

**National Association of Student Anthropologists (NASA)  
2004 Annual Report to the AAA**

Submitted by Karen Kapusta-Pofahl, President (Incoming), Prepared by Persephone Hintlian, President (Outgoing)

**Membership and Finances:**

According to September 2006 figures, NASA membership stands at 936, substantially higher than last year's average of 807. This increase in membership is attributed largely to efforts NASA has made via the NASA Opportunities list and other announcements to provide enhanced information-sharing services to our membership.

As of September 30, 2006, NASA's net assets stand at \$7944.49. NASA's primary expenditures continue to be travel and award monies, including the Carrie Hunter Tate Awards and the Travel Awards, used largely to offset the cost of annual meeting attendance for members. NASA, in accordance with our bylaws, offers travel monies to all incoming and outgoing officers who: a) attend the annual meeting, and b) certify that their trip hasn't been provided via another source of travel monies (i.e. university grant, other travel award, etc.). Travel reimbursement and student Travel Award monies saw less than budgeted expenditures this year due to the change in annual meeting venue, which represented a particular deterrent to students given end-of-term schedules. NASA continues to adjust its annual budget downward to combat deficit spending, but will likely be making a minimal dues increase (above the current \$1 dues paid by the majority of our membership) to \$5.00 in the near future in order to enhance programming alternatives.

**AAA Meeting Activities**

The NASA Program Editor organized an impressively diverse number of activities for the AAA Annual Meeting in San Jose. The 2006 NASA program represented a particularly strong group of sessions. Marcy Hessling was the principle organizer for the sixth annual NASA/AAA Mentor Workshop, which continues to be a successful way of pairing students with faculty from a variety of fields did not take place due to the change in meeting venue, though NASA Graduate Representative At-large Michelle Verma put much effort into planning the event. This year, NASA did hold the fifth annual "Student Representative Open Forum," which is an opportunity for free discussion about student issues within AAA, academia, or our own communities. The forum brings together student representatives from across AAA sections as well as student leaders from other student anthropology associations. This breakfast was held at the 2006 San Jose, Annual Meeting. Finally, for the third time, NASA offered a "Student Orientation to the AAA Annual Meeting: Insider Perspectives," which gave students who are attending their first annual meeting a chance to learn how to get the most from their time in Atlanta. NASA Secretary/Treasurer Frank Mannix continues to be instrumental in planning this event. The NASA Business Meeting this year was sparsely attended, but offered additional opportunity for frank discussion about the role of students within the AAA. Typically NASA Awards are presented at this meeting. This year NASA awarded its Travel Award to ?? NASA's Carrie Hunter-Tate Award Committee also elected to give its graduate award to Robert O'Brien and two undergraduate awards to Dawn Stricklin and Carolyn S. Barnwell.

**Communications**

NASA Editor Tara Hefferan continued to create a strong monthly AN column. The column is a well-rounded mixture of section announcements, research and items of interest from members,

and insights from the editor's own fieldwork. NASA maintains a listserv of more than 550 members that is also used as a communication tool in addition to e-mails to the entire membership provided through AAA lists (listserv membership has increased by over 100 in the past year). In addition, NASA publishes an opportunities list through the listserv, which is a digest of opportunities for student awards, jobs, resources, and calls for papers compiled from the web. The opportunities list is an important benefit that NASA offers its members and we hope to maintain and build it as a resource in the future. A continued problem with the listserv is the lack of non-advertising-based hosting space available. Yahoogroups currently offers a variety of features, but the number of ads makes a private AAA-based listserv based on current membership enrollment vastly preferable. Are excited by the opportunities Anthrosource may provide in this area, and encourage greater focus on making these sorts of communication options to membership available as soon as possible.

Thanks to NASA's Webmaster, Arleen Garcia, our webspace was updated this year and kept up-to-date, serving as another way to generate interest in student participation. Arleen Garcia also developed a NASA officer "wiki" in order to answer any questions new officers might have about their position and for older officers to help their successors. This year via the website we noticed an increase in interest in local anthropology clubs, and thus will be looking to pursue ways of connecting these valuable student organizations via our webspace and other means. The aforementioned NASA opportunities emails are archived on the site, and calls for student participation in the AAA conference were also posted on the NASA website.

