

From: kbstrier@wisc.edu

Subject: AAA LRP Mission Statement--from BAS

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Dear Virginia:

I am writing on behalf of the BAS Executive Committee, to add our voice to the concerns that are being raised about the wording of the new AAA Mission Statement. Specifically, we strongly support the recommendations (i) to restore the "science" in the AAA's mission statement and (ii) to refocus the statement so that the mission of the AAA continues to emphasize anthropology and anthropologists instead of public education.

We realize that there are many other ways of knowing, and that not all anthropologists regard their scholarship as scientific. But, by eliminating science, the empirical basis of many (if not all) areas of anthropology is inappropriately excluded. Moreover, during a time when many of our members are concerned with the fractious nature of our discipline, we assert a need for more inclusion and integration of all sub-fields in the AAA. An omission of the "science" will effectively diminish the biological anthropology membership in the AAA during a period when we are trying to actively increase the numbers of broadly trained and holistic biological anthropologists in the AAA.

Similarly, although increasing public understanding is a large part of what many of us do, we also engage in a number of other worthy efforts (e.g., conservation of the environment, defense of human rights). Despite the importance of these and similar types of activities, none of them encompasses the full scope of the AAA mission. We hope we can continue to work within the AAA toward advancing anthropology and the increasing integration of its multi-faceted approaches within this broader cause.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Strier
Chair, Biological Anthropology Section (BAS)