

# The Changing Face of Anthropology

**Anthropology Masters Reflect on Education, Careers, and Professional Organizations**

**The AAA/CoPAPIA 2009 Anthropology MA Career Survey**

**Report from the AAA Committee on Practicing, Applied, and Public Interest Anthropology**



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The MA Survey Advisory Network was enormously helpful in developing the final survey. We appreciate the many hours that members spent negotiating the types of questions and how to ask them, making the survey responsive to all subfields of anthropology. The Consortium of Practicing and Applied Anthropology Programs (COPAA) played an important role in providing support for the distribution of the survey to alumni colleagues, friends and networks. We also appreciate the Society for American Archaeology for their willingness to post the survey link on their website, helping us reach archaeology MA graduates. We also thank the Society for Historical Archaeology and the Register of Professional Archaeologists for their cooperation and coordination. Most importantly, we thank the Masters graduates themselves who tapped into their networks of colleagues and friends to snowball the sampling.

Additional special thanks are extended to Robert T. Trotter, II, at Northern Arizona University for his participation on the Advisory Network—particularly his willingness to contribute extra effort to analyze and interpret open-ended questions and career narratives. Extra special thanks are warranted for Jona H. Pounds, Academic Relations Program Coordinator, for her help in setting up the online survey, preparing data and analysis, and making ongoing modifications to the survey web pages, always in a timely and helpful fashion. Jona's final editing, analysis and formatting of the report was an extraordinary effort which allowed us to move forward to the final report.

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CoPAPIA Survey Team: Shirley Fiske, Linda Bennett, and Patricia Ensworth

**2009 AAA/  
CoPAPIA  
Masters Survey  
Advisory  
Network**

We gratefully acknowledge the substantive contributions, insight, and collaboration of the members of the 2009 Masters Survey Advisory Network. Members are listed below in alphabetical order.

Drew J. Asson (writer and political consultant)  
Elizabeth Bird (University of South Florida)  
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Mary Odell Butler (University of Maryland)  
Janet Cohen (National Park Service)  
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Robert Trotter (Northern Arizona University)

In order to understand how Anthropology Masters graduates craft career paths, assess their educational experiences in departmental programs, and evaluate membership in national organizations, the American Anthropological Association's Committee on Practicing, Applied and Public Interest Anthropology (CoPAPIA) surveyed a non-random sample of Masters graduates in Anthropology. Over 883 individuals responded to the electronic survey, with 758 respondents meeting criteria for inclusion in the primary respondent group: an MA degree prior to 2008 from a North American institution. Key findings in each area are presented below.

### Key findings—Masters' Career Pathways

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- Over 75% of all respondents strongly or somewhat agreed that their degree plays a significant role in their overall career satisfaction.
- Over 42% “strongly agree” that they identify themselves as anthropologists professionally most of the time. This is a modest proportion, but another 20% “somewhat agree” that they identify themselves as anthropologists, making moderate or strong identity the norm for the entire pool of respondents.
- Most respondents reported having a full time job as opposed to part time (39% vs. 8%); and a permanent job, as opposed to contractual (20% vs. 9%). Multiple responses were possible on this question.
- Most MAs located a job within 12 months of receiving their degree (64%).
- By far the most frequent way that MAs found employment was through “networking with a colleague or friend,” (34% of the responses) compared with job-posting services either electronic (12%) or traditional (7%). Multiple responses were possible.

### WHERE DO MAs WORK (EMPLOYMENT SECTOR)?

- The most frequently mentioned employer/sector for both cultural/applied and archaeological degrees was academic institutions (about 20%). Jobs were typically at research centers, museums, and administrative positions rather than anthropology department faculty appointments.
- Archaeologically focused MAs worked more frequently for consulting firms (16%), followed by federal and state government sectors, each at 13%. Public sector, non-academic jobs, therefore, accounted for the highest proportion (26%) of archaeologically focused employment.
- Cultural/applied and 4-field MAs worked more frequently in the non-profit sector (15%), followed by federal and state governments (8% and 7%, respectively).

### WHAT DO MAs DO IN THEIR JOBS?

Among MAs with a cultural/applied focus, education and/or outreach was the most common domain or type of work, followed closely by administration/management. Among archaeologically trained MAs, the most common type of employment was archaeology, cultural resources management, and historic preservation, followed closely by administration/management and education/outreach.

### DO MASTERS GRADUATES WORK IN “ANTHROPOLOGY JOBS”?

Among MAs working in non-academic jobs, nearly 30% have jobs that *require* education and training in anthropology (e.g., cultural resources specialist, ethnographer).

## Key Findings—Assessments of Educational Programs and Experiences

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We asked respondents to assess educational and training areas *most important* to include in an MA curriculum, given their experience:

- Among research and methods, *qualitative skills* ranked highest among five research/method areas (78%), compared to *quantitative skills* at 57%. Archival research ranked lowest at 51%.
- Among substantive/content areas of a curriculum, case studies and readings ranked highest at 62%; anthropological and archaeological *theory* ranked at 54%. Policy/compliance foundations for anthropology and archaeology ranked lowest at 44% among seven substantive areas.
- Among workplace preparation skills, over three-fourths of respondents ranked technical writing for proposals and grants as the most important skill for MA curricula, followed by project design, development and management. Lowest ranked of seven workplace topics was “job-seeking skills.”

We asked for an assessment of the relative merits of the major components of MA programs:

- Over one-half of MA graduates ranked the “thesis/research project” as an extremely helpful component of their graduate program, followed by “field research opportunities” and “advisory/mentor relationships.” “Student teamwork” was the lowest-ranked component among seven areas.
- Over one-third indicated that an Internship/practicum was a component not available to them.
- Overall, Masters graduates expressed high satisfaction with the quality, depth, breadth and relevance of their education and skill sets. Only 9% were somewhat or very dissatisfied.

## Key Findings—Masters Views on Professional Organizations

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- Two thirds of all respondents had a current affiliation with at least one *national* anthropological organization, with the AAA most frequently noted, followed by the Society for Applied Anthropology and the Society for American Archaeology (multiple choices possible).
- Over 40% responded that they belong to *regional and local* anthropological organizations. The four most frequently identified were the Southeastern Archaeological Conference, the Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists, Midwest Archaeological Conference, and the Alaska Anthropological Association.
- More than one-third of the respondents indicated that they belong to a professional organization outside of anthropology (e.g., American Public Health Association, American Evaluation Association).
- We asked about the relevance of national associations across five aspects of membership: 44% of respondents agreed that annual meetings are relevant to their needs and important to their career, and 43% agreed that membership serves their career or occupation.
- We wanted to know what “benefits, services, or opportunities” would lead MA graduates to join an organization. “Networking” was cited as the most important reason to join an association by far, but “access to journals and publications” and “keeping up with the field” were equally cited as the second-most important reasons for joining an association.



## A. Background

According to data collected by the American Anthropological Association (AAA), the number of Masters degrees awarded in anthropology has grown consistently and dramatically since the 1950s. Since 1991 anthropology departments have matriculated over 1,000 Masters students annually (Figure 1). Moreover, there are increasing numbers of MAs produced relative to PhDs. According to the report from the Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE) on PhDs in anthropology, PhDs have increased as well, although at a slower rate (Rudd et al.: 3). Based on CIRGE and AAA data, it appears that in 1958 there were roughly twice as many MAs awarded as PhDs; by 2004, there were three times as many MAs awarded.

While the number of degrees and graduates has steadily increased, little is known about graduates' career trajectories, how Masters programs prepare them for the job market, and their involvement in anthropological organizations. In addition, degree level is not tracked by national associations or independent organizations such as the Survey of Earned Doctorates for PhD theses.

## I. Introduction

**Figure 1. Trends in MAs Awarded in Anthropology 1948-2010**

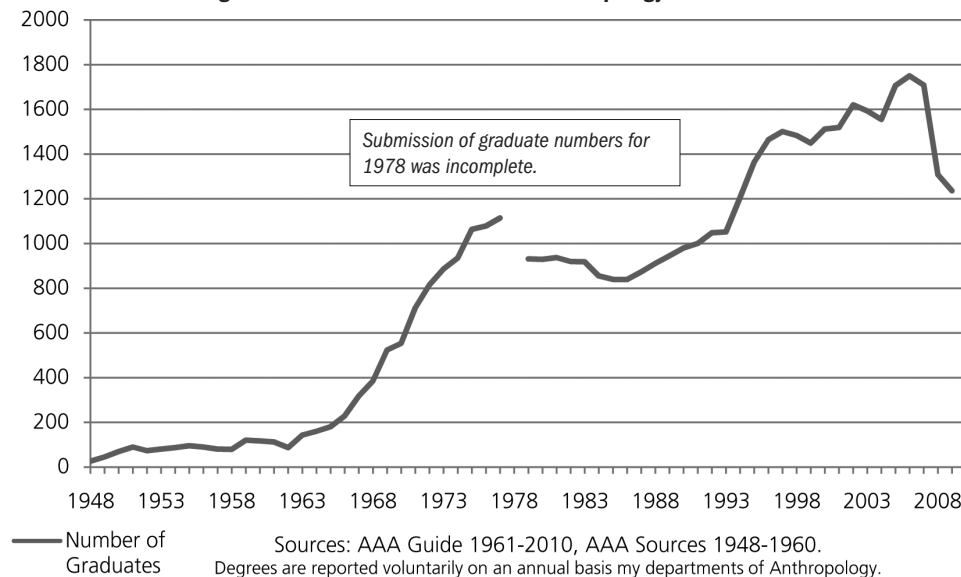
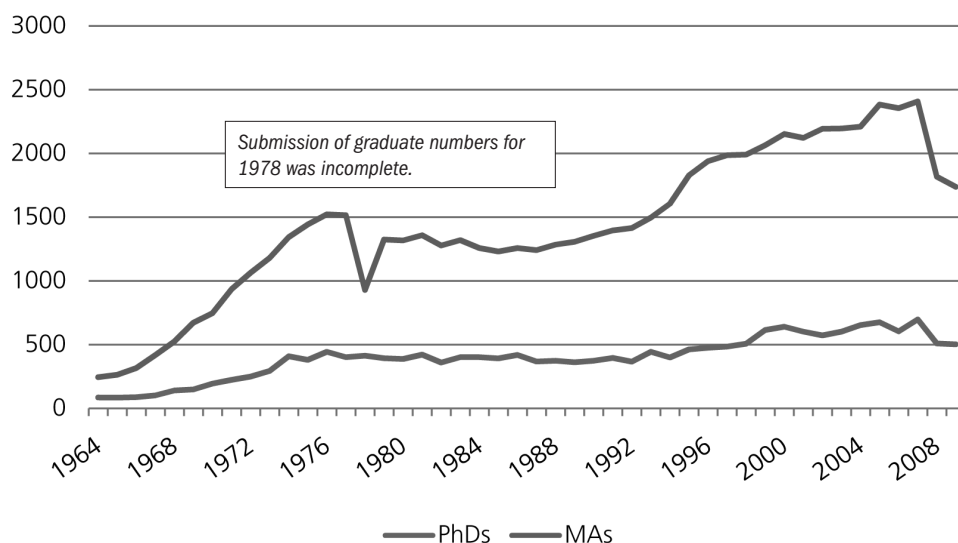


Figure 1 shows increases in the number of Masters graduates since the early 1960s. The production of MAs peaked in 2005 and 2007, with over 1700 graduates per year. The slight decline of 2007-8 was within normal historical variability; however, the large drop in 2008-9 appears to have been caused by a combination of a change in data collection policy (in 2008-9, later revoked); and an actual decrease in the number of MA, PhD and BA graduates reported by departments.

The number of PhDs also grew during this time period, so comparisons are warranted. Figure 2 compares MA graduates and PhDs in anthropology from 1964-2009. The number of Masters graduates outpaces the production of PhDs. In 1963, PhDs were 57% of the total (MA and PhDs) degrees awarded; in 2009, PhDs are 41% of the pool of MAs and PhDs.

In Figure 1, please note that the dip in graduates in 1978 is due to incomplete data collection for that particular year, rather than a trend in the number of MAs awarded. The steady growth in MAs raises broad questions regarding the development of our discipline and profession, such as the degree to which our discipline is becoming a profession or at least has 'professionalized' our field of endeavor (see Baba 2009). The Masters degree can

**Figure 2. Trends in MAs and PhDs Awarded in Anthropology 1964–2009**



be characterized as a portal to employment outside of traditional academic departments, but where are MAs finding employment? How will these trends affect anthropology as a whole? How can their experience and expertise be integrated into the discipline as a whole, benefitting all of anthropology?

Naturally the growth in MAs and applied anthropology programs has fostered interest by academic departments in topics of education and training for Masters. Questions began to appear in the disciplinary literature, such as: “What do graduate students learn from their experiences in practice settings outside academia (i.e., internships)?” and “How do their experiences illuminate the design of training programs?” Case studies, anecdotes, departmental peer reviews, and departmental records have formed the basis of most knowledge about Masters programs and graduate experiences (Freidenberg and Chambers 2000).

