

Biological Anthropology Section 2011 Annual Report

Submitted by:

Karen B. Strier (kbstrier@wisc.edu)

I. Section Officers

Position: President

Name: Karen B. Strier

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Position: President-elect*

Name: Agustin Fuentes

Email: afuentes@nd.edu

Position: Member at Large

Name: Rachel Caspari

Email: caspa1r@cmich.edu

Position: Past president

Name: Darna DuFour

Email: Darna.Dufour@Colorado.EDU

Position: Member at Large*

Name: Robin Nelson

Email: rgairnelson@gmail.com

Position: Program chair

Name: Debra Martin

Email: Debra.Martin@unlv.edu

Position: Student member*

Name: Sarah Livengood

Email: slivengood2@student.gsu.edu

Position: Webmaster

Name: Kate Pechenkina

Email: pechenkina@yahoo.com

Position: Newsletter editor

Name: Virginia Vitzthum

Email: vitzthum@indiana.edu

Position: Incoming program chair

Name: Katherine MacKinnon

Email: mackinn@slu.edu

Position: W.W. Howells Book Award Chair

Name: Sara Stinson
Email: SStinson@qc1.qc.edu

Position: Secretary/Treasurer
Name: Karen Rosenberg
Email: krr@UDel.Edu

II. Status, Activities and Accomplishments this year

1) Provide the most recent membership numbers and list any factors you think may be increasing or decreasing your Section membership:

Number of Members: 437

Factors affecting Membership:

Membership was 437 as of 11/3/2011 based on AAA posted data; 432 members as of October 2011 AAA posted data.

Membership declined from a peak of >600 in 2002, but has risen slightly from its low of 424 in 2009.

We discussed membership issues at our EC and Business meetings. Posited reasons for decline include the cost relative to perceived value for Biological anthropologists who routinely belong to other professional associations including the AAPA and more specialized associations (human biology, paleontology, primatology, etc) in their areas of interest.

2) * Provide the most recent financial balances for Section budgets (and publication sponsored budgets, if applicable). Also list any factors you think are affecting your Section's finances:

Financial Balance: 18,616

Publications: (if applicable)

Not applicable

Factors affecting Finances:

Balance of \$18,616 is based on Secretary/Treasurer's report for our balance as of October 31, 2011. We also had a balance of \$24,555.59 in our W.W. Howells Fund as of October 31, 2011, as per the same report.

Our BAS balance reflects our sole revenue from limited membership. To economize our funds, the Executive Committee voted to eliminate the complimentary lunch that had been the precedent during previous BAS Executive Committee meetings. This saved us hundreds of dollars. We also were careful to keep the cost of our reception following the Business meeting and BAS distinguished lecturer below our actual budget. This should yield further savings for next year.

3) * List the titles of your Section's AAA meeting invited sessions, co-sponsored sessions,

and any special events your Section sponsored or in which it participated. Check with your program chairs if needed: When providing session information please note if these are invited, volunteered or co-sponsored.

Session Type: Invited, Co-Sponsored with SAS

Session: CALCULATING LEGACIES: INFORMED BIOLOGICAL ANTHROPOLOGY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Session Type: Invited

Session: THE SCARS OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

Session Type: Invited

Session: NEW DIRECTIONS IN BIOARCHAEOLOGY

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: THE SOCIAL LIVES OF BONES: STORIES OF COLLECTION, CURATION, AND REPATRIATION

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: BODY PARTS AND PARTS OF BODIES: THE TRACES OF VIOLENCE IN CULTURES IN CONFLICT

Session Type: Volunteered

Session: RE-ENVISIONING CULTURE: CHALLENGING LEGACIES AND SHIFTING TIDEMARKS IN THE STUDY OF HUMAN DIVERSITY

Other Events:

Other events held at the meetings:

- BAS Executive Committee meeting
- BAS Business meeting
- W.W. Howells book award presented during the Business meeting to Dr. Wenda Trevanthen
- BAS Distinguished Lecture immediately following Business meeting; 2011 lecture given by Jonathan Marks (UNC-Charlotte): "Why Be Against Darwin? Creationism, Racism, and the Roots of Anthropology"
- BAS Reception followed the lecture and business meeting

