

Annual Report 2006  
**Committee on Scientific Communications**  
Prepared by Deborah Heath, CSC Chair (2003-2006)

**Executive Summary**

The Committee on Scientific Communications oversees the annual meetings and the publications, both print and electronic, of the American Anthropological Association. The 2006 annual meetings in San Jose were ably chaired by Maria Vesperi, working with the essential staff support of Lucille Horn and Khara Minter. Maria's recommendations for how best to meet the charge to the Executive Program Committee were reviewed by the LRPC in 2006, as well as by the CSC. Some were met during the San Jose meetings, as noted below, and others are listed below in recommendations for 2007.

The CSC established a liaison subcommittee and expanded the editorial board to include two associate editors for the *American Anthropologist* in 2005, and has continued to offer its support since the transition to the new editorship in 2006.

The evolution of AnthroSource, and its relationship to section publications, client libraries and other institutional subscribers, and the membership at large, has been a central focus of the CSC's efforts during 2006. This has included ongoing work directly with section publication editors, a major undertaking supported by AAA staff member Susi Skomal, and very ably continued by Alison Pryor and Jasper Simons. Input about how best to enhance the functionality of AnthroSource came from the indefatigable efforts of the AnthroSource Steering Committee (ASSC). The AnthroSource Working Group (AWG), very active in the founding phase of AnthroSource, rejoined the discussions about future directions for AnthroSource.

The CSC, and the AAA Executive Board, gave close consideration of the effects of AnthroSource resource allocations on different sections, with invaluable assistance from Dan Segal, Section Assembly Convener.

The Chairs of CSC, ASSC and AWG communicated closely throughout the summer and fall of 2006, along with AAA President Alan Goodman and members of the AAA professional staff, working to improve organizational structures to address concerns related to AnthroSource. Effective as of the 2006 annual meeting, AWG and ASSC have been replaced by a new committee, the Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publishing (CFPEP).

## **Committee Members**

Deborah Heath, Chair (2003-2006), Peter Allen (2004-2007), Monica Heller (2005-2008), Sally Engle Merry (2005-2008), Leith Mullings (2004-2007), J. Anthony Paredes (2004-2007), Andrea Wiley (2003-2006). Alan Goodman, President (Ex-Officio), Setha Low, President-Elect (Ex-Officio). Staff liaisons: Jasper Simons, Alison Pryor. AnthroSource Steering Committee liaison: Suzanne Calpestri, Chair (2003-2006).

## **Activities**

### **Relationship between 2006 activities and the Long Range Plan**

The activities of the CSC during 2006 have taken note of key recommendations from the 2005 and 2006 reports of the Long Range Planning Committee. The 2005 report for the LRPC list the following “core issues” for 2006:

1. The future of the annual meetings
2. Issues related to AnthroSource, publications, and the AAA website

The 2006 LRPC report lists as its #2 and #3 priorities the annual meeting and AnthroSource, enumerating its recommendations as follows:

#### **#2 Annual Meeting**

LRPC recommended action items:

- a. Computer software by 2007 (submitted to CSC)
- b. Train section program editors
- c. Electronic message system
- d. Abstracts on line
- e. Creative subsidization for student participation
- f. Identify and facilitate inclusion of international presence

#### **#3 AnthroSource**

LRPC recommended action items:

- a. Sort out committees and their responsibilities (sent to EB)
- b. Repository
- c. Participatory planning process and business analysis with an outside expert

The CSC addressed many of these priority items during 2006, as outlined below.

*Annual Meeting:*

- LRP Objective VII: “The AAA will organize the Annual Meeting...”

Among recommendations made by Program Chair Maria Vesperi prior to the 2006 annual meetings, action has been taken on the following:

1. *Computer software* to address the organization/format of the program and proliferation of overlapping sessions and papers. The Executive Board has voted to support this initiative as soon as is practicable.
2. *Abstracts on line* were available for the 2006 meetings.
3. An evaluative survey emailed only to registered participants immediately after the meeting is already in place and has been a useful practice.

*AnthroSource and AAA Publications:*

The CSC’s charge to oversee print and online publications, as well as the development of AnthroSource, both as the online product marketed by University of California Press, and as an eventual link to a repository for a wide range of digitally available documents, falls under the following key objectives from the AAA Long Range Plan:

- LRP Objective I: “The AAA will have an integrated coherent and coordinated publications program that disseminates the most current anthropological research to its members, the discipline, and the broader society.”
- LRP Objective XI. “The AAA will respond to needs for anthropological knowledge and expertise in the wider society by exploring better mechanisms for making such resources available through print, broadcast, online and other media.”