There are multiple factors behind the growth in MA graduates and programs, and the purpose here is to note some of the organizational developments in recent years that have been supportive of the professional status and identity of MA anthropologists. Archaeology provides some clear examples, including the development of the Register of Professional Archaeologists to encourage professional and ethical actions of members. One of the many developments fueling the number of MAs is the growth of the cultural resources management (CRM) industry and related fields in archaeology. It is estimated that “in the United States, CRM already is, or soon will be, operating at the scale of one-billion dollars per year. Roughly 14,000 persons are estimated to be employed as CRM professionals across the nation, and presently about 70% of them are trained as archaeologists. In contrast, there are about 1,500 archaeologists employed in traditional professor/researcher roles, a number that has not grown for the last generation. Even though more than 85% of all archaeologists in the US now work in the growing CRM industry, most undergraduate and graduate programs continue to produce graduates for an ever-shrinking number of academic positions.” (Doelle and Altschul 2009)

In 2000, the Consortium of Practicing and Applied Anthropology Programs (COPAA) was formed to advance the education and training of students, faculty, and practitioners in applied anthropology. Initially, five of the nine original member departments had Masters programs that focused on applied and practicing anthropology; the others offered doctoral programs, also with a focus on applied anthropology. Subsequently two of the five masters

programs have developed doctoral programs, with a strong emphasis on applied anthropology and archaeology. COPAA now has 27 members.

## **B. CoPAPIA and Survey Development**

In fall of 2007, on the recommendation of the AAA's Practicing Anthropology Working Group (PAWG), the AAA Executive Board established a standing committee to advance the interests and efforts of the growing sector of anthropologists working outside of academia. The Committee on Practicing, Applied, and Public Interest Anthropology (CoPAPIA) noted that the profession and discipline as a whole suffer from the lack of integration of Masters in the discipline and identified the survey as a high priority. CoPAPIA recognized the mutual interests of Masters alumni, Masters degree programs, and the AAA as the major national anthropological association. These facts and personal synergisms led Shirley Fiske, Linda Bennett and Patricia Ensworth to spearhead the development of an electronic national survey to learn more about MA anthropologists across all major fields of anthropology. A proposal to AAA was developed in spring 2008, and CoPAPIA and the survey team gratefully acknowledge AAA Executive Board for its financial support for the survey and the report. Terry Redding was asked to join the team as Survey Coordinator in the fall of 2008, and he took on responsibility for implementing the survey development, its execution, and analysis of the results.

There was one previous survey of Masters graduates in 2000. Under the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA) sponsorship, Robert C. Harman, Jim Hess, and Amir Shafe conducted a mailed survey with 113 individual respondents from six applied MA training programs (California State University Long Beach, University of Maryland, University of Memphis, Northern Arizona University, University of South Florida, and University of Kentucky). The one-page survey contained four open-ended items, which were coded into various skill and job categories. Results offered valuable foundational data and comparison information for this current survey (Harman et al. 2004) and Robert Harman agreed to serve on the survey's advisory group.

The CoPAPIA survey team drafted the initial goal and purpose statement, which was refined through discussions with the committee, AAA staff, and COSWA practitioner survey director Keri Brondo (now a CoPAPIA member). The Survey Team completed additional telephone interviews with a number of Masters graduates, department chairs of Masters programs, and AAA section presidents in order to flesh out and validate the idea and focus. The committee was committed to a strong outreach effort to reach MA archaeologists and specialists of CRM, historic preservation, and fields of museum work in addition to the cultural and applied anthropological workers with sub-specialties of medical and public health, government, community development, environment, business and industry, education, and evaluation. Physical anthropologists, biological anthropologists and forensics, and linguistics were very important as well.

In order to integrate these broad perspectives in the design and distribution of the survey, the CoPAPIA survey committee engaged an advisory network of over 20 experienced anthropologists representing departments with Masters degree programs, members of COPAA, MA alumni in diverse occupations and careers, and presidents of predominantly applied sections of AAA. In January and February of 2009 the Survey Team solicited the 2009 MA Survey Advisory Network which represented the major constituencies and sectors including archaeological contracting firms, MA graduates in historic preservation, anthropologists in public service and in the private sector in a wide range of sub-specialties. The charge to the advisory network was to provide advice on the content of survey, the design of questions and outreach to graduates; to help distribute the survey electronically, and to

provide feedback on the results. The Advisory Network members are listed on page iv.

The overall purpose of the survey was to better understand the career trajectories of Masters degree holders and how they have applied the knowledge and skills acquired in their programs to their careers. Among other things, it was hoped that the survey would do the following:

- Reveal how Masters degree alumni have crafted careers and provide advice for departmental programs.
- Show whether MAs continue to identify with the profession.
- Relate how MAs can best be engaged by national organizations, so that organizations can benefit from their knowledge and experience.
- Determine how organizations can better serve MA alumni.

In addition to the NAPA/Harman 2000 survey noted earlier, the AAA Committee on the Status of Women in Anthropology (COSWA 2007) conducted an online practicing anthropology workplace climate survey (Brondo et al. 2009). The COSWA practitioner report served as a very useful model, and the assistance from Keri Brondo as lead author of the survey was very helpful in planning and undertaking the 2009 Masters Survey. In addition we found the COSWA survey on academic climate and gender to be very helpful, especially in interpreting our results relative to gender (Wasson et al. 2008). The survey of American archaeologists undertaken in 1997 was a useful resource as well (Zeder, 1997). Another useful survey was conducted by the Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE), based in the University of Washington, College of Education. The survey results focused on PhDs within the academy and offered useful comparisons to MA graduates on a number of dimensions (Rudd et al. 2008).

### **C. Survey Design, Methodology, and Implementation**

It should be clarified that the term “anthropology” here and throughout the report refers to the discipline in its broadest sense: archaeological, cultural, linguistic, physical/biological, applied, and other specializations. In this report, the terms Masters, MA (Masters of Arts), MS (Masters of Science), MAA (Master of Applied Anthropology), and other Masters level anthropology degrees will be referred to as either “Masters” or “MAs”.

Decisions about target and focus of the survey and the construction of the questions were followed by pre-testing and vetting of draft surveys. Several dozen sample questions were compiled into a draft questionnaire and distributed for comment to the CoPAPIA committee and the Advisory Network. Although the list of questions was painfully narrowed, the survey team wanted to keep a substantial number of open-ended questions because of the potentially rich data. In the end it was decided to have a more lengthy survey in which certain open-ended questions were optional in order to preserve the richness of personal narratives. Those respondents with time constraints could move through the survey more quickly. It was estimated that it would take 30 minutes to complete the survey.

Once a final version of the survey was completed, it was uploaded by AAA staff and the survey coordinator into the online survey provider (Zarca). Several beta testers with no prior connection to the process then completed the survey online, timed their responses, and provided further perspective and comments.

The survey opened for responses in early May 2009 after meetings with COPAA at the Society for Applied Anthropology (SfAA) annual meetings. Announcement messages went via email during the first few weeks to all anthropology departments and institutional members of AAA, AAA Sections, personal and professional contacts of committee and advisory group members, CoPAPIA and COPAA members, the Society for American

Archaeology (SAA), the Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA), the Register of Professional Archaeologists (RPA), and other organizations, groups, and individuals.

Recipients forwarded messages to email lists, listservs, web sites, alumni lists, and other resources. Some 675 individual invitation messages were sent directly to MAs from a list provided by AAA. All those who received messages were asked to help distribute the message further, especially to those colleagues who might be out of anthropological communication circles. This snowball sampling effort was instrumental in trying to reach those who had lost touch with anthropology.

Notices about the survey were published in a number of places: *Anthropology News*, the SfAA Newsletter, E-Anth, the URBANTH-L, Association for Political and Legal Anthropology and AnthroDesign listservs, the ethnography.com blog, and various Facebook pages, to mention a few. From feedback received over the summer it was evident that the survey notice was being widely distributed, as queries came in from individuals abroad and previously unknown groups that had received the message. Periodically over the summer of 2009 the survey data were reviewed to ensure it was reaching a cross-section of anthropologists. During the summer the survey team increased efforts to reach members of minority groups through personal contacts, LPOs, and AAA Sections.

During the summer peak, responses were coming in at a rate of several per day. By the posted deadline of August 31, there were still several respondents each week, so the survey was continued for two additional weeks and closed on September 16, 2009. Data were downloaded by AAA staff in MS Excel format and sent to the survey committee for analysis.

Questions were tabulated using MS Excel and SPSS, and results were organized into tables and charts for analysis by frequency and percentage. Responses with names, dates, and one or two-word answers were compiled by frequency and in alphabetical or numeric order. Cross tabulations were performed using SPSS and Excel. Coding was applied to short-answer questions related to quantitative questions, which were then quantified and analyzed. The stand-alone, open-ended questions were analyzed using ATLAS.ti.

Analysis was aided by a Roundtable presentation of the initial results at the AAA meetings in December 2009, followed by a presentation to the Department Chairs at the same AAA meeting. Feedback and responses were very helpful in clarifying messages and analysis and have helped shape this report. In addition, preliminary data on all the sections of the report were posted on the CoPAPIA website as the analysis and report progressed. (<http://www.aaanet.org/cmtes/copapia/index.cfm>)

In summary, a total of 883 respondents completed the survey. Of these, 758 met the survey criteria for our target group (MA from a North American institution before 2008), and were the primary data set for the analysis. In designing the survey, we chose to limit the target group to those who graduated before 2008 in order that respondents would have the necessary time in the workforce and experiential base to answer questions on career and education. Additionally, we wanted to limit the respondent group to those who had had similar curricular experiences, in general, in North America. The remaining 125 respondents consisted of 2008 graduates, those who graduated from institutions outside of North America, and those whose date and place of graduation could not be determined. These data were available to be used for comparisons to the primary data set and for comments.

Naturally it is hard to generalize to a population assumed to be in the tens of thousands since 1980, so it is helpful to keep in mind a profile of who answered the survey. The demographics of the respondents reflect the demographic structure reported for AAA membership overall: 60% are women, and 80% identified themselves as white. In addition, 50% of the respondents received their degree in the 2000 decade, and another 25% in the 1990s, so the group was predominantly graduates within 20 years of their degree.

The survey and questions were oriented toward the experience of MA-only degree

holders; however, some MAs who went on to get PhDs or were PhD students took the survey anyway. We elected to include them in most analyses (i.e., the primary pool of n=758 respondents) because (a) they received an MA and had relevant experiences even if they continued to a higher degree; and (b) those respondents could be sorted when needed for MA-only analyses. Approximately 31% went on to PhDs or were enrolled in PhD programs, either in anthropology or in another field (see Table 4, page 10). Those questions where we wanted to reflect only MA graduates' experiences are clearly identified as Masters-only data in the discussion and titles of the tables.

## II. Respondent Demographics

Very little is known about Masters graduates as a group. The Harman et al. (2000) survey is the only other survey that targeted anthropology Masters graduates. This section provides a snapshot of the sample's demographic characteristics. We asked a number of questions about respondents' backgrounds that help provide a profile of MAs: educational status and specialties, gender, age, race, ethnic, marital status, and income distribution.

Because of the length and depth of the survey, only the major trends and highlights are reported in the sections. However, we encourage the reader to read the appendices for additional information: Appendix B contains detailed tables of the breakdowns of respondents, as well as compiled response frequencies for survey questions 1 to 59. Cross tabulation tables for several questions are shown in Appendix C. These two documents provide readers with a deeper and more detailed look at all survey questions and the methods by which report analyses were derived. Frequencies for most tables are provided. Frequencies may vary, as not all respondents answered all questions.

### A. Educational Demographics

#### YEAR AND DECADE OF GRADUATION

Not surprisingly, more respondents graduated recently. Table 1 shows a breakdown by graduation decade of respondents, half of whom graduated in the first seven years since 2000.

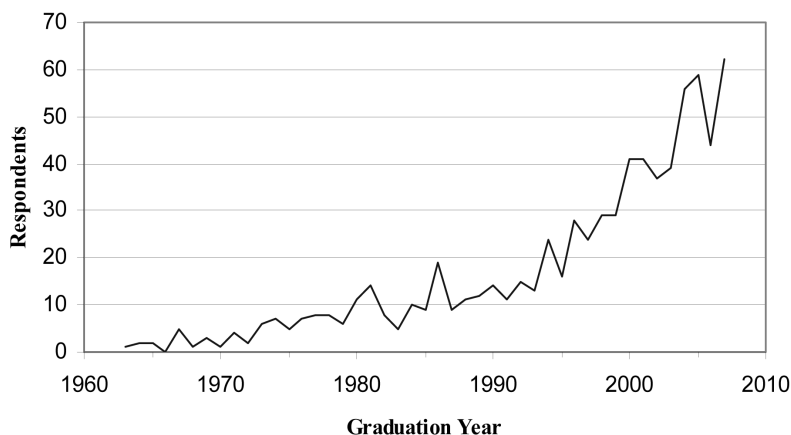
**Table 1. Respondents by Decade of Degree**

Decade	Frequency	Percentage
2000s	379	50%
1990s	203	27%
1980s	108	14%
1970s	54	7%
1960s	14	2%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

Plotted by year, Figure 3 shows a steady increase by year in respondents who graduated more recently. This result can be anticipated, assuming that more recent graduates would be easier to contact through alumni groups, graduating departments and other sources before they drifted away from current networks.

