that in its statements and actions attack the value of critical thinking and scientific knowledge, constitute threats to human rights, human dignity and academic freedom. There was a charged atmosphere during last year's Annual Meeting in November (2016) as members discussed the US national election and its implications. Since then, AAA staff and leadership have prepared for and acted upon threats to anthropology, anthropologists and the Association. Despite the deep sense of uncertainty, the Association has moved forward on several fronts, seeing some projects come to successful conclusion, the preparations for others making good progress, and plans for a productive future in the works.

In what follows is a summary of the key activities we have engaged over the past year in relation to AAA goals and processes. Where relevant, I note our accomplishments, and identify challenges and opportunities before us. The key goals related to: 1) public engagement and public presence; 2) publishing; 3) external relations; 4) internal relations: members, programs, meetings and sections; 5) governance and programming structures; and 6) AAA's financial state.

1. Public Engagement and Presence

1.1. Advocacy

In the period between November 30 2016- October 26, 2017, AAA has engaged in over **40 advocacy efforts** generally in the form of letters and public statements on issues brought to the Association often by members. These efforts reflect the kinds of concerns that many members care about, including harmful and draconian state policies and practices, violations of human rights, academic freedom and indigenous rights, and the systemic and structural violence of racialization. As always, AAA's advocacy efforts are in keeping with the discipline's core values and the Association's established processes.

In challenging times, it is especially important for the Association to be vigilant (aware and informed), and to take action at appropriate times and in appropriate ways. This requires us to conduct due diligence, consult with relevant stakeholders, and be discerning in the actions we take, requisites not always easy to keep in balance.

AAA continues to face challenges in this area. How do we balance priorities and resources when advocacy requires large expenditures of time, human resources, money, and political capital?

Also, it is not uncommon for members to contact us inquiring about AAA plans of action on particular issues when more often than not, AAA has already acted on that issue. How do we drive members to the AAA website, *AN* online and print, and other social media for up-to-date information on AAA advocacy efforts? Put another way, here I respectfully request that members make a habit of visiting the **AAA website** and the Association's other mediums of communication to keep up to date with the very many actions and activities engaged by the Association. For those who want to get more actively involved, please roll up your sleeves and participate in **AAA's Time to Take Action** effort.

This year's advocacy efforts included developing and enacting a collaborative, ongoing project called **Understanding Race After Charlottesville** to combat misperceptions about race and racism, affirming **AAA's commitment to UNESCO**, demanding the US Congress to swiftly enact **DACA legislation** to protect undocumented youth, joining forces for the **April 2017 March for Science**, objecting to legislation aimed at closing **Central European University** (Hungary), reiterating our condemnation of the **Executive Order banning immigrants** (related statements in January, March, May, June, August, and September) and taking various steps to

protect science funding and academic freedom, including establishing the **Rapid Response Network on Academic Freedom**. Over the past year, **AAA's advocacy efforts** include:

- Anthropologists: Time to Take Action!
- AAA Remains Committed to UNESCO
- AAA Urges Congress to Swiftly Secure DACA Legislation
- AAA Grieves for Victims in Las Vegas
- Adding Star Power to the Fight for the NEH
- Travel Ban Remains Unjustified
- Phasing Out DACA is a Grave Injustice
- Hurricane Harvey Donations
- AAA Advocates for Academic Freedom in Thailand
- Congressional Action Alert on Immigration
- Charlottesville Aftermath: AAA Resources on Race
- Latest Travel Ban Decision Cause for Concern
- A Just and Sustainable Climate for All
- AAA Condemns Senseless Gutting of Science In White House Budget
- AAA Voices Concerns About Proposed Visa Vetting Plan
- Next Steps in the Fight to #SavetheNEH
- AAA Stands in Solidarity with Brazilian Anthropologists
- What the Spending Deal Means for Heritage Preservation
- Signing on with Howard University Law Professors In Support of International Refugee Assistance (Amicus Brief)
- Joining Forces with March for Science
- Condemning Legislation Aimed at Closing Central European University in Hungary
- Slamming Trump's Reversal on Climate Policy
- Requesting the Release of Dr. Ahmet Yükleven
- Issuing a Statement on Revised Travel Ban
- Endorsing our medical anthropologists offering to help fix health care in America
- Joining Forces forming the Cultural Heritage Advocacy Coalition
- Opposing the Congressional Review Act Resolution (H.J. Res. 44)
- Calling on Anthropologists to "Take Action – Come to our Meeting in D.C."
- Calling for Immediate Reversal of Executive Order Banning Immigrants
- Offering Selected Information Resources Regarding January 27, 2017 Executive Order Banning Immigrants and Refugees

