

AAA COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC POLICY

2005 Annual Report

ACTIVITIES IN 2005

Views on Policy Submissions to Anthropology News: COPP member Melissa Checker coordinated the preparation and submission of five "Views on Policy" pieces for the Anthropology News during 2005. The five pieces are listed below:

January 2005

- *Anthropological Perspectives on the Legacy of Brown (Catherine Emihovich)*

March 2005

- *New Wave Creationism (Benjamin Freed)*

April 2005

- *While We Were Sleeping (Hugh Gusterson)*

September 2005

- *Environmental Justice Pushed Backwards by Bush Administration (Melissa Checker)*

October 2005

- *Stem Cell Policy as Spectacle Ripe for Anthropological Analysis (Linda Hogle)*

Public Policy Fora for the 2005 Annual Meeting: The COPP organized and sponsored three public policy fora during the 2005 AAA Annual Meeting. The three sessions are identified below:

- *"The Second Bush Administration & Environmental Justice"*
- *"Organized Labor"*
- *"Language and Social Justice"*

Planning for Website Improvement: In November 2005, COPP met with AAA staff members Stacy Lathrop and Sam Hines to discuss: 1) updating electronic communications; and 2) how the COPP presence in the *Anthropology News* could be linked to the AAA website. A proposal to establish a public policy blog that would have new material added on a daily basis was discussed. Hines indicated that it was technically possible, and Lathrop indicated that she was interested in pursuing linkages with the website, especially through AnthroSource. As an initial step, COPP proposed sending information to the AAA to update the COPP web page. Pursuant to the discussion, the new COPP Chair, David Hess, stated that he would send a detailed proposal for doing so in January 2006. (The proposal was sent.)

Public Policy Center Proposal: At the November 2005 COPP business meeting, outgoing Chair Kendall Thu indicated that he had not completed the proposal for a public policy center. Incoming Chair Hess stated that he would review the proposal and rework it for consideration at COPP's March 2006 meeting. The committee discussion of the proposal at the business meeting reflected some skepticism that funding for such a center will be forthcoming. Hess and some of the other COPP members were unable to see a plausible funding model for the center. As is, the proposal has a budget of \$300 to \$500k and it is questionable that any university would have the funds to support it, and that any single director could raise this level of funding. COPP also recognizes that the AAA does not have the financial resources to support the center, and the

amount is probably too large for Wenner-Gren Foundation. For this reason the proposal will be reworked to include other options or configurations.

ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2006

Finalizing Proposal for Public Policy Center. The final proposal will include two potential levels of funding: a commitment to hire a faculty member in anthropology who will contribute to public policy and participate in a consortium among DC-area universities to develop a metropolitan anthropology and public policy network; and a commitment to provide funding at a level of \$200-\$500k to start up a public policy center. By dividing the proposal into two levels of potential funding, there may be greater likelihood of success.

Define Working Relationship with IGAPP. Given the formation of IGAPP, COPP is recognizing that it may make more sense for that group to take on the roles of coordinating policy pieces for the *Anthropology News* and organizing public policy fora for AAA annual meetings.

Strategic Planning Retreat: AAA Staff Liaison Paul Nuti and new COPP chair David Hess have discussed the possibility of organizing a strategic planning retreat for the COPP at the AAA office to discuss the need for a mission shift for COPP [see below, in "Responsibilities and Objectives" section]. Some funds have been budgeted for this purpose in 2006.

RESPONSIBILITIES & OBJECTIVES

Shift in Mission: The role of COPP could evolve into that of a true public policymaking committee, a role that IGAPP does not wish to have. In this capacity, COPP could be charged with gathering resolutions from the AAA membership on public policy issues, developing the resolutions, and passing them on to the executive board or other appropriate forum within the Association for approval. The COPP plans to undertake a more detailed discussion during 2006 of how it might re-engineer its mission. A strategic planning retreat for the COPP offers an excellent opportunity for this.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO AAA LONG-RANGE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Proposal for Public Policy Center See above.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO AAA EXECUTIVE BOARD

Expansion of COPP Size, Redefinition of Mission, or Cessation of Action:

COPP is at a crossroad, and there are several possible future developments for COPP: 1. It could continue to provide the service of developing public policy articles for the *Anthropology Newsletter* and fora for the AAA meeting. In order to complete that function, the committee is too small. Furthermore, some members have been inactive. A system needs to be in place so that inactive members can be replaced, and the overall membership may need to be expanded. 2. COPP could pass on the central function to IGAPP. This makes a lot of sense, given the larger network that IGAPP is expanding. In this case, COPP could take on a new role of developing public policy statements for the AAA as described above, and it would probably not need to increase in size. 3. COPP could pass on the central function to IGAPP and then disband.