**Figure 3. Respondent Graduation by Year (n=758)**





We asked respondents to identify the university from which they graduated. They reported graduating from 128 different universities in the U.S., twelve in Canada, and two in Mexico. The most frequently identified universities of graduation are shown in Table 2. Many of these universities have well-established applied anthropology programs, perhaps reflecting distribution networks through COPAA and CoPAPIA. The first six universities listed make up nearly one-third of the entire respondent pool, a fact that should be kept in mind when interpreting later questions on education and careers.

**Table 2. Degree-Issuing Universities, top 12  
(A total of 128 academic institutions were listed.)**

University	Frequency
University of Memphis	61
Northern Arizona University	53
University of Maryland College Park	45
University of South Florida	32
University of Arizona	30
American University	22
Western Washington University	14
University of Wisconsin Milwaukee	12
Arizona State University	11
Georgia State University	11
San Diego State University	11
University of Arkansas	11

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, *The Changing Face of Anthropology*

### PRIMARY FOCUS OF DEGREE

We wanted to find out how Masters graduates categorized their degree focus, and asked respondents to check off a list of specializations. Multiple responses were possible in order to get a more complete interpretation of MA specializations. All respondents selected at least one specialty; many selected more than one. Another 78 wrote in additional specialties under the “Other” option. As seen below, those who identified “Archaeology” as their degree focus made up the *largest single group* of respondents. The larger numbers of archaeologically focused MAs responding to the survey most likely reflects the production of greater numbers of MA graduates and greater employment opportunities for CRM, historic preservation, and other specialties. This trend probably reflects the history of statutes that have created demand for professional archaeological knowledge and services, from the Antiquities Act, Historic Preservation Act, and the National Environmental Protection Act, to name the most prominent. The production of MAs is a response to the employment market for these skills combined with an increasing public interest in archaeology and history. The Harman et al. survey (2000) also found greater numbers of archaeologists among respondents.



**Table 3. Masters Degree Specialties, Focus of Degree (n=758)  
Multiple responses possible**

Specialty	Frequency
Archaeology	271
Cultural/Social	262
Applied/Practicing	243
Medical	97
Physical/Forensic	66
Urban	53
Museum/Curatorial	39
CRM	38
Educational	26
Environmental	21
Historic Preservation	17
Linguistics	15
Four Fields/Generalist	6
Business	5
Public Anthropology	5
Visual and/or Media Anthropology	4
International Development	4
Primate Behavior/ Primatology	3
Community Development/ Engagement	3
Ethnohistory	3
Other	78

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

The respondents were categorized by degree specializations into two broad groups for purposes of comparison. The archaeological specialization includes those respondents who indicated Archaeology, CRM, or Historic Preservation as their area of focus. These were combined into one subgroup, referred to as “Archaeological focus” or degree specialization.

The second broad subgroup included those respondents who checked Cultural or social anthropology, applied /practicing anthropology, a four-field approach, and specializations such as medical, urban, environmental, business, educational, linguistics, or “Other.” Physical/ forensic anthropology (n=66) and Museum/curatorial (n=39) specializations were also included in this category because of the small frequencies. (Please see Table 3, page 9, for the frequencies for each of 21 choices of degree focus.) This second broad category of degree specializations is called “Cultural/applied and other specializations.”

These two general categories of degree specializations are useful in understanding variability in the respondent group across a number of educational and career topics.

### CURRENT EDUCATIONAL STATUS

The survey asked people to describe their current educational status—that is, what degrees they were working on or had completed. The survey provided an open-ended matrix wherein respondents could enter up to seven university degrees, years they were completed, and specializations of study. Using this question (survey questions 49–50) and the related question on degree focus (Table 3), all 758 respondents were coded for their focus and highest degree.

We wanted to be able to sort the Masters-only from those who chose to go on to a higher degree but had completed the questionnaire. They were sorted into three groups: those who obtained MAs (70% of total); those who are currently pursuing a PhD (about 14%); and those who have obtained a PhD or other post-MA degree (16%). Then, we combined the latter two groups into what we refer to as the PhD-destination group, which constituted about 31% of the sample. Thus we were able to make comparisons between MA-only and PhD-destination subgroups in our analyses. The groupings and frequencies are shown in Table 4, below.

**Table 4. Current Educational Status of Survey Respondents (n=758)**

Highest Degree Obtained	Frequency	Percentage
MA, cultural, applied, urban, medical, physical, and other specialties	328	43%
MA, archaeological focus	144	19%
MA, not able to determine or four fields	50	7%
PhD student, cultural, applied, physical, and other specified focuses	26	3%
PhD student, archaeological focus	11	1%
PhD student, non-anthropology focus	17	2%
PhD student, subject not specified	62	8%
PhD, cultural, applied, physical, and other specified focuses	70	9%
PhD, archaeological focus	27	4%
PhD, MD, JD, etc., non-anthropology focus	20	3%
PhD, subject not specified	3	0%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, *The Changing Face of Anthropology*

### ADDITIONAL CERTIFICATES AND TRAINING

In addition to their MA degrees, we asked respondents if they received any additional certifications, training, or degrees not already mentioned. In an open-ended question (Q #52), we gave them the opportunity to specify additional degrees or certifications. This question yielded over 100 different forms of training, certificates, degrees and coursework from 169 respondents. Although frequencies of each were very low, two types of certification or training were mentioned most frequently—12 respondents mentioned teaching certificates and training, and 8 individuals mentioned certificates in museum studies.

## B. Other Demographics

Our respondent pool reflected trends noted in other surveys and AAA data, namely a strong proportion of women in the field, and a preponderance of people who identified themselves as Caucasian. The COSWA 2009 survey on practitioners found very similar characterizations along these dimensions of gender and ethnicity, which also reflects AAA membership trends.

### PRIMARY PLACE OF RESIDENCE

We asked people where they lived at the time of the survey. Respondents were spread geographically across 48 U.S. states and the District of Columbia, seven Canadian provinces, and three Mexican states. Another 19 claimed primary residence outside of North America in 14 countries around the globe. The top 10 places of residence are shown in Table 5 below. Except for the first state listed, California, these correspond somewhat with the locations of the most frequently listed graduate schools of respondents.

**Table 5. Primary Residence, Top 10 States (n=737)**

State/Province	Frequency
California	70
Tennessee	49
Arizona	47
Maryland	44
Florida	43
New York	40
Washington	35
North Carolina	32
District of Columbia (DC)	25
Texas	22

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

### SEX

The survey allowed people to categorize themselves by sex. Of the 746 respondents to the survey, 496 (66%) checked female and 247 (33%) identified themselves as males; three respondents reported “Other” and 12 did not answer.

When cross tabulations were performed, separating out the MA-only group and comparing sex and degree specializations, we found that differences in the female/male balance were more pronounced within some degree specializations. For example, among MAs with an archaeological focus, females constituted 57% and males, 43% of the sample. However, among MAs with cultural/applied and other specialties, females made up 75% and males only 25% of the respondents. Please see Appendix B, pages B-3 and B-45.

### ETHNICITY

We asked people to identify themselves “ethnically or culturally” in an open-ended question; in a subsequent question we asked respondents to choose categories from the U.S. Census that best identified themselves. The data underscore the over-representation in the discipline of those who consider themselves white, ethnically and/or racially. Eighty-four percent (n=599)

indicated they were white/Caucasian; 3% (n=20) selected Black (including African American, Afro-Caribbean); 3% (n=24) chose Hispanic/Latino; and 2% (n=13) Asian/Pacific Islander. American Indian/Native Alaskan respondents were 1% (n=9) of the respondent pool. Since AAA does not collect ethnic data from members, we cannot compare these results with AAA membership overall. At the same time, these numbers correspond very closely to the results of the COSWA survey of practitioners, which also found 84% of its sample to report being Caucasian, and similarly small numbers indicating minority status (Brondo et al. 2009: 15).

The open-ended answers provide rich data on the diverse ways that people identify themselves as ethnic and cultural beings, since nearly all respondents answered this question. The self-identifiers ranged from “American with ancestors from Italy, Acadia, Canada” to “Slovenian,” “Costa Rican,” “Californian,” “Chicana,” and “GreekAmerican/Mutt.” There were a number of responses such as “I do not agree with using such categories” and “Homo sapiens/anthropology,” and “I don’t,” indicating a frustration with attempts to be asked to categorize themselves ethnically. Although this question was not analyzed other than frequency tables, the data for Question 56 (the open-ended question) are worth the time to read for their ability to provide a glimpse into the rich diversity of North American anthropologists. Please see Appendix B-47 and B-48.

Although groups representing traditional ethnic minorities were specifically contacted to help distribute the Masters survey (e.g., AAA Sections including the Association of Black Anthropologists and Association of Latina and Latino Anthropologists), non-white respondents were disproportionately fewer in frequency relative to their general U.S. population frequencies.

The one exception were American Indian or Alaska Native respondents—slightly over one percent—in this survey, while they constitute less than one percent of the general population according to 2000 U.S. Census figures.

#### **MARITAL STATUS AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION**

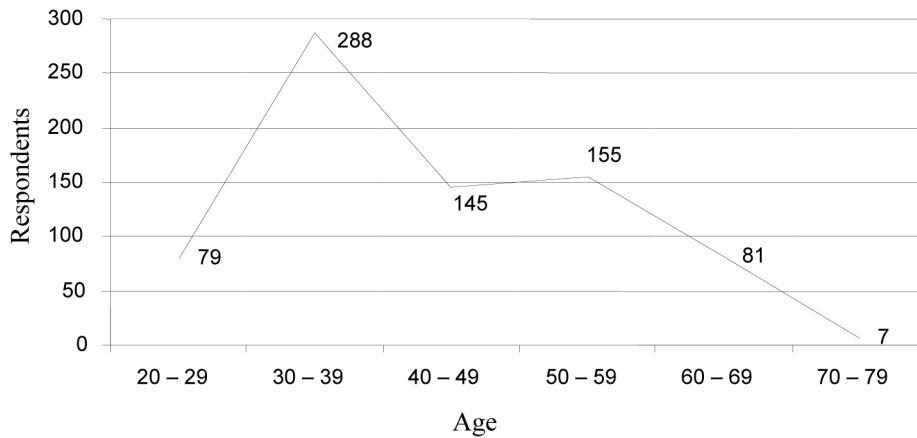
The majority, 68%, of all respondents reported their status as “Married/domestic partner” (n=508). Twenty percent were “Single,” (n=149) and 10% were “Divorced/separated” (77). One percent reported being a widow or widower, and 1% reported “Other.” Please see Appendix B-47.

When asked about the number of children or dependents living with them, 38% (n=263) reported one or more children/dependents living with them. Of those who had dependents in the household, 18% (n=123) had one child/dependent, while 16% (n=108) had two children or dependents living with them. The majority of the respondent pool (n=423, 62%) indicated that the question was “N/A” to their situation. Please see Appendix B-47.

#### **AGE DISTRIBUTION**

Considering the degree data in Figure 3, we might assume that respondent age distribution would mirror graduation dates; that is, with the higher frequency of recent graduates, we might anticipate the respondent pool would be skewed toward younger people. However, data in Figure 4, on the following page, show a different pattern.

**Figure 4. Respondent Age Distribution (n=755)**

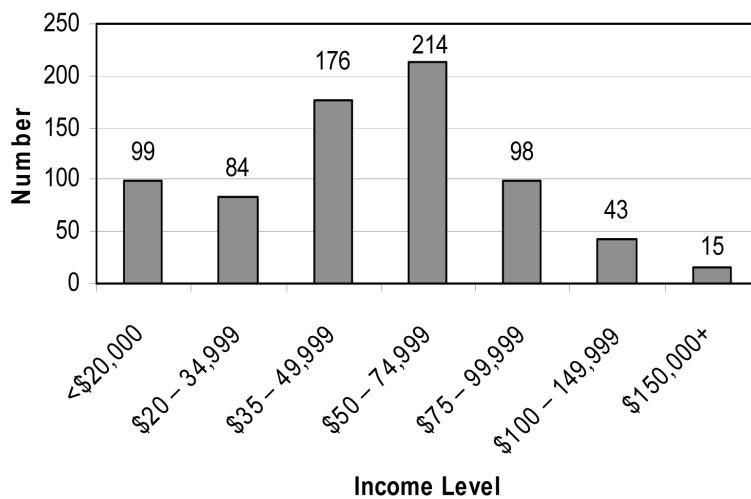


The data show that the most frequently selected age group consists of respondents in their 30s to 40s; but many respondents were in their 40s and 50s as well. The majority of respondents were between 30 and 59 years of age. When sorted by Masters degree holders only, the resulting chart appears nearly identical to this graph (which includes all respondents in the primary pool, n=755). Please see Appendix B-44. In comparison with the practitioner survey done by COSWA, which found the majority of practitioners in the 30-69-year range (Brondo, et al. 2009: 15) this survey found the respondent pool to be slightly younger, with the majority in the 30-59-year range.

**SALARY RANGE AND INCOME DISTRIBUTIONS**

We asked people to identify their salary within given ranges, from less than \$20,000 annual salary to over \$150,000. The question was optional, yet a total of 729 respondents (96%) answered this question. Income levels followed a relatively normal curve, with the majority (53%, n=390) falling between \$35,000 and \$74,900; and the largest group between \$50,000 and \$74,900 (Figure 5).