- Relaying a Message from the National Humanities Alliance: Yes, Your Emails to Congress Matter
- Standing in Solidarity with Standing Rock
- Endorsing a Resolution Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman, and Degrading Treatment or Punishment
- Creating a Rapid Response Network: Academic Freedom
- Strengthens Commitment to Protect Academic Freedom
- Calling on Museums to Mobilize Now
- Reaffirming Commitment to Academic Freedom
- Helping Preserve Federal Funding for the Humanities
- Encouraging President Obama to Create Bears Ears National Monument
- Issuing a Resolution in the Wake of the 2016 National Elections

1.2. Anthropology and Policy Workshop

On May 15 and 16, 2017, AAA hosted a policy workshop organized by anthropologist Eben Kirksey with support from the Wenner-Gren Foundation. The workshop brought together over a dozen scholars with expertise in several key policy areas to: 1) identify key policy issues requiring the input and advocacy of anthropologists (e.g., immigration, race, the environment, health disparities, cultural heritage and social justice); 2) provide information, training and experience on engaging policy makers in Washington, DC; and 3) facilitate the ability of individual anthropologists coming to Washington for the Annual Meeting to engage policy makers.

1.3. Update on Israel-Palestine

In keeping with the Executive Board's 2016 **courses of AAA action** concerning Israel-Palestine, the following reports on follow-through activities:

- The Committee for Human Rights (CfHR) issued its first monitoring report in December 2016: **AAA Committee for Human Rights Monitoring Report on Israel-Palestine**.
- Committee for World Anthropologies developed **The Israel-Palestine Conflict Bibliography**, designed as an online "living" resource (people can add to the bibliography), posted on March 8, 2017.
- **Palestine Israeli Fellowship Fund for Travel** (PIFFT). We engaged in aggressive fund raising and reached the minimum needed to issue an award in 2017. The **call for applications** for the 2017 PIFFT award was posted in May, and AAA is delighted to name

Rami Salameh of Birzeit University and the Graduate Institute in Geneva as the very first PIFFT awardee.

- The Middle East Section president Emilio Spadola provided feedback on the proposed book donation/sharing initiative. Subsequently, we clarified that AAA had requested MES both assess and take on the project, assuming they deemed it feasible (last correspondence was March 7, 2017).

1.4. Public Education Initiative

This AAA Public Education Initiative “World on the Move: 100,000 Years of Human Migration” is more relevant than ever. It represents what AAA can do so well: bring anthropological voices into the public conversation on complex and difficult-to-discuss topics. In his report, Executive Director Ed Liebow details developments with “World on the Move,” including successful summer 2017 events as part of the **Smithsonian Institution’s Folklife Festival**.

1.5. Working Group on Racialized Police Brutality/Extrajudicial Violence

In, 2017, Orisanmi Burton and Sarah Ihmoud replaced David Simmons and Marla Frederick as co-chairs of the Working Group (through 2017). Keri Brondo has generously arranged for graduate student Austin Wyatt to assist the working group. We look forward to seeing the results of this important endeavor reported at the 2017 Annual Meeting.

