AAA Committee on Ethics
2003-2004
Annual Report

Members: K. Anne Pyburn, Chair; Kathleen R Martin, Larry Zimmerman, Rachel Caspari, Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, Gale Goodwin-Gomez, Anita Spring, Joe Watkins (Ethical Currents Editor), Stacy Lathrop, AAA Staff.

The Committee on Ethics is working toward a higher educational profile both within the AAA and for the general public. Guided by the Ethics Education Initiative, the committee has undertaken several projects.

Annual Meetings

Guidelines and a timeline for reviewing and selecting COE Invited Sessions were circulated, amended and approved in order to insure future proposed sessions actually materialize. Briefly, COE members will solicit proposals from the membership and two topics will be selected in the fall during the annual meeting; session proposals on these topics will be circulated to COE members toward the end of January; COE will make any necessary changes to the proposed sessions in a February teleconference so that full proposal can be submitted to the Association by the 1 April deadline.

2004 COE Invited Session
Kathleen Martin reported that the COE Invited Session on the Oral History Decision was successful even though there were only two panelists. A reporter from the Discovery Channel was in attendance. Status of an Invited Session signaled to the membership the seriousness of the topic.

COE Invited Sessions for 2005
Rachel Caspari is working with the Biological Anthropology Section on a jointly invited session on ethics and biological anthropology for the 2005 Annual Meeting in Washington, DC.

Free workshop on field school ethics for 2005
Anne Pyburn and Larry Zimmerman will organize a workshop on field schools that emphasizes ethical issues for the 2005 meeting in Washington, DC. Results of the workshop will be aimed toward policy development.

Ethical Currents column in AN
Nine Ethical Currents columns were published this year. Rachel Caspari is currently soliciting columns on ethical issues in biological anthropology.

Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban, Larry Zimmerman and Rachel Caspari confirmed they would serve as the new editors of the "Ethical Currents" column on a rotating basis starting with the September 2004 issue (July 15 deadline).

**AAA Statement on Ethnography and IRBs**
Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban assisted in drafting, and the Committee on Ethics reviewed, an educational statement on Ethnography and Institutional Review Boards (IRBs) adopted by the AAA on June 4 that addresses the protection of human participants in ethnographic research for policymakers, IRBs and ethnographers. The statement interprets the federal regulations governing the protection of human subjects invoked by IRBs in their review of research proposals as they apply to ethnography.

**Textbook Award**
Kathleen Martin wrote a memo to the Finance Committee of the American Anthropological Association regarding the potential costs of establishing an award to be given to textbook publishers for the best presentation of anthropological ethics. The award would not be monetary but rather a certificate of recognition. The award would allow the publisher to note in the marketing of its anthropological text that this text had been selected by the COE as having the best presentation of anthropological ethics. For the purposes of this award, the COE defines anthropological textbooks as those books that discuss the five fields of anthropology (applied/practicing, archaeology, biological, cultural and linguistics) as a basic, introduction to anthropology. Since the mission of the COE is educative, the Committee deems that this kind of award to textbook publishers would encourage publishers to include in their textbooks an enhanced discussion of anthropological ethics.

**Syllabi Project Update**
Difficulty in obtaining copyright for publication of syllabi lead to the decision that instead of posting syllabi the COE provide WEB links to those already posted online. This will be considered by the subcommittee to review the ethics web page. Pyburn agreed to begin collecting links.
Ethics Web Presence

A subcommittee of Rachel Caspari, Larry Zimmerman, Joe Watkins, with consultation of incoming chair Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban was appointed to consider issues in updating and developing the ethics web page, in part to provide institutional memory and educational information on ethics. The lack of association support for web design is seriously hampering the COE's ability to realize its educational mission. Posting links to ethics syllabi, providing a list of specialist advisors, presenting an ethics handbook and several other contributions discussed by the committee all require expertise in posting material through the Association's website.

Friends of the COE

Approximately six queries on ethical issues from Association members and the public were fielded by the COE during the year; this seems like a worthwhile service in line with our educational mission. To enhance our ability to perform this task, previous members of the COE will be invited to join a listing of people available to the membership for consultation on particular topics. The list has been prepared but needs updating.

Responding to the Gregor-Gross Resolution

The COE drafted a report to the membership in response to the Gregor-Gross Resolution, but an article addressing the topic in the December issue of American Anthropologist occasioned additional discussion. The committee was split over whether to go beyond the important commentary by committee member Joe Watkins published in the March 2003 Anthropology News to recommend the Association take the high profile action of creating a nationally competitive research fellowship. Such a fellowship might be directed toward ethical practice, but serve to foreground the educational mission of the committee and the association. Carolyn Fluehr-Lobban agreed to revise the current draft response and circulate that to the committee by the beginning of March. The AAA Executive Board extended the deadline for this report to April 1, 2005.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks are due to Joe Watkins who continued in an advisory capacity to the committee to provide the continuity needed to continue to deal with the repercussions of the Darkness at El
Dorado controversy. Special thanks are also due to Stacy Lathrop, who provides invaluable support, editing, critiques, and encouragement to committee members.