Economic Anthropologists Join World’s Largest Professional Anthropology Association

The American Anthropological Association (AAA) is pleased to announce that the Society for Economic Anthropology (SEA) has merged with the AAA. The merger of the two groups became official on March 13 of this year, and former SEA members will now form a new section within the AAA, the Society for Economic Anthropology.

In December, 2012, the membership of the American Anthropological Association voted to incorporate the Society for Economic Anthropology. In May of last year, SEA President, Katherine Browne formally proposed a merger of the two organizations by which SEA would cease to exist as a separate corporation and be folded into AAA as an unincorporated section of the association.

The SEA is a group of anthropologists, economists and other scholars who are interested in the connections between social and economic life. In presenting the vote to with members, AAA President Leith Mullings noted, “This merger presents an opportunity for the AAA to expand its reach across an interdisciplinary and international spectrum, affirming the unique insights of a four field tradition”. Other benefits include the acquisition of a highly respected publication

The merger converts the highly respected SEA monograph series into a peer-reviewed journal, Economic Anthropology, to launch in January 2014 as the newest publication in the AAA publishing portfolio. Economic Anthropology expands the AAA’s coverage of issues that connect social and economic anthropology. The journal is devoted to publishing scholarship concerned with economic aspects of local and global life such as "urbanization", "inequality" and "social change." Economic Anthropology will also publish scholarship that addresses interconnections between scales of micro and macro study, and transformations in domains that include economic realities.

As a new AAA section, SEA will continue to offer its three prizes, the Halperin Memorial Fund, the Harold Schneider Prize, and the SEA Book Prize. The SEA Rhoda Halperin Memorial Fund is a competitive annual prize awarded to three Ph.D. students in anthropology who demonstrate the late Dr. Halperin’s love of economic anthropology and her concern for people living on the margins. Students engaged in economic research focused on social exclusion and poverty are provided small dissertation research grants ($1,000) to help them develop their topics and proposals, and subsequent travel money ($500) to present their findings at the Society for Economic Anthropology annual spring conference. The Harold K. Schneider Prize Competition is an annual student paper competition established by the Society for Economic Anthropology to honor its first president and to encourage new scholars in the field of economic anthropology. The SEA Book Prize is awarded every two years to recognize the single best publication in the field of economic anthropology.

This new AAA section will also continue to hold an annual conference each spring. The 2013 SEA Annual Meeting will be held at Washington University in St. Louis, MO from April 11-14. This year’s conference brings together researchers from all fields of anthropology as well as other social sciences to present and discuss research that engages with the broad theme of inequality.

SEA President Browne, a professor of anthropology at Colorado State University, is excited for this shift within the society. “Thanks to the support and resources of the AAA, this merger prepares the way for our beloved SEA to expand its scholarly reach and visibility, and to connect to a broader public. We could not be more pleased about our new status” Browne notes.

AAA is pleased to welcome the Society for Economic Anthropology as one of its 40 sections.

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Founded in 1902, the American Anthropological Association is the world's largest professional organization of anthropologists and others interested in anthropology, with an average annual membership of more than 10,000. The Arlington, VA – based association represents all specialties within anthropology – cultural anthropology, biological (or physical) anthropology, archaeology, linguistics and applied anthropology.