1.6. Social Media

AAA’s social media effort is enormously successful in terms of timeliness and consistency in issuing messages and in the reach of AAA’s platforms. Members are encouraged to follow and/or contribute to **@AmericanAnthro** (Twitter, 29,869 followers as of November 1), the **AAA Facebook page** (78,093 page likes as of November 1), and the **AAA blog**. Following the Annual Meeting, the twitter handle **@anthropez** with 1,848 followers (as of November 1) will be handed over to AAA incoming President Alec Barker.

2. Publishing

2.1. New Publishing Agreement

This year, the Executive Board authorized AAA Executive Director Ed Liebow to execute a publishing partnership agreement with Wiley; the agreement was finalized and announced in early March 2017. The agreement came after a deliberate and thoughtful 18-month process. For the period January 2018-December 2022, Wiley will: continue to publish AAA’s 23 journals;

host and provide further developments to AnthroSource, including “single sign on” for members; provide for an annual innovation fund; provide sponsorship funds for **Anthropology Day** for each year of the contract; and provide a number of editorial support enhancements to be implemented in 2018, including complimentary editorial software and training as well as the development of a subject-heading taxonomy to improve search functionality. In addition, the new publishing agreement provides greater royalties to the Association: royalty revenues over the term of new contract will increase by up to 20 percent compared with what AAA earned over the preceding contract term.

The terms of the contract enable the Association to support the “portfolio principle,” which means that all 20+ publications will be supported regardless of the ability of any individual journal to be self-supporting. AAA’s publishing program, governed by the four values of quality, breadth, accessibility, and sustainability, provides opportunities for anthropologists to disseminate scholarly knowledge; receive valuable credit for their professional work because they publish in credible outlets; and participate in supporting a community resource. To be a member of the AAA community, the Association offers a sliding scale membership fee. Among other benefits, members receive the full portfolio of AAA publications—more than 300,000 full-text articles from AAA journals, newsletters, bulletins, and monographs. For more on AAA’s publishing program, members may consult the **AAA Publishing FAQs**.

2.2. Author Agreement

During the May (2017) Executive Board meeting held at AAA offices in Arlington, the Executive Board voted to review the AAA author agreement and address how to make the agreement best meet the needs of the field considering ever changing technological and market changes, the needs and interests of authors, and the needs of the publishing program/portfolio as a whole. The ACC Working Group, comprised of Jillian Cavanaugh (ACC Chair), Anna Agbe-Davies (EB and Section Assembly representative), Lynne Goldstein (PFC representative), Deb Thomas (AA Editor), and Janine Chiappa McKenna (AAA Director of Publishing) are currently in process of conducting this review.

2.3. Repository

During the May (2017) Executive Board meeting, the Executive Board also voted to establish a discipline-specific repository. In order to ensure that the repository will be a fully functioning, easy-to-use resource for the discipline, the Publishing Futures Committee (PFC) is in process of gathering information (including on costs, functionality and potential providers) on how to build such a repository. AAA authors may post their article on their personal or institutional website

(Note: this does not include a page on Academia.edu, ResearchGate, or any other commercial site), and may post the postprint manuscript draft (i.e., manuscript draft post peer-review) or uncorrected page proofs of article on free (i.e., non-commercial), discipline-specific public servers of preprints and/or postprints. An institutional repository is a server within one's own college or university or library that allows researchers a venue to post their research for their colleagues to access. Note also that AAA contributed to the development of the Anthropology & Archaeology Research Network (part of SSRN), prior to its acquisition by Elsevier. When the author agreement was drafted, AAA considered AARN to be within the author agreement; now, however, the conditions have changed and so will AAA policy.