**Figure 5. Respondent Income Distribution, all Respondents (n=729)**



**Figure 6. Salary Distributions, MA graduates by Sex (n= 572)**

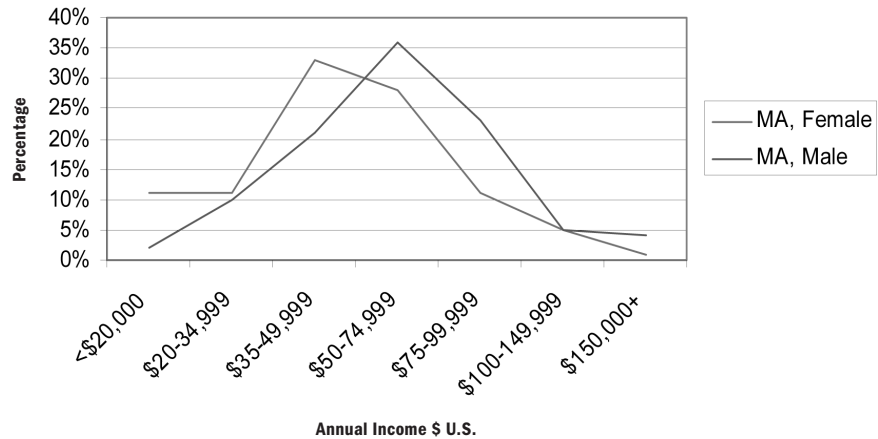
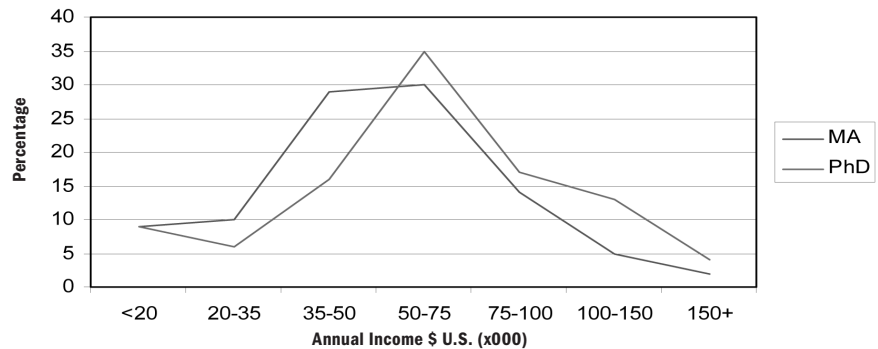


Figure 6 shows MA degree-holders only and compares the number of men and women who fall in each income range. As can be seen, fewer women are in the mid-high income range of \$50,000-\$99,999 compared with men. In the higher income range of \$100,000-\$149,000 there appears to be roughly the same number of women and men. For the highest income bracket that we tested, there are again more men earning high salaries than women. At the lower end of the income spectrum, the situation is reversed. There are more women than men earning low salaries and mid-low salaries from less than \$20,000 to \$35,000-\$49,999.

**Figure 7. Salary Distributions, MA graduates and PhDs (n= 758)**



Both MA and PhD respondents have similar curves for income levels. PhDs have greater proportions of their subgroup earning from \$50,000 to the highest income bracket, \$150,000. By comparison, the U.S. Census data comparing income by gender and degree across the U.S. population show dramatic differences between MA and PhD income, below.

**Table 6. Income Figures, U.S. Census, by Gender and Degree (2006)**

		Masters	Doctorate
Female	Median	\$50,835	\$64,081
	Mean	\$54,839	\$71,129
Male	Median	\$71,797	\$95,877
	Mean	\$88,824	\$116,846

Where are respondents with \$150,000 salaries most likely to work? By looking at Table 7 below, one can see where MA-only respondents with annual incomes over \$75,000 are likely to work. In order to get a clearer picture, we broke out the archaeology focus from the cultural-applied-other specialization group. Those respondents who had specialties in the archaeology/CRM/historic preservation areas were much more likely to work for the federal government than other sectors, followed by consulting firms. Those MAs with a cultural/applied/other specialty were more likely to work for a large corporation in the private sector, but followed very closely by federal government, consulting firms, and non-profit organizations.

**Table 7. MAs Earning \$75,000-\$150,000/year.**  
**Sector of Employment**  
**Multiple responses possible on both questions.**

MA with Archaeology Focus*		MA with Cultural/applied and other specialization*	
<i>(n=24; responses =38)</i>		<i>(n=72; responses=112)</i>	
42%	Government, federal	22%	Larger corporation
25%	Consulting firm	18%	Government, federal
17%	Small or medium business	17%	Consulting firm
17%	Government, state or local	15%	Nonprofit organization
17%	Museum/curatorial	13%	Independent consultant

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

\*For this and other analyses by degree focus, the respondents were categorized into two broad groups for purposes of comparison. The archaeological “focus” includes those respondents who indicated Archaeology, CRM, or Historic Preservation as their area of focus. These were combined into one subgroup, referred to as “Archaeological focus” or degree specialization. The second broad subgroup included those respondents who did not check archaeology, but who checked Cultural or social anthropology, applied /practicing anthropology, a four-field approach, and specializations such as medical, urban, environmental, business, educational, linguistics, or “Other,” in which they could specify their focus. Physical/forensic anthropology (n=66) and Museum/curatorial (n=39) specializations (unless they specified ‘Archaeology’ and museum/curatorial work) were also included in this category because of the small frequencies. (Please see Table 3, page 9 for the frequencies for each of 21 choices of degree focus.) This second broad category of degree specializations is called “Cultural/applied and other specializations” for purposes of brevity.

### **C. Summary**

In sum, our sample is characterized as being recent graduates, the majority of whom graduated between 1990 and 2008, from institutions with long-standing anthropology Masters programs. While the survey was explicitly oriented to Master-only graduates, about 31% of the respondents received higher degrees beyond the MA level or were currently enrolled in PhD programs. Among the full pool of respondents, the most frequently identified degree focus was Archaeology (n=271), followed closely by Cultural Anthropology (n=262), and Applied/Practicing (n=243), where multiple choices were possible. Demographically, the majority of respondents were white women in the age range of 30 to 49 years of age, who were married or living with a domestic partner. Thirty-eight percent reported having 1 to 4 children or dependents living with them. A majority (although slight) of the overall sample had salaries between \$35,000 to \$74,900, with a fairly normal distribution. The proportion of women earning less than men in each income bracket was consistently lower, with the exception of the lowest and lower-mid income ranges from \$20,000 to \$49,999. In these income ranges, there were more women than men. These data show that greater proportions of women in the sample have lower salaries than men; and more men have mid-high to high incomes than women. The archaeology MAs with the highest salaries (between \$75,000-\$150,000) tended to work in the federal government and consulting firms; the high-salary MAs with a degree focus in cultural/applied anthropology and other specialties tended to work in private-sector corporations and the federal government. More details on crafting careers, employment sectors, salaries, and types of work done by MA anthropologists will be found in upcoming sections.



### III. Survey Results

The 2009 MA survey asked Masters for their reflections in three main areas: experiences and views of their education and degree programs; career development, satisfaction, and current employment; and views on organizations and affiliations.

This report presents key findings for each of the three areas. Additional information is provided in full in the appendices. The survey instrument can be found in Appendix A; the frequency results and percentages for each question can be found in Appendix B. All cross tabulations are compiled in the “Survey Cross Tabulations Tables,” Appendix C. With these three documents, readers can obtain a broader range of information and greater understanding of the survey data beyond that which is offered in the report text.

As mentioned in the Demographics section, the team faced a number of challenges in analyzing the data. Although the survey was designed for Masters graduates only and not for respondents who continued on in PhD programs, about 31% completed or were in PhD programs. We partitioned the data into subsets of “MA-only” and “PhD” degree-holders and students so that we could get a clearer picture of those graduates with MAs only. While most of the analyses use the full set of respondents (n=758)—that is, the pool of MA-only + PhD-bound respondents—some of the discussion and questions focus on MAs only. We clearly indicate the respondent base being utilized in all cases.

An additional challenge was to characterize the degree focus or degree specializations of graduates. We asked several questions to capture the substantive focus of peoples’ degrees. Table 3 (page 9) shows degree focus responses where multiple selections were possible from a pull-down list. The most frequently chosen specialization was “Archaeology,” followed closely by “Cultural/Social” and “Applied/Practicing.” However, in a separate question, the survey also provided a matrix where respondents could enter up to seven degrees they had completed, years they were completed, and specializations of study.

The combination of these two questions allowed us to categorize degree focus into broad subgroups with more precision. Those with an “Archaeological focus” include respondents who checked “Archaeology,” “Historic preservation,” or “CRM.” Those who indicated a focus in Cultural and Applied anthropology, along with other specialties including urban, linguistics, medical, education, environmental, business and “four-fields” were categorized as “Cultural/applied and other specializations.” The two main subgroups received a separate coding for comparison purposes.

There were very small numbers of respondents who indicated their specialties as “Forensic/physical” (n=66), Museum/curatorial (n=39), and “Primate behavior/Primateology” (n=3). Because of the small numbers, these degree specialties were included in the “Cultural/applied and other specializations” category, as they were not viable as separate categories.

#### A. Reflections on Masters Education and Degree Programs

Over a dozen questions explored respondents’ reflections on how they appraised their MA education and the components of their degree programs. In planning the survey, the survey team drew upon the advice of members of the Advisory Network regarding information that would be helpful to departments who offer MA programs. The team also consistently heard from their Advisory Network on the need for information from graduates on whether they found their degree and educational preparation useful in their careers.

#### MOTIVATION FOR PURSUING MASTERS DEGREE

To begin, we asked about graduates’ reasons for pursuing an MA in anthropology. A series of Likert scale questions explored motivations across 10 different factors. Of the primary pool of survey respondents (n=758), a large majority (85%) believed a Masters would enhance their career opportunities more than a bachelor’s degree. Seventy percent were also seeking

*“The masters would have been sufficient had it also included more teaching experience and/or grant writing experience. I feel the knowledge I gained was not marketable enough to make me competitive with other MA anthropologists or other MA social scientists. I feel more required experiences would benefit all the MA students to make us competitive in more diverse professional arenas.”*

MA, APPLIED URBAN  
FOCUS

education or training for a specific job or career. About two thirds agreed that they were motivated by a general interest in anthropology rather than a specific career goal. One third said they could not afford, in time and/or money, to pursue a PhD.

Over half of all respondents hoped to combine the degree with other education or training in pursuit of a specific job or career. Nearly half (45%) said they planned to pursue a role in teaching. Please see Appendix B-9 for the frequencies across all 10 motivational factors.

Distinct differences in motivation for pursuing a Masters education become apparent when looking at subgroups by degree specialization and type of degree. Table 8 compares four groups: those holding PhDs and those holding MAs with an archaeological focus; and those holding PhDs and those holding MAs with a cultural, applied, or other focus.

The Masters subgroup specializing in archaeology strongly agreed (two-thirds) that they were pursuing a specific job or career, while less than one third of those with a cultural, applied, or other focus strongly agreed that was their reason for pursuing an MA. The data suggest that archaeology-focused MAs feel strongly that they are pursuing a fairly well-defined career with clear job opportunities; have less likelihood of going into teaching as a profession, and; are less motivated by a general interest in anthropology.

Those with MAs in cultural, applied, or other specialties are more likely to be motivated by a general interest in the topic and perspectives of anthropology, and are much less likely to have a clear career objective or a specific job in mind as they undertake their MA education. Nearly 50% of this subgroup is pursuing a general interest in anthropology in the hopes that the MA degree will enhance their career choices even though those choices may be very vague.

Table 8 shows the percentages from each group that answered “strongly agree” in the series of questions.

**Table 8. Why Did You Pursue a Masters in Anthropology?  
Percentages of Those Who Answered “Strongly Agree”**

Why Did You Pursue a Masters in Anthropology? Sub-question	Degree Type			
	MA, Archaeology	MA, Cultural, Applied, et al.	PhD, Archaeology	PhD, Cultural, Applied, et al.
Was seeking education/training for a specific job or career (n=562)	67%	29. %	73%	39%
Thought Masters would enhance my general career choices more than a BA/BS (n=563)	77%	61%	59%	52%
Hoped to combine the degree with other education/training to pursue a particular job/career (n=557)	28%	26%	23%	31%
Motivated by a general interest in anthropology rather than a specific career goal (n=560)	15%	48%	35%	40%
Planned or still plan to pursue a role in teaching (n=561)	15%	20%	41%	36%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

**IS A MASTERS DEGREE SUFFICIENT?**

The survey asked this question as part of the suite of motivational questions. Among the primary respondent pool (n=758), 41% agreed that an MA degree was sufficient for their career interests. In another question in the suite, 46% said they planned or still planned on pursuing a doctoral degree. Comparisons by sex, income, and date of degree showed little difference in degree pursuit.

Among Masters-only holders as a subgroup of the primary respondent pool, those with an archaeological focus were more likely to agree that their Masters was sufficient for their careers and that a PhD was not needed. Conversely, those with cultural, applied, and other specialties were 10% more likely than archaeologists to agree that they planned to pursue a PhD (35.7% versus 26.1%, respectively). (Page C-37, Table 4(33), Appendix C).

