

Annual Report For CSAS 2002
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1. **Membership numbers** have hovered around 250 for the past three years.
2. **Financial balance** has gone from about \$18,000 to just over \$2,000. We have maintained benefits to members--chiefly, two issues of the Bulletin each year and student prizes. Because expenses were not being covered by the dues structure, and because dues had not been increased in over six years, the Board voted to increase 2003 dues to help cover costs of benefits.
3. In 2002 we sponsored an invited session for **the annual AAA meeting**, though many felt it was badly scheduled. We reviewed an organized session. At the New Orleans AAA meeting we held our Board meeting and hosted a reception for our members.
4. The **spring meeting** was held in East Lansing, MI on the campus of Michigan State University. Marshal Sahlins was the distinguished lecturer. The Anthropology Department of MSU hosted a reception for Sahlins. Claude Jacobs brought his "Religious Diversity in Detroit" photo exhibit to the meetings for exhibit to the campus community and the CSAS membership. Approximately 125 papers were delivered.
5. We used **AN columns** for sharing meeting information and society news. We developed a website, which we hope to link to the AAA site next year in 2003. We used a membership listserv to communicate meeting information, to make calls for papers, and to call for proposals for the AAA meeting.
6. We have engaged in no **formal outreach to other sections**, though many of our members were active in organizing the alternate meetings of the Society for Anthropological Sciences in New Orleans, and many share the point of view of that organization.
7. There have been no changes in **bylaws or governance structure**.
8. There have been no **activities relative to the long-range plan**. We have a longstanding commitment to diversity, open structures, transparent procedures and practices, democratic involvement of members and inclusiveness.
9. **Future activities relative to long range planning committee**--our liaison on the long range planning committee has never contacted us, so we are in the dark. We note that this but one example of inactive and incommunicative AAA committees.
10. **Recommendations to the long range planning committee**. We believe the AAA should represent the interests of all anthropologists and of our discipline. We believe that the current politics of the AAA is interfering significantly with that goal.

We would like to see the AAA adhere to its rhetoric of diversity and democracy by *opening the nominations process*. We have observed that the process was effectively closed to all but a small coterie of members close to the chair of the nominations committee. This was apparent from the individuals nominated and their associations with the chair. Like many other members, we found her explanation in the AN to be disingenuous and implausible. We have seen little improvement in this process in the 2002 nominations, in which, once again persons close to the same chair were nominated - to the point of nepotism. *We request that the LRPC look into the matter* as continued exclusion of members from leadership roles and continued domination of the AAA by small vocal minorities of members will increasingly alienate members of all affiliated groups as is apparent by the 2002 meetings and the response by a substantial number of our most active members in forming the Society for Anthropological Sciences. The nomination committee's rejection of well qualified members to serve the political goals of a few should cease.

We also request *more honesty and openness with members*. AAA lost much credibility with membership with the 'explanation' of the nomination process. This did not serve the organization well when it attempted to explain in concrete terms the selection and scheduling of sessions for the New Orleans meeting of 2002. In short, many did not believe the AAA. When the Anthropology director of the National Science Foundation and the co-directors of the Human Relations Area Files join with other influential members in their protest of AAA procedures, it is a wake-up call that the AAA should heed. Simply put, the domination of our organization by small cabals is moving AAA away from its function of serving its members.

It is true that only a minority of members vote, but as J.K. Galbraith pointed out in his book, *The Politics of Contentment*, this is because members find the exercise futile and hopeless--a waste of their energy. When they can vote only for Version A or Version B of the same thing, there is no point voting. When the work of volunteers is ignored, there is no point volunteering our efforts. Non-participation becomes a rational response. At some point, withdrawal becomes a more rational response. Many biological anthropologists have left the AAA; those who remain are unsatisfied. Many archaeologists have withdrawn from AAA. This leaves our rhetoric of a 4-field approach increasingly vacuous. Now as the AES has become a haven for political viewpoints, and its journal has deteriorated over the past decades in quality, many sociocultural anthropologists are re-thinking their involvement in AAA. We wish to see this process reversed. Historically we have seen the effectiveness of well organized vocal minority politics in the Bolshevik revolution and in the rise of the National Socialists in Germany. It works - unless there is some intervention. That is what we request.

11. We have no **questions to the executive board**. We would request, however that the EB rectify the situation with the nomination committee and take other steps to open the AAA to all of the membership. The reasons are clear and evident, as stated above, in the increasing alienation of AAA and section members. The selective scheduling and rejection of sessions by the program committee should cease also, for the reasons stated above.

Finally, while our board applauds the AAA position in support of diversity in other areas than its own membership, we request that the exclusion of meeting sites by

state cease and a return to screening sites by city. Further, we wondered why the state of Illinois was put off limits because some find the mascot of the University of Illinois to be offensive while Washington D.C., and other cities with similarly offensive sports mascots, are not excluded. We support the use of whatever clout the AAA may have in support of efforts for equality and diversity that are more meaningful and substantial, for instance, not meeting in any municipality that has not adopted a Living Wage Ordinance. This ordinance is meant to insure that any firm that does any city work pays its employees a wage that allows them to escape the poverty level as locally defined. The 80 municipalities that have such ordinances are listed on the Living Wage website and can be easily checked so that sites could be verified for eligibility. Further, because unions are the principle means for achieving economic democracy, we suggest, in the same vein, that AAA not hold meetings in hotels whose workers are not members of unions. The list of hotels whose workers are organized can be found at the [HERE \(Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union\)](#) website. Though this is not a question, we request that the E-Board initiate these two actions. In short, we request more meaningful EB action on behalf of equity and AAA openness.