Clarifications on Sessions, *including* Additional sessions that the online form would not permit me to list above (underlined here):

1. Individual submitted poster abstracts were combined as our "invited" poster session by program committee:

- NEW DIRECTIONS IN BIOARCHAEOLOGY

2. Submitted as complete sessions by organizers, considered "volunteered":

- THE SOCIAL LIVES OF BONES: STORIES OF COLLECTION, CURATION, AND REPATRIATION
- BODY PARTS AND PARTS OF BODIES: THE TRACES OF VIOLENCE IN CULTURES IN CONFLICT

- RE-ENVISIONING CULTURE: CHALLENGING LEGACIES AND SHIFTING TIDEMARKS IN THE STUDY OF HUMAN DIVERSITY
- TRANSFORMING BIOCULTURAL AND ECOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN ANTHROPOLOGY: THE LEGACIES OF R BROOKE THOMAS

3. Individual submitted papers that were compiled into a volunteered session:

- NEW DIRECTIONS IN EVOLUTION, VARIATION AND GENETICS

4) * Did your section request a meeting registration waiver or community engagement grant?

Requested Grant: Yes

If granted, who/what was it/they used for? (if applicable)

Request was made for Felix Engel, Licentiate in Philosophy – Promotionskandidat, University of Freiburg. Engel is a biological anthropologist working in the area of bioarchaeology (skeletal biology of ancient people). He is in his final stages of working on his PhD at the University of Freiburg, where he teaches and runs a field school. His paper, “Limitations of Evidence: What Can and Cannot Be Learnt about Armed Conflict From the Early-Medieval Graveyard of Lauchheim (Germany)” provides new methodological approaches to understanding violence in the past; he was an invited participant in a double session sponsored by BAS and organized by BAS members Ryan Harrod and Debra Martin: “Body Parts and Parts of Bodies: The Traces of Violence in Cultures in Conflict”.

5) List spring meeting activities (if applicable):

Not applicable

6) List awards presented this year on behalf of your Section, if applicable (please provide the title of the award, date presented, and full name, affiliation, and title of the project/paper/accomplishment of the awardees):

Award Title: W.W. Howells Book Award

Date: 2011-11-18 00:00:00.0

Recipient: Wenda Trevathan

Affiliation: New Mexico State University

Project/Paper/etc: Ancient Bodies, Modern Lives: How Evolution Has Shaped Women’s Health

Award Title: Student Prize winner

Date: 2011-11-28 00:00:00.0

Recipient: Meredith Ellis

Affiliation: Syracuse University

Project/Paper/etc: A Disciplined Childhood: A Social Bioarchaeology of the Subadults of the Spring Street...

Award Title: Student Prize runner up

Date: 2011-11-28 00:00:00.0

Recipient: Valentine Volk

Affiliation: Cleveland State University

Project/Paper/etc: A Preliminary Assessment of Health and Disease at the Late Woodland Mayer Site, Vermillion, Ohio

7) * Mentorship efforts (at or beyond the AAA meetings) to any of the following (e.g., special activities, funding, awards, guidance/advising on professional matters, etc.):

Undergraduate and/or graduate students

We encourage students to attend the annual meeting and apply for the student prize.

Early career scholars:

We make an effort to include early career scholars on the BAS ballot and to encourage their election to AAA committees.

Although BAS was not involved in the application or selection, we were delighted that one of our members, Julienne Rutherford, was selected for a 2011 AAA leadership award.

Independent scholars:

Not applicable

8) Additional outreach efforts (at or beyond the AAA meetings) to other sections, interest groups, and scholarly societies, government agencies, public education/community engagement, and underrepresented minorities:

BAS members participated in several sponsored sessions at the AAA meetings. Our newly-elected Student member, Sarah Livengood, represented BAS at the AAA Section Summit on The changing job market.

9) Status and use of Section internal communications such as a website, list serve, or newsletter (if applicable): Please list internal communication tools you use and what they are used for:

We have expanded our website to include news as well as resources such as blog sites of interest to biological anthropologists. We also used our listserve for communication from BAS president to contact our members about AAA and BAS news. Members of the BAS Executive Committee are in touch via email throughout the year as needed. Our Newsletter editor also submits BAS columns for publication in AnthroNews.