In addition, because of the complex relationship of AnthroSource digital revenues and expenditures, including subscription costs, AAA and section membership dues, and marketing, its fiscal ramifications merit consideration as an important aspect of long-term financial planning for AAA, in keeping with

- LRP Objective XII “The AAA will develop and periodically revise its long-term financial plans and goals.... Financial goals and funding decisions will be based upon articulated objectives and priorities of the association,

the size and diversity of our membership, and costs to members and others consumers of AAA's services.”

During 2006, the CSC addressed LRPC recommendations with respect to AnthroSource as follows:

*AnthroSource Oversight Committee Organization:*

Following the extensive report of Melissa Cefkin, member of both the Long Range Planning Committee and the AnthroSource Steering Committee, the LRPC recommended that attention be given to *the structure and function of the committees involved in AnthroSource planning*. To this end, the CSC worked in close consultation with the Chair and members of ASSC, and with the Chair of the AnthroSource Working Group (AWG), to address these concerns.

At its May 2006 meeting, the CSC recommended, and the Executive Board approved, an invitation to the ASSC chair to be the formal liaison to the CSC and be invited, in person or by phone, to the appropriate portions of the CSC meetings as needed. Following subsequent recommendations of the Chairs of ASSC and AWG, *the Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publishing (CFPEP)* was formed as the November 2006 Annual Meeting came to a close, taking over integrated and revised functions that were the purview up to that point of AWG and ASSC.

*Repository:*

Following the initiatives and recommendations of the ASSC, the CSC discussed two main “Phase 2” initiatives for AnthroSource, the addition of third-party content (e.g., links to non-AAA publications) and the formation of a repository to house a wide range of digital content. Consultations took place with the Canadian Academic Research Libraries (CARL) group about potential collaboration in forming an anthropology repository. Budgetary constraints put planning for a repository in the forefront, while plans to develop third-party content have been delayed.

*AnthroSource and Diversity Outreach:*

- LRP Objective V(a): “The AAA will increase the impact and presence of minoritized anthropologists by supporting and fostering programs that bring more minorities into the Association and discipline.”

A series of motions aimed at fostering enhanced minority outreach were passed at the November 2006 meeting of the CSC and the Executive Board, offering free access to AnthroSource, starting January 1, 2007, to Tribal Colleges, Historically Black Colleges and Universities, Canadian First Nation Colleges, and qualifying institutions in Less Developed Countries.

*American Anthropologist:*

- LRP Objective I: “The *American Anthropologist* will continue to be the principal association-wide journal of new knowledge, emphasizing integration and synthesis.”

The smooth transition to a new editorial office for the *American Anthropologist*, under Ben Blount at University of Texas San Antonio, was facilitated by the organizational changes recommended by the CSC in 2005, i.e., the addition of two associate editors, and the constitution of a CSC Liaison Subcommittee to provide continuity and support for the editors and the editorial board.

**Activities planned for 2007 and recommendations**

- **Annual meetings.** The following additional recommendations from the LRPC and Program Chair Maria Vesperi’s report merit consideration during 2007:
  1. Training for section program editors. The work of the section program editors constitutes the heart of the overall program for the annual meetings. Providing them with appropriate information as early as possible is critical, and may be facilitated by input from past program chairs. Maria Vesperi has volunteered to spearhead such as initiative.
  2. Electronic message center at the annual meetings. This remains an oft-requested item of interest to many members. Investigating financial and technical requirements to provide this service merits further attention.
- **Committee on the Future of Print and Electronic Publishing (CFPEP)**, formed as the November 2006 Annual Meeting came to a close, is taking over integrated and revised functions that were the purview up to that point of **AWG, the AnthroSource Working Group**, and **ASSC, the AnthroSource Steering Committee**. In keeping with the initiatives

undertaken during 2006 to improve the lines of communication linking the CSC and the Executive Board to ASSC and AWG, we recommend that the Chairs of the CSC and the newly constituted CFPEP, as well as the appropriate staff liaisons, maintain close contact, and work to foster clear shared agendas, both short and long term, as well as decision-making protocols.

- We recommend that the CSC, in conjunction with CFPEP, facilitate a **broader discussion concerning “open access” publishing models in relation to AnthroSource**, on the one hand, and proposed legislation mandating repositories for federally funded academic research (See <http://www.aaanet.org/press/FRPPAA.htm>).
- The success of **AAA publishing initiatives**, including AnthroSource both as a commercial venture and as a prospective electronic arena for creative uses of information technology, will also depend on **regular communication between the CSC and the Section Assembly**. We recommend that the Chair of the CSC, along with appropriate AAA staff liaisons, maintain an active consultative relationship with the Chair of Section Assembly, as well as editors of section publications.
- We recommend that the CSC continue its active consultative role with the through its ***American Anthropologist Liaison Subcommittee***, formed in 2005 to provide active support to the editor, associate editors, and executive board of *American Anthropologist*.