*“For me, the phrase used by my professors— ‘Anthropology is good to think with’ —has proven true in all aspects of my life, personal and professional... I’ve found the learning I acquired in anthropology has been an excellent foundation.”*

MA, CULTURAL, EDUCATIONAL FOCUS

**OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH EDUCATION**

Moving from motivations for undertaking a Masters education, we now turn to graduates’ reflections on their education—both the programmatic and curricular aspects. From the educational demographics section, we know that the survey respondents were primarily from well-established MA programs (Table 2 on page 8) and that the primary specialties of their degrees were archaeology, cultural or applied/practicing anthropology, followed by medical, physical, urban, museum/curatorial, and CRM (Table 3 on page 9).

With this background in mind, the survey showed that respondents overall were very positive about their Masters education. Over three-quarters (77%) indicated that their MA degree had prepared them well (39%) or somewhat well (38%) for their current career choice. Only 13% said they had reservations about whether their degree prepared them for their current career.

Question 15 in the survey asked specifically for graduates’ satisfaction with the quality, breadth and depth of skill set, and the relevance and career advancement potential of their MA education. Satisfaction clustered around 80% across five factors, as seen in Table 9, below.

**Table 9. Satisfaction with Quality, Depth, and Breadth of MA Education**

Please rate your satisfaction level in the following areas:						
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Neutral	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	N/A
The quality of education received in my Masters program (n=754)	50%	37%	3%	7%	2%	0
The depth of the skill set I came away with after graduation (n=753)	36%	43%	8%	10%	3%	0
The breadth of the skill set I came away with after graduation (n=750)	40%	38%	9%	11%	3%	0
The relevance of my Masters education to my career overall (n=754)	50%	31%	10%	5%	3%	1%
Career advancement opportunities enabled by my MA degree (n=755)	39%	28%	15%	9%	6%	3%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

Those with an archaeological focus were more likely to report satisfaction with the

above-noted statements, sometimes by very large margins. For example, 80% of MAs with an archaeological focus were satisfied with career advancement opportunities, but only 60% of MAs from cultural/applied and other specialties were satisfied. The latter group was also nearly three times more likely than those with an archaeological focus to be somewhat dissatisfied with the breadth of the skill set they came away with from their MA programs. (Appendices C-71 and C-72).

### ASSESSMENT OF MASTERS PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Most Masters programs have a set of standard components, such as classroom experiences led by faculty and students, laboratory-based sessions for physical and archaeology classes, a thesis or other capstone document, opportunities for field research, advisor and/or mentor relationships, and an internship or practicum. In Question 8, we asked Likert scale questions, asking respondents to rank each of the main components generally found in Masters programs from 'Extremely helpful' to 'Not helpful at all' or 'Not Applicable.'

**Table 10. Looking back on your graduate education program, please rank how helpful the following components or resources were to you:**

Masters Program Components	Extremely Helpful	Generally Helpful	Somewhat Helpful	Marginally Helpful	Not Helpful at all	N/A
(a ) Classroom experience (n=757)	37%	45%	13%	3%	1%	0%
(b) Student teamwork (n=752)	17%	34%	23%	14%	5%	7%
(c) Thesis/research project (n=754)	52%	28%	8%	4%	1%	7%
(d) Public presentation/ colloquium s(n=751)	30%	31%	16%	6%	2%	15%
(e) Internship/practicum (n=740)**	35%	14%	6%	3%	3%	38%
(f) Partnership opportunities with outside organizations and institutions (n=754)**	29%	19%	11%	4%	5%	32%
(g) Advisor/mentor relationships (n=750)	45%	26%	14%	7%	6%	1%
(h) Field research opportunities (on or off campus) (n=757)	51%	19%	11%	4%	3%	11%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

\*\*Note: Internships and Partnership opportunities with outside organizations received relatively low rankings (about 50% each). However, these components are not available in many MA degree programs; 38% and 32%, respectively, indicated that these two components were not available to them—a very high percentage relative to other program elements. When lack of availability (N/A responses) is factored into the calculations, internships were found to be extremely or generally helpful by 80% of respondents, and partnering opportunities increased to 71%.

The highest-ranked components of Masters education programs—elements that respondents found most helpful—were classroom experiences (82%), advisor/mentor relationships (81%), thesis/research projects (80%), and field research opportunities (70%). As explained above, internships were ranked helpful by 80% and partnership opportunities at 71% when corrected for the N/A responses.

The lowest ranking component, which received the greatest number of “somewhat” to “not at all helpful,” was student teamwork. About 42% assessed it as unhelpful to them in their Masters education and current career. With respect to teamwork, students complain that

assignment to teams can be random; they get stuck with team members who do not pull their weight or do not understand the concepts; and grading a team effort means that the team is only as good as its weakest member/s.

The survey team searched the database for teamwork responses on open-ended questions to further understand the resistance to student teamwork. One respondent in his/her mid-30's commented that his/her experience in the workforce had already prepared him/her to work in teams, so s/he didn't benefit from it as much as those without such work experience. However, we did find that those teamwork exercises providing *interdisciplinary* experiences were considered helpful. For example, one respondent commented that "Emphasis on multidisciplinary teamwork also helped me to do my current job." Another commented that "I think students should also learn how to work in teams with people from various disciplines—in my situation I was working with dentists and other very quantitative researchers and had a difficult time 'proving' how useful qualitative research and anthropological methods are." There were at least half a dozen open-ended passages that supported the value of interdisciplinary team experiences, such as, "In medical anthropology I think it is important to have more connections with practicing and researching clinicians."

As a measure of networking and solidarity among classmates in MA programs, respondents reported that over 63% keep in touch frequently (22.5%) or occasionally (40.7%) with other graduates of their MA program. See Appendix B-10 (Question 6).

#### ASSESSMENT OF CURRICULAR COMPONENTS

A series of questions asked respondents to rank the importance of 35 substantive and skill areas they would recommend for inclusion in MA curricula, based on their own experiences. These were divided into three main categories: (1) research design and methodology, (2) substantive/content areas, and (3) workplace preparation and application.

The frequencies for each category are shown in Table 11 below.

**Table 11. Knowledge and Training to Include in MA Curricula, ranked by frequency of "More Important" responses**

Knowledge/Training Areas	More Important	Average Importance	Less Important	N/A, Don't Know
<b>(1) Research Design and Methodology</b>				
Qualitative research skills in general (n=758)	78%	18%	3%	1%
Observational skills (n=754)	75%	19%	3%	2%
Interviewing skills (n=756)	63%	24%	10%	4%
Ethnographic methods (n=756)	60%	25%	13%	3%
Quantitative research skills in general (n=753)	57%	33%	8%	2%
Survey techniques (n=755)	55%	33%	8%	3%
Archival research/data mining (n=755)	51%	33%	9%	6%
Statistics (n=754)	47%	37%	14%	2%
Archaeology field methods (n=751)	42%	22%	14%	21%
Geographic Information Systems (GIS) (n=756)	38%	29%	15%	17%
Software-based statistical packages (e.g., SPSS, SAS) (n=754)	38%	33%	17%	12%
Archaeology lab methods (n=748)	37%	24%	16%	24%

*"I think my Masters program laid a solid foundation upon which I have been able to build my career. The experience was full of critical thinking and dialogue which, incidentally, my PhD program has been lacking. I was exposed to a breadth of ways of thinking and skill sets, which I think is perfectly appropriate for a Masters program. My PhD training has been much more specific and in-depth in a narrower set of skills. The (MA) practicum experience allowed me to create relationships that I still rely on, 10 years later."*

MA, APPLIED FOCUS;  
PHD STUDENT, HEALTH  
BEHAVIOR

Knowledge/Training Areas	More Important	Average Importance	Less Important	N/A, Don't Know
Rapid assessment techniques (n=754)	32%	33%	13%	22%
Focus groups (n=741)	31%	30%	26%	13%
<b>(2) Substantive/Content Areas</b>				
Applied anthropology or archaeology case studies and readings (n=756)	62%	30%	6%	2%
Collaborative, participatory, community-based approaches to anthropology and archaeology (n=756)	59%	30%	7%	4%
Anthropological theory (including theory in archaeology) (n=755)	54%	35%	10%	1%
Ethics competency training (n=753)	52%	37%	8%	3%
Four-field exposure/coursework (n=757)	46%	34%	17%	3%
Evaluation research (n=751)	46%	31%	10%	12%
Policy/compliance foundations for anthropology and archaeology (ARPA, NEPA, NHPA, NAGPRA, etc.) (n=753)	44%	34%	13%	9%
Social impact assessment (n=755)	40%	36%	13%	11%
Historic Preservation (n=752)	31%	38%	20%	11%
Museum work, representation, collection, exhibit preparation (n=755)	22%	37%	28%	13%
<b>(3) Workplace Preparation and Application</b>				
Technical writing (proposals/grants) (n=757)	76%	20%	2%	2%
Project design, development and management (n=754)	73%	22%	3%	2%
Presentation skills (verbal/PowerPoint/graphics) (n=752)	68%	25%	5%	1%
Budget preparation/analysis/execution (n=754)	58%	32%	7%	4%
Networking skills (n=738)	57%	35%	7%	1%
Community development/partnerships/grassroots—working with communities (n=756)	51%	32%	12%	4%
Job-seeking skills (n=748)	45%	40%	11%	4%
General computer skills (MS Office, web applications) (n=751)	44%	39%	15%	3%
IRB experience or training (n=752)	24%	33%	9%	34%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

- Research design and methodology:** The top seven research design and methodologies were the foundational skills related to most anthropological endeavors, with general qualitative and observational skills ranked highly by three quarters of respondents; indeed, these are two of the three most important of all listed skills ranked by respondents. Quantitative skills, survey methods, and archival research were ranked lower, but were still considered very important. They were ranked 'more important' by over 50 % of respondents.



- **Substantive and content areas:** Almost all curricular descriptions provided by departments include a menu of substantive and content areas. Case studies and readings for archaeology and applied anthropology ranked most highly with 62% indicating these were the 'more important' content areas. Collaborative, participatory, and community-based approaches to anthropology ranked almost as highly, with 59% labeling this body of knowledge as more important to have in a curriculum. Anthropological theory and ethics training were considered as 'more important' by over 50% of respondents. On the other end of the scale, three areas were ranked as being less important: four-field exposure, evaluation research, and policy foundations for anthropology.
- **Workplace preparation and skills:** The third area of curricular assessment was workplace preparation and skills, which many departments are integrating into their curricula in order to prepare graduates for looking jobs outside academia. Consistent with responses given elsewhere in the survey, the most highly ranked workplace skill was technical writing, while other communication areas (presentation skills and networking) were also ranked highly. Skills related to the ability to organize and manage projects (design, budgeting, community participation) were also ranked highly. It can be argued that some of these skills are better taught, in whole or part, outside of anthropology departments; the larger point is that these are the skills that respondents list as most important to their careers, and the opportunities to develop them should be incorporated in Masters education.

In an open-ended follow-up question on skills and knowledge, respondents were invited to identify additional coursework, knowledge, and specialized skills outside of anthropology that they would have found beneficial for their career. The question elicited a generous range of responses (n=297), which was categorized and the frequencies included in Appendix B-13, Question 14. The top categories that emerged in this open-ended question substantiated the data in Table 11 page 21. Top-mentioned were writing skills (grants/proposals, general writing skills, technical writing); management skills (project management and general management); specialized research skills including GIS (mentioned 56 times), evaluation skills, network analysis; specialized medical/health training (particularly public health and focuses such as epidemiology and biostatistics); community based research; biological and physical sciences like biology, chemistry and geology; business-related training; environmental studies; and teaching skills (about 50 occurrences).

#### **SUMMARY—REFLECTIONS ON MASTERS EDUCATION AND DEGREE PROGRAMS**

As a whole, respondents were very positive about their educational experience. About 80% reported being 'somewhat' or 'very satisfied' with the breadth and depth of the education and skill sets and the quality of education they acquired during their MA program. They felt equally strongly that that their degree was relevant to their career and enabled their career advancement opportunities.

Why did they pursue a Masters degree? The top two reasons were the belief that a Masters would enhance their career opportunities more than a bachelor's degree and the pursuit of training for a specific job. About two thirds, however, agreed that they were motivated by a general interest in anthropology rather than a specific career goal. One third said they could not afford, in time and/or money, to pursue a PhD.

In a cross tabulation with specialty focus, distinctions between MA-holders in archaeological specialties and MA-holders with a cultural, applied, or other specialty focus became apparent. MA-holders with an archaeological focus were more than twice as likely to have pursued an MA with a specific goal/job or career in mind than were cultural/applied and other specialty MA anthropologists, leading to the observation that specific jobs and

*"Through my coursework, I developed analytic, writing, and data-mining skills that have been critical to my job, but the best, most practical experiences were gleaned from the not-for-credit internships I completed. The applied and policy classes didn't go far enough with linking theory with real-world issues and practical avenues for addressing such issues through anthro-related work."*

MA, APPLIED FOCUS

careers are more easily identifiable for MA archaeologists than they are for cultural/applied anthropologists.

In order to obtain insight on MA graduates' educational experiences, we asked them to rate eight typical MA program components, ranging from internship/practicum experiences to classroom sessions and thesis research. We wanted to identify those that were most helpful to them from their vantage point in their current career. The most helpful components were classroom experiences, advisor/mentor relationships, thesis/research projects, and field research opportunities, in declining order. Internships/practicum were not available in many Masters programs, but when that was factored into the calculations, they ranked very highly (80%) as a program component. On the other hand, student teamwork was ranked as the least helpful educational component by MA graduates.