2.4. AAA Guidelines for Tenure and Promotion Review: Communicating Public Scholarship in Anthropology

In May 2016, I launched this initiative by naming a working group to develop guidelines on new forms of writing, publishing and communicating public scholarship in anthropology. The working group gathered data on existing guidelines, assessed the state of tenure and promotion expectations in anthropology, examined guidelines produced by sister societies, reviewed a sampling of relevant literature, developed the guidelines, and had them reviewed by a diverse group of 22+ anthropologists. In late April (2017), the Executive Board endorsed the guidelines that are available on the AAA website alongside AAA "T&P" guidelines produced by CoPAPIA (for scholarship in the realm of practicing, applied and public interest anthropology) and by SVA (for ethnographic visual media).

2.5. Open Anthropology

Open Anthropology continues to provide a means of "*opening up*" anthropology by: bringing anthropology into the public conversation about critical social issues and policy debates; focusing on a timely theme, offering a selection of articles relevant to contemporary concerns; introducing nearly the full archive of AAA journals, past and current—the online stacks—to readers who may not even know these exist; making content available free on the public Internet for a period of time; and opening up anthropology to the non-specialist reader by drawing attention to key issues or themes raised in the selected articles.

In May 2017, the Executive Board extended the terms of *Open Anthropology*'s dedicated editors, Jason Antrosio and Sally Han, for another three years. The titles of Volume 5 (2017) are:

- **Vol 5 (3): Open Anthropology Matters**
- **Vol 5 (2): Music – Anthropology – Life**

- **Vol 5 (1): Advancing Age: Anthropological Perspectives on Being & Growing Older**

3. External Relations

3.1. Sister Societies

We continue to foster relationships with sister societies in the US and internationally. Among our activities, we have participated in panel and board/committee meetings, attended or will attend conferences and otherwise have been available to discuss and plan ways to work together. In 2017, AAA participated in meetings held with the following societies:

- National Humanities Conference (Ed Liebow; November 2017)
- EPIC/Ethnographic Praxis in Industry Conference (Ed Liebow; October 2017)
- *Sociedad Mexicana de Antropología* (Ed Liebow; October 2017)
- American Council of Learned Societies (Matthew Durlington substituting for Monica Heller; Ed Liebow; May 2017)
- IUAES/WCAA/CASCA (Alisse Waterston; May 2017)
- American Alliance of Museums (Alec Barker and Ed Liebow; May 2017)
- American Association of Physical Anthropologists (Lorena Madrigal; April; 2017)
- American Educational Research Association (Ed Liebow; April 2017)
- Central States Anthropological Society (Ted Hamann; April 2017)
- International Association of STM Publishers (Ed Liebow; April 2017)
- American Ethnological Society (Alisse Waterston; March 2017)
- Consortium of Social Science Associations (Ed Liebow; March 2017)
- National Humanities Alliance (Ed Liebow; Alec Barker; Alisse Waterston; March 2017)
- Society for American Archaeology (Tricia McAnany, AD president on AAA's behalf; March 2017)
- Society for Applied Anthropology (Alec Barker; March 2017)

In his Executive Director's report, Ed details some exciting partnerships and collaborations, including AAA's participation in the UN Climate Change Conference in Bonn (November 2017) and plans for a joint AAA/African Studies Association conference in South Africa (2018).

3.2. Cultural Heritage

AAA is committed to developing strategies, partnerships, and initiatives to better address cultural heritage issues and confronting challenges to heritage and identity worldwide. AAA works with Cultural Heritage Partners, a government relations consultant, to monitor and advocate for cultural heritage safeguards. In addition, AAA, in collaboration with three other scholarly

societies, has formed the **Coalition for American Heritage** to help protect funding for historic preservation, and research in history, archaeology, anthropology, and the social sciences.

At this year's Annual Meeting, Elizabeth Chilton, chair of the Working Group on Cultural Heritage organized a Presidential roundtable to discuss AAA's guiding principles for cultural heritage with a group of cultural heritage experts and the audience. President-elect Alec Barker is in talks with Antonio Arantes of the *Universidade Estadual de Campinas* (Brazil) on AAA's participation in several sessions on cultural heritage at the 18th World Congress of the IUAES to be held in Florianopolis, Brazil in July 2018.

