

Ethics and the Anthropological Profession in the 21st Century

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This November at the AAA Annual Meeting, we anticipate that the membership will review a proposed revision to the AAA Code of Ethics and begin a two-year code review process. This article presents some critical background for that discussion from the point of view of applied, professional or practicing anthropologists. Anthropology as a discipline has grown beyond its university-based roots and contemporary practitioners are expanding its reach through applied and professional work.

where revealing this information would be illegal, constitute a violation of accepted Institutional Review Board standards or put respondents in danger. In contracts with the federal government, in contrast to grants, there generally exists a clause that gives the government ownership of materials produced. This clause (Federal Acquisition Regulations 52.227-14) gives the government the right to control publication and dissemination of the results. The government may wish to have the results disseminated; however there are situations where the findings will be withheld.

Many museum professionals today work in legally and ethically complex situations. For example, during consultations to implement the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA), research is often conducted with tribal elders and other cultural experts who share culturally privi-

be to craft a Code of Ethics that lays out clear philosophical principles and methods for individual engagement with the anthropological community. The AAA membership requires a means to engage in thoughtful discussion of the roles of our discipline and how we ethically conduct our important work, and we support current collaborative efforts to revise the Code of Ethics that take into consideration the diverse needs of our disciplinary community.



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ANTHROPOLOGY WORKS

A large number of anthropology graduates are leaving the academy and taking the skills of anthropology to the world with a vision of their utility. The challenge that the discipline and AAA face as this trend continues to gain momentum is to remain relevant to an increasingly diversified, sophisticated and multidisciplinary constituency.

In 1971 anthropology was still clearly a discipline that owed its existence to an academic context. The AAA Code of Ethics that was developed then reflected that context. By 1998 when the code was re-examined, the transformation of the discipline was well underway. From those discussions came the language that embraced both academic and professional anthropologists while ensuring that the essential elements of anthropological ethics were well understood. This language has guided both the AAA and the training of new anthropologists for the past nine years. Throughout our continued development, we have been a largely self-regulating, self-conscious discipline with clear concern for our subjects, respondents and clients and for the clarity with which we report their information, even as we have grown well beyond the academic ground from which we developed.

The world of anthropological work is varied and complex. In the coming period as the AAA Code of Ethics is reviewed, it is essential that this complexity is understood. The following are a few examples of such complexity drawn from the professional, applied and academic worlds.

The federal government, many foundations and non-profit organizations have legitimate uses for anthropological skills and analysis and yet must retain control of the information developed. This is particularly the case when the work involves access to highly personal or sensitive data about an individual or group

leged information, which is vital for understanding a NAGPRA claim but is not intended for public consumption or even to be shared with other tribes. Research and consultation results published in the Federal Register often delicately balance providing enough information to justify repatriation while respecting tribal traditions that dictate how some cultural information is not intended to circulate in the public sphere.

Anthropologists also work through contracts that require clearance from international unions in order to obtain research information. They serve as expert witnesses for plaintiffs seeking redress from the public health and quality of life consequences of industrial meat production facilities requiring the development of reports for use by plaintiffs' attorneys and for use in the courtroom. Clearly, the ability to honor the client-attorney privilege is fundamental.

With shrinking governmental and philanthropic funding for research, universities are increasingly turning to corporate research and development (R&D) partnerships as a means to fund basic and applied research opportunities. Sponsored R&D projects require participating faculty and students to sign non-disclosure agreements in order to protect shared intellectual property between the corporation and the university.

Today our reach as anthropologists is broad—in academia, in the public sector and throughout the private sector. We work in multidisciplinary teams, in novel settings and we relate to Institutional Review Boards and other oversight bodies as we plan and conduct our work. Little that we do is without scrutiny, and none of what we do should be without having been carefully trained by our professors to think and act ethically. Our concern should

CEAUSSIC Phase Two

Up and Running

ROBERT ALBRO
CEAUSSIC CHAIR

In November 2007, the Commission on the Engagement of Anthropology with the US Security and Intelligence Communities (CEAUSSIC) concluded its first phase with a summary report, available at www.aaanet.org/_cs_upload/pdf/4092_1.pdf. The commission has since then entered its second phase, with an expanded membership that has greater balance between academic and applied practitioners; those working inside and outside of military, security and intelligence environments; and with broader disciplinary representation, including an archaeologist and a biological anthropologist. New participants also include a member of the Network of Concerned Anthropologists. For details see www.aaanet.org/cmtes/commissions/CEAUSSIC.

CEAUSSIC advises the AAA Executive Board by: (1) providing information and recommendations on the varied roles that practitioners and scholars of anthropology currently assume within intelligence and national security entities; (2) providing guidance on the state of AAA's existing guidelines and on the involvement of anthropologists in intelligence and national security-related activities and (3) examining key ethical, methodological and practical/political challenges faced by the discipline and the AAA in its current and future engagement with intelligence and national security. To this end CEAUSSIC has undertaken to produce an Ethics Casebook, which will explore the ethical, methodological and theoretical aspects of work in, around and for the national security state. For project details and the call for abstracts see www.aaanet.org/cmtes/commissions/CEAUSSIC/Ethics-Casebook.cfm.