### **Outreach Efforts**

NASA continues to search for ways to cooperate and share ideas with other like-minded AAA sections, journals, clubs and associations. The Student Representative Open Forum, for example, brings together student leaders from across the association. We hope that this event will continue to grow and encourage much more cross-section cooperation in the future. In addition, NASA has continued its long-standing efforts for creating student representation in the association and section-wide governance of AAA. From the section's origins more than a decade and a half ago, NASA has been instrumental in stressing the importance of student participation throughout AAA. In its student members, AAA has an enthusiastic and creative resource for the future and we are working to create opportunities for increased student participation wherever possible.

### **Future Activities**

Although relatively informal, the following serve as a rough guide for future NASA activities:

- I. Offer expanded membership participation/benefits
  - II. Increase membership to more accurately reflect the number of students within AAA
  - III. Create an online NASA E-journal/newsletter as a forum for student research and work
  - IV. Create a committee to examine the bylaws, mission, goals and vision of NASA and present findings for ratification at the next AAA board meeting
  - VI. Work to achieve financial sustainability while maintaining NASA's high membership value
- Particular NASA goals for 2007 include effective officer transition, continued emphasis on communicating opportunities to members, institutionalization of the Student Representative Forum within the AAA, and effective communication of student perspectives on current issues of AAA leadership.

## **Recommendations to the Long-Range Planning Committee.**

*Reprinted from NASA's "Long-Range Planning Input 2002"*

\* We would like the association to continue to make itself affordable and accessible to student participation. Student rates for association membership, annual meeting costs, publications and special events should always be kept as low as possible. One of our goals is to work towards student representation in all applicable sections. We would also like to see increased student representation in section and association-wide committees and task-forces. To this end, we would like the opportunity to participate more directly in AAA long-range planning by the addition of a student seat on the planning committee. If this seat was adopted by the AAA membership, NASA would be happy to provide a commitment to assist the nominations process by identifying a range of student nominees for the position.

\* We would like to see the AAA expand its public engagement initiatives, not only in the area of government or public policy, but to wider public arenas as well. Encouraging anthropologists to contribute to public debates will increase the vitality and relevance of the discipline. AAA should continue to provide and increase opportunities for media training, popular publishing and community action among anthropologists. Public intellectual engagement is common outside of the United States and can be used as a model for American anthropologists who want to make greater public contributions.

\* Beyond the ethics training goals of AAA (currently targeted only towards graduate students), the Association should explore methods of interaction with the agencies which currently regulate the ethics of research among students and professional anthropologists: institutional review boards (IRBs) on human subjects research. These boards are often based on guidelines for medical and psychological research which differ considerably from the methods most anthropologists employ. Moreover, these committees often seem to lack understanding of what most anthropologists do, and as a result, create unnecessary institutional obstacles to anthropological research. Finally, the research environment fostered by most review boards is more concerned with legal liability than the types of guidelines outlined in AAA's statement on ethics. Therefore, the discipline as a whole would be well served by an association-wide effort to interact with IRBs. This effort could be accomplished through the creation of a AAA statement addressed to IRBs which outlines how the federal guidelines for human subjects research relate specifically to anthropological research.

\* Since the creation of sections within AAA, there seems to be a trend towards increased specialization and reduced interaction among them. Any effort to reduce the increasing exclusivity and specialization among sections should be encouraged within the Association. The attempt to find alternatives to sections through interest groups and alternate structures is a step in the right direction. NASA is in a unique position to benefit from increased section interaction, because we share a common experience as students rather than as part of a particular sub-discipline or world area.

\* Similarly, as our members can increasingly expect to find job opportunities in anthropological practice, NASA is somewhat concerned that the actions set forth in the AAA long range plan may actually serve to further divide practitioners and traditional anthropologists -- particularly as the plan seemingly does not address possible AAA-initiated steps toward integrating practicing and traditional anthropology within the academy. NASA asserts that a strong future anthropology depends much more on institutionalized academic valuation of practice, as opposed to seeking out token practitioners to sit on committees. We highly encourage, for

instance, efforts toward AAA advocacy of teaching methodology and research design in anthropological graduate programs. Graduates of programs in which such practical skills are ignored are ill-prepared for changes in a discipline that is limited in academic openings, is growing in number of graduates, and is attempting to demonstrate usefulness in policy arenas to a multidisciplinary audience. \*

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