3.3. Advocating for Anthropology

In his Executive Director report, Ed Liebow describes activities and efforts AAA has supported so that elected officials become more aware of the value of anthropology and to ensure that anthropology programs are funded. The organizations with which AAA is affiliated are COSSA (The Consortium of Social Science Associations), the National Humanities Association (NHA), and Cultural Heritage Partners.

4. Internal Relations: Members, Programs, Meetings and Sections

4.1. Membership

AAA Membership Development Manager Haleema Burton reports that AAA's membership has remained steady since 2016. This puts us right in the middle of general membership trends, since across other associations about half report a membership increase, while half report that membership is steady or declining.

AAA is in process of evaluating the membership dues structure (sections and association-wide dues) with assistance from a professional consultancy that specializes in this area. The consultants will base their recommendations on results of a member survey, a competitive (comparative) analysis, and financial modeling assessment.

4.2. Labor and Employment Issues

4.2.1. The Working Group on Anthropology Non-Tenure Track Faculty Employment

Alec Barker, AAA's VP/PE, chairs the "Working Group on Anthropology Non-Tenure Track Faculty Employment" that launched in September 2016 and includes Rayna Rapp, Chair of the Committee on Labor Relations and Lavanya Murali Proctor (Lawrence University). The Working Group is charged with recommending ways the Association can contribute to reducing employment vulnerability of non-tenure track faculty in anthropology, including ways to monitor

academic employment trends, identify vulnerable categories of anthropologists, clarify the causes and risk factors associated with employment vulnerability, and collect information about best practices for mitigating such vulnerability. In his VP/PE report, Alec provides an update on the working group's activities and accomplishments, including the launch of [AAA's online community](#), a platform for contingent faculty to share experiences, strategies, and practices with one another; AAA staff and leadership also participate to learn about the most pressing issues and enable AAA to better support anthropologists in precarious employment situations.

4.2.2. Anthropology Information Central

In an effort to better assess the twin issues of contingent labor and the labor market for anthropologists, Daniel Ginsberg, AAA's Manager of Education, Research & Professional Development, has issued the following reports based on a member survey conducted in 2016:

- **Report #1: Survey Respondents At-A-Glance**
- **Report #2: AAA Members Outside the Academy**
- **Report #3: Faculty Members, Tenure and Precarity**
- **Report #4: Students Look Toward the Job Market**
- **Report #5: Sexual Harassment: A Stubborn Fact of Anthropologists' Work Life?**

Anthropology Information Central also offers secondary research reports, such as the following produced in September 2017:

- **A Review of Undergraduate Learning Outcomes in Anthropology**
- **Trends in Anthropology Bachelor's Degrees: A Review of Federal Data**

4.3. The AAA Annual Meeting

The **116th AAA Annual Meeting** under the intelligent leadership of Executive Program Chair Agustin Fuentes, has shaped up to be an exciting and successful gathering. The theme, "Anthropology Matters," and location, Washington, DC, are strong draws. In the call for papers, Agustin urged anthropologists to "unite in our diversity, embrace difficulty, be vibrant messmates, and promote the relevance of what anthropology is and does."

This year, AAA used a new operating system for paper and panel submissions for the Annual Meeting. Unfortunately, there were more kinks to the system than expected. To help accommodate the situation, the submission deadline was extended by four days (Tuesday, April 18, 2017). The operating system is currently under evaluation; we expect the issues will be

identified and resolved. These issues do not appear to have had a significant impact on submissions.