A series of questions asked respondents to rank the importance of 35 substantive and skill areas they would recommend for inclusion in MA curricula. These were divided into three main categories: (a) research design and methodology, (b) substantive/content areas, and (c) workplace preparation and application. The top recommendations for inclusion in the research design and methods section are the suite of anthropological qualitative research skills including observation, interviewing and ethnography, followed by quantitative skills in general. Among the substantive and contents areas generally found in curricula, the top-ranked category was 'case studies and readings in applied anthropology and archaeology,' followed by 'collaborative participatory and community-based methods,' and 'theory in anthropology and archaeology.' In workplace preparation, technical writing (grants, proposals) and project design and management were the most frequently noted skills that graduates recommended including in current curricula. Please see Table 11 and the discussion for more detailed consideration of MA educational and training components as there are more nuanced interpretations of the frequency data.

## **B. Career Paths and Satisfaction**

Thirteen multi-part and open-ended questions address career trajectories, job sector, work responsibilities, and career satisfaction. As mentioned earlier, there is little information available on Masters graduates after they leave departments and enter the workforce and their careers. Most information is the result of case studies, narratives and anecdotes passed along through personal networks between graduates, university-based advisors and colleagues. In some cases the information is a result of departmental perseverance in maintaining databases on former students, but this is not the norm.

This survey provides the first broadly solicited glimpse of what MA anthropologists are doing, how they are engaged in crafting anthropology-based careers, where they are working, and whether they identify—or not—with the fields of anthropology and archaeology. The topics to be covered start from the beginning: how people found jobs and how long it took to find them; their current employment status; where people are working (sector); and the types of work they do in their jobs. The report then tackles the nuanced questions of how people think of themselves professionally (identity) and how they use anthropology in their job. We were interested in the extent to which MAs use anthropology and whether their job title reflects their training. This set of questions leads to an assessment of their careers, the role of anthropology, and their overall satisfaction. Several sections address the top skills needed in their job now and for the future.

### **HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO FIND A JOB?**

Overall, MA alumni were able to find jobs reasonably soon after graduation. For all respondents, 46% said they found a job within 6 months of graduation (n=758). To get a more



focused view of Master's experience compared to the overall respondent group, we broke out the MA-only alumni, and the percentage increased to 51% who found a job within 6 months. See Table 12, below. This subgroup of MAs-only included 23% who answered "N/A" (Not Applicable). Presumably these respondents were not searching for jobs immediately after graduation, perhaps because they already held a job or they went on for a PhD. After removing the "N/A" group, the data show that 66% of MAs found a job within 6 months of graduation. In addition, 82% reported finding jobs within a year of receiving their degree.

**Table 12. Time Needed to Find a Job after Graduation (MAs Only)**

Time Needed	MA only, with N/A		MA only, without N/A	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Under 6 months	262	51%	262	66%
6-12 months	65	13%	65	16%
Over 12 months	71	14%	71	18%
N/A	118	23%		
Total	516		398	

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

#### **HOW DO GRADUATES FIND EMPLOYMENT?**

When asked how they obtained their current positions, respondents as a group overwhelmingly indicated that "A colleague or friend referred me to the position or organization." This is an indication of well-developed use of networks and personal referrals. Only 14% said they found their job through a website, and 13.5% found theirs through a non-web job posting.

In contrast, and somewhat surprisingly, only 4% reported that they found their job through an internship or practicum, and only 2% reported that a professional organization provided assistance in locating a position. The small percentage of cases from the internship/practicum may be an artifact of the relatively few programs that offer internships both historically and geographically across the country. In fact, a related question in the education section indicated a large number of programs do not have internships. Throughout the survey, respondents mentioned that networking is an important skill for entering and developing their careers. Fully 75% of all respondents said they keep in touch with other anthropologists in their field/specialization frequently or at least occasionally (Appendix B-10). The importance of networking is clear in Table 13, on page 26, which shows the ranked frequencies of types of strategies for finding employment.

**Table 13. Finding Employment (n=733).  
“How did you attain your current position?”  
Multiple responses possible.**

A colleague or friend referred me to the position or organization	280
Was promoted or transferred within my organization	136
Found through a web site or search engine (e.g., USAjobs.gov; Monster.com)	100
Found through a job posting (not web-based)	92
Submitted a resume to the organization but not specifically for my current position	68
Am self-employed	53
Attained through an internship or practicum with the organization	32
Had position before Masters program and returned to it	31
Assisted by college program advisors	20
Assisted by professional association (e.g., AAA, SFAA, SAA, Local Practitioner Organization)	17
Other (see table below)	177
<b>Total</b>	<b>829</b>

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, *The Changing Face of Anthropology*

#### **EMPLOYMENT STATUS**

All respondents (n=758) answered the question about their employment status, and we found it challenging to interpret the data, since multiple, non-exclusive responses were possible. For example, an individual might check “More than one job,” and “Work full time,” and also “Work part time” (e.g., on weekends or as a consultant).

In general, however, the data (modal responses) showed a profile of people who work full time (compared with many fewer responses for part time) in a permanent position (compared with term-limited work). A small proportion of the total responses indicated that people had more than one job. The fact that 100 responses (13%) indicated having more than one job and 120 (16%) indicated their position was term-limited may mean that anthropologists are used to multitasking in the job market, re-creating themselves for different contracts and consulting jobs in sequence, or working in different sectors to piece together a financial base. See Table 14 on page 27. It might be noted that very few responses indicated ‘unemployed’ as their job status. One hundred and ten respondents selected “Other” as their employment status. That distribution is available in Appendix B-18.

**Table 14. Employment Status (n=758)**  
Multiple responses possible

Current Employment Status	Frequency
I work full time	519
I work part time	102
I have more than one job	100
My position is permanent	268
My position is a contractual and/or term-limited position	120
I am a full time student	79
I am unemployed	25
Other	110
<b>Total</b>	<b>1323</b>

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

### EMPLOYMENT SECTOR: WHERE ARE THE JOBS?

Two of the most frequent questions heard in anthropology departments and among MA students are: “Where are the jobs?” and “Where are they working?” There is widespread interest, curiosity and uncertainty about where MAs are working and the types of jobs they qualify for. In this section of the survey, respondents were asked about the type of employer for which they currently worked (the employment sector). Because the survey was originally designed to be answered by Masters-only graduates and to reflect their career realities, we decided to focus on the subgroup of respondents holding an MA degree only.

Respondents were given the option to check more than one response on employment sector, so frequencies exceeded the 522 MAs in the subgroup. The reasoning behind multiple choices was that many institutions cross over multiple sectors, and we wanted to allow respondents to check as many categories as they needed to characterize their employment sector. The resulting frequency distribution provided us an opportunity to see the world from their perspective, so we could characterize their employment sectors more robustly. As examples, they tended to combine “independent consultant + government”; or “non-profit + research institution.” Respondents used the categories to describe their personal situation in the world of employment, using all the categories that fit their situation.

The largest percentage of MA respondents worked for academic institutions compared with other employment sectors. This was an unexpected finding because the team anticipated MAs would most likely be working in jobs beyond the university. However, when open-ended responses on job titles were examined it became clear that academic jobs were not the traditional tenure track faculty jobs implied by the term “academic.” By reviewing the answers to Question 17, in which respondents could list their job titles and affiliations, it became apparent that academic jobs as a category were typically in non-anthropology and non-departmental settings: university-supported museums, such as the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology at the University of New Mexico; specialized research centers and institutes (e.g., a center for gerontology); administrative jobs at state colleges and universities; and as lecturers, adjuncts, and full time faculty in a variety of different departments across campuses.

Table 15 shows the frequencies of responses across employment sectors.

**Table 15. Type of Organization of Primary Employment, MAs Only (n=504)**

Type of Organization	Frequency
Academic (College, Community College and/or University)	158
Nonprofit organization/association	79
Consulting firm	75
Government (federal)	72
Government (state or local)	68
Museum/exhibition/curatorial	51
Research institution/organization	45
Larger corporation (100 or more employees)	40
Small or medium business/LLC (under 100 employees)	36
Self-employed or have own business	34
Independent consultant	27
Nongovernmental or community-based organization (NGO/CBO)	15
K-12 education	15
Unemployed	14
International organization/institution	11
Tribal government/organization	6
Foundation/philanthropic	5

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, *The Changing Face of Anthropology*

We wanted to know whether the focus of one's degree made any difference in which sectors graduates found employment. We suspected there might be a difference between archaeology-focused jobs (including CRM and HP) and those where the MAs with cultural/applied and other specialties worked. The results are shown in Table 16a and 16b on page 29, where we broke out the degree specialties separately. While their profiles of both subgroups matched in the academic sector, beyond that, the profiles *diverged substantially*. Table 16(a) shows where the archaeology-focus degrees (including HP and CRM) worked.

**Table 16a. Degree Focus and Employment Sector.  
MA degree-holders with archaeological focus (n=142).  
Multiple responses possible.**

Archaeological degree focus (archaeology, CRM, historic preservation)	
Sector	% of responses
Academic*	22%
Consulting firm	16%
Federal government	13%
State or local government	13%
Small or medium business	6%
Research institute	5%
Self-employed or own business	3%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

\*As noted previously, “academic” refers to the academic enterprise at large, including research institutes, museums, administration and teaching. Jobs tended to be outside the traditional tenured faculty appointments.

As can be seen in Table 16a, above, Masters in archaeologically focused degrees are more likely to work in large consulting firms and to work for federal, state and local government. In fact, when federal and state and local sectors are combined, “government/public sector” employment outranks academic employment as the most frequent category for archaeology. Public sector employment accounts for 26% of the responses, while the academic sector only accounts for 22%. This profile differs from the cultural/applied and other degree-focus, as explained below.

**Table 16b. Degree Focus and Employment Sector.  
MA degree-holders with cultural/applied/physical and other focus (n=322). Multiple responses possible.**

Cultural/applied/ and other specialties	
Sector	% of responses
Academic*	20%
Non-profit organization/association	15%
Federal government	8%
State or local government	7%
Self-employed or own business	5%
Independent consultant	4%
Small or medium-sized business	4%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

\*As noted previously, “academic” refers to the academic enterprise at large, including research institutes, museums, administration and teaching. Jobs tended to be outside the traditional tenured faculty appointments.

In the above table, Masters in cultural/applied and other specialties are most likely to work in academically based employment, followed by the non-profit and public sectors. Both non-profit and public sector employment are equally likely, both ranking at 15% (when federal and state and local are combined).

Comparing the two profiles, it is understandable that the largest sector of employment for archaeologically focused degrees is the government/public sector, with the history of legal statutes protecting archaeological and historic resources, and the development of state-based infrastructure for historic preservation (State Historic Preservation Offices) in partnership with regional and county preservation associations. In addition, many museums and history centers are state- and university-based, so that opportunities to work in academic sectors are relatively plentiful.

Cultural/applied and other specialties MAs tend to work in university-based employment sector most frequently. The opportunities range from medical centers, university-affiliated hospitals, research institutes, and university and college administration such as in a Chancellor or Provost's office. Non-profit organizations and associations provide the next most frequent employment base for cultural/applied anthropologists. This makes intuitive sense due to the opportunity to work on social causes, services, and policy (see examples in the next section). Federal employment is a strong possibility for employment, as federal agencies seek to fulfill their requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act and also seek to improve the quality of their services, programs, and evaluations of those programs (Fiske 2008).

#### **CURRENT EMPLOYER**

While knowing the general employment sector is an important first step, we gave respondents the opportunity to provide more detailed information on their work in two open-ended, voluntary questions. A substantial number of responses were received, leading to the overall impression from the open-ended questions throughout the report that people want to share their information and stories. (See Appendix B page B-25, Question 26, for summary.)

The bulk of respondents worked for academic enterprises or government/public sector, noted previously in Table 15. Examples of public sector employers included the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Institutes of Health, the National Snow and Ice Data Center, state historical societies, state historic preservation offices, local and county departments of public health, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Among the consulting firms identified were Desert Archaeology (Arizona), New South Associates (Georgia), Panamerican Consultants (Alabama), and LTG Associates in California/Maryland.

Some of the non-profit organizations mentioned include the American Association of Retired Persons, American Cancer Society, Big Brothers Big Sisters, Boy Scouts of America, California Lawyers for the Arts, Center for Alaska Native Health, Research Center for Coalfield Justice, Center for Southern Folklore, Coalition of Essential Schools NW, Council of Spanish Speaking Organizations, Farmworker Justice, Leadership Memphis, McCormick Foundation, The Conference Board, The Trust for Public Land, and the Urban Institute. Tribal governments mentioned were the Chickasaw, Seminole, Yavapai-Apache, and Zuni nations. Among the "larger corporations" mentioned were Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Bose, Panasonic, Pfizer, The Louis Berger Group, and URS Corporation (government contracting and engineering/California).

#### **DOMAIN OF EMPLOYMENT: WHAT DO YOU DO IN YOUR JOB?**

In describing the types of work or their domain of employment, MAs provided 1,524 individual selections from the 26 categories, and an additional 100 responses in the "Other"

category. Multiple responses were possible in this question, because of the difficulty of classifying all types of work. The proliferation of answers underscores the fact that MAs are employed in highly diverse work sectors. Only 157 respondents selected a single category or “Other;” the remaining 351 selected at least two categories. As shown in Table 17a, respondents tended to check several categories, and seven or eight responses were common.