Blogs and other social networking devices (e.g., Facebook) are increasingly used by biological anthropologists for communication. Although we do not maintain a BAS blog, we do list Blogs on our BAS website, which we use as a repository for news and as a reference.

10) Changes in bylaws or governance structure (if applicable):

We submitted changes to our W. W. Howells Book award procedures. These changes were approved by our EC and at the BAS business meeting.

III. What Initiatives does your Section have underway or planned for the coming year: Membership, publication annual meeting, mentorship, other?

We completed our most recent updates for the Section Officers Handbook and have uploaded these to our BAS website. We envision this as an evolving document, and anticipate continuing updates to it as appropriate.

We also have nearly caught up with the elections for section officers and Executive committee members. These had gotten out of synchrony due to some mistaken records. The result was that with the onset of my first year as section president (post AAA meeting in 2010), we were short three EC members. Thus, elections for these positions (President-elect, member at large, student member) in addition to the regularly scheduled election for the next secretary/treasurer, were held in spring 2011. The three newly elected EC members attended our 2011 EC meeting (indicated with *asterisks* in the list of EC members provided in this report). Both the member at large and the student member will serve through the 2013 meeting; the President-elect will take over after the 2012 AAA meeting so as not to extend the current president's term beyond the original designated period. We will be holding elections for the next President-elect and the other member at large this spring 2012. We had to extend the terms of the second member at large for a 3rd year to prevent additional gaps on the EC. All of these extensions were done in consultation with Kim Baker and the individuals involved. After the elections this coming spring 2012, we will be back on schedule and all subsequent elections and terms of office/board membership will be back to normal.

Our primary goals are to maintain our current BAS members and to increase our membership numbers. To insure the former, we are initiating a short monthly email blast from the BAS President to members with bulleted highlights or news, with links for additional information on the BAS or AAA website as appropriate. To advance the latter, we are encouraging members to spread the word to colleagues and students. We also hope to stimulate membership through our activities at the AAA annual meetings and through communication with the membership of other professional societies to which current and potential BAS members belong. We seek to maintain strong BAS representation on prominent AAA committees, where our voice can continue to be heard.

IV. Please tell us what your chief concerns and issues are, especially if they are not previously noted:

What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the Section Assembly Executive Committee (SAEC)? Please be specific.

The ability of the SAEC to respond rapidly to AAA-related issues is critical so that the smaller

AAA Executive Board can take rapid action on controversial issues. Yet, the large number of sections makes it difficult for SAEC leadership to get feedback quickly. This problem was illustrated by the fairly long delay SAEC experienced before obtaining section responses to the science-in-anthropology confusion that arose last year. I was told that the SAEC delay was responsible for the slow response of the AAA EB; the delay resulted in some negative press including prominent pieces in the NYTimes and Chronicle. Had the AAA EB been able to respond sooner, the story would not have been news.

I suggest that we empower the SAEC leadership to impose some time limits and/or contingency plans when responses from sections are delayed. Here are a few possible ideas of facilitating this challenging process should an urgent need to get feedback from sections arise again:

1. Establish a minimum (e.g., 51%, 2/3, whatever) consensus of section responses, at which point the SAEC can be authorized to represent the majority of sections' opinions on an action.
2. Establish a time limit after which the SAEC is authorized to act on behalf of sections. To insure that all efforts to obtain section input are obtained in such cases, section presidents might be encouraged to list at least two alternate elected section members as SAEC contacts in case urgent section responses are needed within a narrow time frame.

Facilitating the ability of SAEC leadership to obtain section input on vital AAA policy positions in a practical and expeditious way will enhance the shared governance that underlies the AAA organizational structure.

What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Executive Board? Please be specific.

I appreciated that those members of the AAA Executive Board I had contacted last year were very responsive.

What issues would you like raised or recommendations would you like to make to the AAA Staff? Please be specific.

Whenever I have needed them, AAA Staff were responsive and helpful. Kim Baker is always great--amazingly helpful, responds rapidly, most appreciated!

Jason Watkins was also a big help with some meeting-related queries.