The thousands of anthropologists who will attend this year's meeting have answered Agustin's call "to be innovative, fearless, generous and challenging." To use Agustin's words, Washington DC *is* the place to be from November 29 to December 3. The program is fabulous--and relevant, with new innovations in presentations, formats, and relevant topics. Some highlights are:

- Opening night event **Bending the Arc of Change: A Conversation with Paul Farmer and Jim Yong Kim.**
- A Native Welcome Ceremony.
- **21 Executive Sessions** in three themes: Political and Environmental (In)justice; Biologies and Biopolitics; and Anthropological Knowledge Creation and Dissemination.
- Nine "late-breaking" sessions and an extensive poster presentation gallery in response to a late summer call for panels on timely subjects.
- The presidential lecture I've titled "**Four Stories, a Lament, and an Affirmation.**"

The total number of events at this year's Annual Meeting is 1,142, with 5,602 registrants (as of October 30).

4.4. Sections

The Section Assembly Executive Committee (SAEC) met at AAA's offices (March 2017). Section Assembly Convenor Rick Feinberg will provide an update on the status of activities, proposals and plans. The Executive Board in April (2017) endorsed the appointment of Ellen Lewin to the Executive Board/Section Assembly Executive Committee seat until the conclusion of the annual meeting in 2018.

5. Governance and Programming Structures

5.1. The Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP)

Alec Barker, AAA VP/PE led the effort to revise the SIP, which is detailed in the Vice-President's report. The Executive Board adopted the **Strategic Implementation Plan (May 2017).**

5.2. Members' Programmatic, Advisory and Advocacy Committee

Trish Redeker-Hepner, Ramona Perez, and Keri Brondo comprise the leadership team of AAA's new standing **Members' Programmatic Advisory and Advocacy Committee (MPAAC).** They

have been busy developing a work plan and other procedures in preparation for MPAAC's launch at the close of the 2017 Annual Meeting. In early October (2017) Trish posted a status update on the AAA blog titled *MPAAC is Ready to Roll!*. The full roster of MPAAC members is as follows:

Chair

Tricia Redeker Hepner

Co-Chairs

Keri Brondo

Ramona Perez

Ethics Seat

Chad Morris

Lise Dobrin

Gender Equity Seat

M. Gabriela Torres

Dianna Shandy

Human Rights Seat

Michael Vicente Perez

Jaymelee Kim

Labor Seat

Daniel Segal

Lavanya Murali Proctor

Minority Issues Seat

Antoinette Jackson

Richard Meyers

Practicing/Professional Seat

Mary Butler

Susan Mazur-Stomen

Public Policy Seat

Katherine Lambert-Pennington

Thurka Sangaramoorthy

Student Seat

Taapsi Ramchandani

Jennifer Halliday

World Anthropologies

Leila Rodriguez

Chandana Mathur

6. Financial state

Treasurer Ted Hamann will provide a report on the financial state of the Association.

Over the past year, motions submitted by the Finance Committee and passed by the Executive Board are as follows:

- Establish the Yolanda T. Moses Travel Fund for the Minority Dissertation Fellowship Award recipient.
- Support Cultural Heritage Coalition advocacy
- Allocate \$190,500 from the operating reserves for six opportunity projects in 2017, including two that were forwarded from 2016.
- Establish a quasi-endowment of the Society for the Anthropological Sciences (SAS) to for the H. Russell Bernard Graduate Student Paper prize.
- Support the Association for Feminist Anthropology to form the initial corpus for a Quasi-Endowment to support the Michelle Rosaldo Book Prize.

In closing, I offer links to the Reports from the President published over the course of my term:

- [**In Praise of Who We Are and What We Do**](#)
- [**On Freedom, Academic and Otherwise**](#)
- [**For What It's Worth**](#)
- [**Reflections on Things Past and Present**](#)
- [**Doing Our Bit**](#)
- [**Getting Proximate on Israel Palestine**](#)
- [**We Are Everywhere**](#)
- [**Anticipations**](#)
- [**Envisioning AAA**](#)

Respectfully submitted,



Alisse Waterston, President

Presidential Scholar and Professor of Anthropology

City University of New York, John Jay College of Criminal Justice

November 1, 2017