“Education/outreach” was the most frequently selected descriptor of MAs’ work. “Administration/management” ranked second overall, and in all but a handful of cases respondents linked this with other types of employment. “Evaluation/assessment” also was cited frequently; again, it was frequently checked along with several other categories, and was never selected without at least one other category. These responses further support the observation that traditional, single employment or work descriptor terms and categories used in most surveys do not reflect the employment reality in the 21st Century.

**Table 17a. Domain or Type of Primary Employment, MA Only (n=508)**

<b>Domain/Type of Employment</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Education/outreach	171
Administration/management	168
Archaeology	151
Cultural resource management (CRM)	102
Evaluation/assessment	101
Historic preservation	91
Ethnography/cultural anthropology	86
Museum/curation/project design	72
Health (international/public health)	66
Environment and natural resources	55
Community development	51
Business	46
Computers/software development/ information technology	37
Advocacy (human rights/social justice)	36
Tourism/heritage	35
Human/social services	34
Healthcare management/ services/delivery	32
Management consulting, organizational development/training	29
Design (products and/or services)	29
Social impact assessment	25
International development/affairs	25
Market research	23
Law/criminal justice/law enforcement	18
Forensics	17

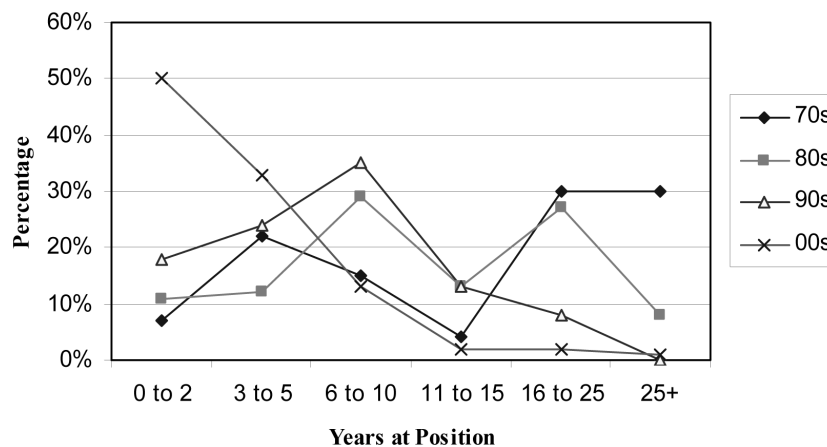
Domain/Type of Employment	Frequency
Mass communication	15
Humanitarian efforts	9
Other	100

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

### YEARS AT CURRENT POSITION

Eighty percent of respondents had held their current positions for 10 years or less; 32%, two years or less. A cross tabulation by decade of receipt of degree provides insight into job tenure (below). Half of those who graduated in the 2000s have held their current positions for only a year or two. Since graduates from the past decade constitute half of the survey respondents, their responses skew the data toward shorter periods of time in current position.

**Figure 8. Years at Current Position**  
Percentage, by Decade of Graduation from MA Program



### JOB TITLES: ARE MAs WORKING IN “ANTHROPOLOGY JOBS”?

Question 17 allowed respondents to provide their current position or title (n=659). The results are interesting and very instructive in themselves because they reveal once again an enormous diversity in the types of jobs being performed by people with anthropology degrees. In addition the data allow us to address one of the most frequently debated questions regarding anthropologists outside of academia: “That’s interesting work, *but is it really anthropology?*”

In order to address this question, we analyzed the job titles of the MA-only respondents (n=321). We realize that job titles are notorious proxies for the substance and competence areas of a job; but we assumed that that there would be at least some connection between job titles and a specialty or training area with anthropology-specific jobs. Job titles were categorized into three groups: (a) those in which anthropology training would be necessary or extremely important for obtaining and performing the job; (b) those in which an anthropology degree would be valuable, and would add to the person’s ability to do the job, but where anthropology was not absolutely necessary; and (c) those in which additional training or experience outside of anthropology—whether through a degree program, certificate, or on-the-job experience—would almost certainly be needed.



We compared job titles across two MA-only subgroups: those with MAs in archaeology and those with a specialization other than archaeology (cultural/applied and other specialties).

Results showed a notable difference between MAs with archaeological specialties, and those with cultural/applied and other specialties. Category (a) in Table 17b on page 34 shows 56% of archaeology-focused degrees have titles that reflect anthropological training, while only 11% of those outside of archaeology do. More specifically, we found that of the 110 respondents who had an archaeological specialty, 55 had “archaeologist” as part of their job title. Of those with cultural, applied and other specialties (213), only 14 had recognizable variants of “anthropology” (7), or “ethnography” (3) as part of their job titles.

Job titles that fall into category (b) in Table 17b are anthropologically relevant but they could also be performed by someone without an anthropology degree. Jobs such as “Museum/curator/collections” and “senior analyst” could be done by people without anthropology training, but on the other hand, depending on the job, anthropology could be integral to its execution. Sixty-one percent of cultural/applied and other anthropologists have job titles in this category, while only 34% of archaeology specialties are in this category.

The job titles in the last category (c) are those which imply a need for additional specialization, knowledge, or experience outside of anthropology. These job titles are more likely to be held by cultural, applied, or other specializations (29%) than those with archaeological specializations (10%).

*“With a Masters degree, you will never be considered for a job titled “anthropologist.” You will be considered for jobs that may use anthropological skills along with other skills sets and have titles such as project manager, project coordinator, community outreach director, director of communications, research associate, etc. (My education) laid a foundation of how to approach a problem and offer a unique analysis and viewpoint of how to dissect a community issue in order to find an entry point for solutions.”*

MA, APPLIED FOCUS

**Table 17b. Job Titles and Classifications, MA Only (n=321)**

Relevance of Anthropology in Title	MA Specialization	Frequency/Percentage	Frequent Responses (titles could contain multiple keywords)	Other Examples
<b>(a) Anthropology-specific</b> (anthropological specialty needed or valuable for this position)	Archaeology	62 (56%)	Archaeologist (all types): 54 CRM: 6 Historic Preservation Archaeologist: 5	Archaeofaunal Analyst, Flaked Stone Analyst, Forensic Archaeologist, Senior Staff Osteologist & Archaeologist
	Cultural, applied, physical, etc	22 (11%)	Anthropology Museum/Curator/ Collections: 9 Ethnographer/Qualitative Research: 4	Tribal Preservation Program Chief, Anthropological Writer, Research Firm Owner
<b>(b) Anthropology-relevant</b> but not necessary (could be anthropological, but position could be performed by another specialist in social science, history, public health, etc.)	Archaeology	37 (34%)	Museum/Curator/Collections: 11 Manager/Director/President: 5 Research Associate/Assistant: 5 Principal Investigator: 3 GIS: 2	Environmental Compliance Specialist, Senior Environmental Specialist, Senior Lab Instructor, Senior Analyst
	Cultural, applied, physical, etc	129 (61%)	Director/Manager: 39 Research/Evaluation: 32 Program Associate/Asst: 4 Administrator/Asst: 4 Unspecified Museum/Curator/ Collections: 9 Health/Medical: 13	Archivist, Community Organizer, Environmental Analyst, Executive Planner, Staff Development Coordinator, Immigration Consultant, Supervisor of Prevention Services, Tribal Liaison
<b>(c) Additional training</b> needed (person holding position would almost always need another specialization, study, or training for this job)	Archaeology	11 (10%)	Sales/Marketing: 3 Communications: 2 Data Manager: 1 Operations Director: 1	Podcast Producer, Farmer, Green Procurement Specialist, Teacher, 6th grade
	Cultural, applied, physical, etc	62 (29%)	Teacher/Educator/Admin: 11 Writer/Editor/Communications: 4 Web/Inform. Spec./ Software: 4 Law/Legal: 4 Policy/Political: 4 Business Consultant/Manager: 3 Housewife/Mom: 2	ADA Compliance Specialist, Artist, Autopsy Tech, Fisheries Biologist, Grants Manager, Intelligence Analyst, Librarian, Nurse Practitioner, Real Estate, Restaurant Worker

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

In general, it appears that MAs with an archaeological focus were more likely to have a job title that reflected their anthropological/archaeological background. Those who studied outside of archaeology were likely to have titles that were less reflective of their training, and were only one-fifth as likely to have a job title that indicated they had anthropological backgrounds. Another way to look at it is that a cultural anthropology background gives one great flexibility in the kinds of jobs sought and can be highly adaptable as a background.

### CAREERS, JOBS, AND THE ROLE OF ANTHROPOLOGY

In order to find out more about the complex interrelationship between Masters' careers and personal and professional identity, we asked a series of nine interrelated Likert scale questions to understand these aspects of careers and personal identity. Additionally, we asked

two questions related to job skills used in their work, designed to address one of the current dialogues in anthropology: whether anthropology skills are sufficient to sustain a career, or whether secondary training such as an additional degree, a certification, or on-the-job training is desirable. We also included a question asking respondents to identify the skills most needed in their *future* careers. Cross tabulations on MA specialty, age, date of MA receipt, and income level, are available in Appendix C.

**Table 18. Attitudes, Beliefs and Perceptions Regarding Jobs, Careers and Anthropology**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
Skills learned outside of anthropology are significant to my current position. (n=751)	61%	26%	6%	3%	1%	4%
Most of my current job skills were learned on-the-job. (n=750)	31%	35%	14%	13%	4%	4%
My degree is not part of my official job description. (n=745)	25%	12%	5%	12%	39%	6%
My degree plays a significant role in helping me understand my job and meeting my job requirements. (n=748)	42%	32%	11%	6%	5%	4%
My degree plays a significant role in my overall career satisfaction. (n=748)	50%	26%	11%	5%	4%	4%
My supervisors understand the contributions an anthropologist brings to my job position. (n=747)	41%	23%	9%	10%	8%	10%
A PhD would have enhanced or does enhance my desired career opportunities. (n=757)	37%	17%	12%	11%	14%	10%
I identify myself professionally as an anthropologist most of the time. (n=751)	42%	20%	9%	14%	13%	3%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

*“With the archaeology emphasis, I would have preferred receiving an M.S. rather than an M.A. ‘Arts’ does not accurately convey the depth and breadth of the scientific training I received at [my university]. This is critical when seeking work with or working for agencies or companies that are loaded with engineers, biologists, or other ‘scientists’. Appropriately skilled archaeologists can often be overlooked for higher level positions or screened out at the initial application.”*

MA, ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
FOCUS

### WAS YOUR ANTHROPOLOGY DEGREE INSTRUMENTAL IN GETTING YOUR JOB?

The survey results showed that among all respondents, 69% agreed (“strongly agree” + “somewhat agree”) that their Masters degree was instrumental in their job offer. Nearly every respondent answered this question, and the result is a fairly strong validation of the degree’s perceived worth in the job market in terms of enabling job applicants to compete and be hired. Age of respondents appeared to relate to how strongly they agreed that their anthropology Masters degree was instrumental in their job offer. Older respondents on average agreed more often and more strongly that their degree was instrumental in receiving their job. Fifty-seven percent of respondents in their 60s—in comparison with 32% in their 20s—strongly agreed with the statement.

### IS AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL BACKGROUND IMPORTANT TO JOB, CAREER AND IDENTITY?

To assess whether people were using their degrees in their employment, we asked respondents to agree or disagree with the statement: “My degree is *not* part of my official job description.” Even though this question is a negative construction, the results indicated that people read it and understood it. The previous italicization is only for purposes of emphasis in this report; it was not italicized in the survey.

There was a striking bimodal distribution on this statement. Overall, 37% of respondents (n=745) agreed, while 51% disagreed that their degree was *not* part of their official job description. Those who disagreed stated that their job descriptions included phrases, expectations, tasks or elements specific to archaeology and anthropology, such as “will oversee stabilization of prehistoric sites,” or “will use ethnographic techniques to evaluate xyz...”

To understand this polarized result, we looked at specialties among the MA-only degrees. Over half of the archaeologists strongly *disagreed* with the statement; in contrast, 36% of cultural/applied and other specialties *strongly agreed* with the statement. This leads to the interpretation that archaeologists more frequently saw that their training connected to their job description, while over one-third of the cultural/applied and other graduates felt their job description did *not* include their degree educational training. In other words, over two-thirds of archaeology-focus individuals felt “somewhat” or “strongly” that their degrees *were* reflected in their job descriptions, while only 38% of cultural/applied and other graduates felt that their job descriptions included their degree skills.

**Table 19. “My degree is not part of my official job description,” by MA Focus (n=463)**

Degree Focus	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Archaeology	16%	14%	4%	11%	51%
Cultural, Applied, Other, etc.	36%	14%	7%	13%	26%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

Two questions further pursued dimensions of the integration of anthropology and employment: one from a personal perspective and the other from the perspective of the employer. Anthropologists have long lamented that the workplace in general and employers in particular don’t understand the value of anthropology. We tend to assume that the problem stems from the “corporate culture,” management, or supervisors who do not understand the contributions that anthropology can make to many jobs.

With respect to supervisors’ knowledge of anthropology, 41% of the overall respondent pool “strongly agreed” that their supervisors understood the contributions an anthropologist

brings to their job position. Although a majority of respondents generally agreed with this statement (64% “agreed” or strongly agreed”), 18% disagreed. Looking at the degree specialty sub-groups, among those with an archaeological specialty, 51% strongly agreed that their supervisor understood the utility of anthropology, while among those with a cultural, applied or other specialty only 29% strongly agreed. (See crosstab in Appendix C-67, Table 27)

#### **CAREER PATHWAYS: MULTIPLE CAREER PATHS, MULTITUDINOUS OPPORTUNITIES**

In order to understand in more depth how MAs developed careers over time, we asked an optional, open-ended question in which respondents could “Provide a brief narrative on your career/professional trajectory since you completed your Masters degree, with particular emphasis on the ways you used your MA training to build a career” (Question 60). Two hundred and seventy respondents answered this question, indicating a high degree of interest by MAs in relating their personal stories and experiences.

The question produced both fascinating and encouraging results. In this career path analysis, we took their statements as linear paths, and laid those paths out side by side. A typical path would start with “I got my MA in applied anthropology (or archaeology, etc.) in 2008, then I was hired by a local community-based organization (CBO) and I have been working there ever since, climbing a career ladder.” This type of statement produced a path that looks like this:

**MA (Applied) ⇒ Community-Based Organization (CBO)**

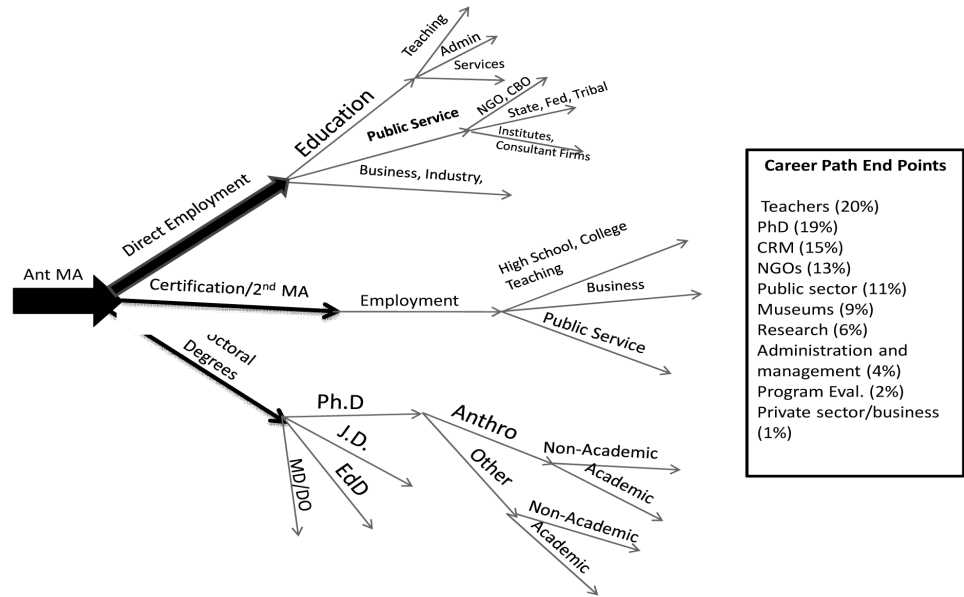
A more complicated path started with an MA (archaeology), which led to employment by a state or federal agency in CRM, followed by the person going into law enforcement in a National Park due to their dual interest in preservation and regulatory enforcement; and ending up with a law degree, and working in a capacity where both degrees were used in a satisfying and interesting career.

**MA (Archaeology) ⇒ National Park Service ⇒ J.D.**

We simplified the number of “path narratives” by taking out the interim comments and leaving a clear formal education-to-career pathway. When we tied those paths together in bundles (at the beginning, an MA in anthropology), and then gathered them at each educational branch in their career path, we produced a composite set of education and career option pathways that are schematized in the following dendrogram.

**Figure 9. MA Career Path Analysis (n=270)**

**Question 60: “Provide a brief narrative on your career/professional trajectory since you completed your Masters degree, with particular emphasis on the ways you used your MA training to build a career.”**



As can be seen in Figure 9, the majority of the respondents went directly into career employment after receiving their MA, as shown by the “heft” of the arrow at the top—in some form of education, public sector, non-governmental, community-based organization, or private sector work. Some of their career narratives are quoted as illustrative pathways at the end of this sub-section.

A smaller proportion either got some form of graduate certification (teaching certificates, etc.) or got a second MA that provided them with additional credentialing and employment opportunities (MPH, MBA, Master in Public Administration). A third portion, the bottom arm of the dendrogram, decided that their career goals had changed either during their MA program, or fairly soon after, and that their new career goals caused them to seek a doctorate, J.D. or MD—often in a research-related field.

The dendrogram above can be contrasted with other degrees that appear to be embedded in clear, relatively simple career paths (business, engineering, nursing, etc.) and that tend to point graduate students to well-defined labor markets. An MA in anthropology (in either its classic thesis oriented form, or applied and internship oriented), appears to produce a complex set of career opportunities, resulting in a myriad of multiple, interlocking career opportunities that provide a framework for positive action in a complex global society.

The following pathways from Question 60 illustrate the phenomena of interlocking opportunities:

### First Person Career Pathways: Examples from Question 60

Museum work	<p>“Throughout my graduate training I have always focused on museum and how museums represent culture. I knew early on that to be able to pursue the career track that I wanted I would not only have to do many internships in the museum field but also complete an advanced degree. By coupling both practical museum-based standards with the ideas and theories I have acquired through classwork, research, and fieldwork in the field of anthropology makes me more adept at presenting culture to a general museum audience.”</p>
Business	<p>“I chose to pursue a doctoral degree in Information Systems at Business School after obtaining the MAA degree. Qualitative skills was one of the primary competitiveness that got me into the current program, and I value and try to use the skills and theories I learned from the anthropology degree. It’s been very helpful.”</p>
Forensics	<p>“After graduate school I became an independent consultant in forensic anthropology and opened an education based company providing forensic anthropology educational enrichment. After a year and a half of this I got an adjunct position at a local community college teaching gen anth. I was referred by my chair to a larger university where I obtained my current position teaching archaeology and forensics.”</p>
Natural Disasters	<p>“For my master’s thesis, I chose to emphasize the impact of cultural perceptions on natural disaster. At the time, I thought pursuing work as a disaster analyst with a cultural emphasis might prove beneficial.”</p>
Community Planning	<p>“While taking an elective I met a woman in class who worked as a community planner. She invited me to visit her workplace and I was intrigued with this thing called planning. I was fortunate to get an entry level job that gave me time to learn the mechanics of planning and with my insight to people, context and how connections are made, enhanced and maintained, I have been able to work my way to the top- 22 years later.”</p>
Public Health	<p>“While completing my MA I secured a position in a state health agency. I did this as a result of reaching out to contacts I made in the School of Public Health in which I had simultaneously begun coursework during my MA training. I have continued employment in this same agency and have since been offered a full-time position. Master’s level training was a requirement for this position; however it was not specifically a requirement to have training in anthropology. The subject matter on which I work is directly related to biological anthropology but is predominantly expressed through public health and epidemiology. Having a background in biological anthropology is helpful but not necessary for my current employment. There was not much in my MA training that has been directly applicable to my employment, particularly because my MA training was four-field and thus rather broad in focus. It was interesting and personally useful, but not overtly applicable.”</p>
Financial Company	<p>“After receiving my MA, I attempted to find a job in research for a nonprofit. I failed. When I got a job at my current company, I started at a low level. An MA in Anthropology was not seen as an asset in a financial company. At one point, I tried to transfer within the company to the HR “diversity” department, thinking the MA in anthropology would be a great fit. It didn’t work. I remain in my same department, but have been promoted. Most people, when they hear of my degree, say, “What are you doing here?”</p>



## CAREER SATISFACTION AND DEGREE

We asked respondents to rate the following question on a Likert scale: “My degree plays a significant role in my overall career satisfaction.” Half of all respondents (n=748) strongly agreed with this statement, and another 26 somewhat agreed, while only 9 percent disagreed. This perception held true when both degree specialization subgroups were broken out; both subgroups indicated strong support for the statement.

This observation—that nearly three-fourths of all respondents felt that their degree was significant for career satisfaction—shows strong identity, loyalty, and empowerment to the degree with respect to career satisfaction.

## PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY AS AN ANTHROPOLOGIST AND ARCHAEOLOGIST

We asked if people “identified themselves professionally as an anthropologist most of the time.” This question was debated during the design phase of the survey because of the difficulties in measuring professional identity in a field that is often invisible in the non-academic workforce.

The results remind us that “identity” is a very personal and finely tuned issue. The wording of this question created some concern among respondents, with a number of individuals specifying that they identified themselves as “archaeologists” rather than anthropologists. With these caveats, we found that 62% of all respondents (n=751) identified themselves as anthropologists, while 17% disagreed with the statement.

According to the cross tabulations by age, the older the respondents were, the more often they agreed with the statement. While 54% of those in their 20s (n=78) agreed, 74% in their 60s (n=80) agreed. These results may suggest something about the aging process, increasing comfort with or clarity of identity, or cumulative experience over time.

## SKILLS AND TRAINING FOR WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION

The question of whether to encourage additional training while in graduate school is an important issue among graduate students and departments offering an MA in anthropology. We asked a number of skill-oriented questions in order to help understand the need for additional courses, certificates, cross-training, etc., and what those needs might be. To start with, we asked whether skills learned outside of anthropology were significant in their current job.

For all respondents (n=751), 87% agreed that skills learned *outside* of anthropology were significant to their careers, with 61% agreeing strongly with the statement. *In short, nearly 9 out of 10 respondents have careers in which their anthropological education was augmented by skills obtained outside the discipline*, as seen in Table 18, page 35.

By comparing degree specializations, it can be seen that both MAs with archaeological degree focuses and those with Cultural/applied and other specializations had similar profiles. Nearly 90% of both subgroups agreed “strongly” or “somewhat” that additional skills were significant to their careers. Among MAs with an archaeological focus, 66% “strongly agreed” and 22% “somewhat agreed” (n=126) that outside skills are significant, while among Cultural/applied and other specializations, 64% “strongly agreed” and 27% “somewhat agreed” (n=293) with the statement. (Appendix C-65, Table 27(20))

If additional skills were important in their jobs (and evidently they were), we wanted to know if graduates were learning skills on-the-job. Two-thirds agreed (“strongly” + “somewhat strongly”) that most of their current jobs skills were learned on-the-job. Taking these two questions into consideration, most graduates felt additional skills are needed, and most—although a smaller percentage—are learning skills while on-the-job. Given that most jobs are in management, education, outreach, or in specialized fields such as public health, medicine,

*“I say I’m an archaeologist first, because people have some idea of what that is (Indiana Jones, though most think dinosaurs first).”*

MA, ARCHAEOLOGICAL  
FOCUS



or environment, it makes sense that additional training will make people more able to execute their jobs.

In order to understand where they might develop their skills in addition to on-the-job training, we looked at whether respondents belonged to organizations outside of anthropology. Forty-two percent responded that they belonged to national, regional and state organizations such as American Association of Museums, American Public Health Association, and the American Bar Association. See Question 43, Appendix B-41. This indicates a potentially strong cross-fertilization and addition of skills through participation in other professional, scholarly, and research-oriented organizations.

We also asked respondents to identify any additional degrees they completed, in Questions 51 and 52 (Appendix B). Sixteen percent of all respondents went on to complete PhDs in anthropology, archaeology, and other fields (e.g., MD, JD). An open-ended question asked respondents whether they completed specific certificates or other training. While over 100 types of training were listed, the most frequent training is listed below. The actual numbers are very small, but indicate what seems to work well combined with a Masters in anthropology.

**Table 20. Additional Training, Certificates, and Degrees Pursued by Respondents. Open-ended question. (n=162)**

Subject Area	Frequency
Certificate: Teaching, K-12, various subjects	12
Certificate: Museum Studies	8
Certificate: GIS	4
Certificate: Nonprofit Management/Administration	4
JD	3
TESOL*	3
Masters of Library Science	3

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

\*Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, certification

We specifically asked whether additional training through a PhD degree would have enhanced individual careers. Among all respondents (n=751), 37% strongly agreed with this statement. This is less than a majority but still over one-third of all respondents, and it parallels the approximate proportions of individuals who did complete higher degrees (See Table 18, on page 35).

**TOP SKILLS NEEDED FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE FUTURE**

A final open-ended question probed further into skills needed for the future, and asked respondents to identify the two or three top skills that would be most important for their professional development *in the near future*. The 560 respondents who answered provided 1,477 individual items. Many responses indicated specific skills or somewhat broader skill areas; however, many responses were oriented towards general goals or skills, or interpersonal or self improvements. The table on the following page shows the most frequently cited skills. We also provided the opportunity to list “Other” needs, issues, and skills. Please refer to Appendix B-29 for the frequencies and categories of these “Other” responses.

*“A PhD would have greatly helped me with my peers and with obtaining grants. I have received several grants but at times, it is pretty obvious that I cannot compete without the PhD.”*

MA, ARCHAEOLOGICAL FOCUS

**Table 21. Top 20 Skills or Skill Areas Cited, (n=560)**

Skill	Frequency
Methods (general)	146
Writing Skills (all areas)	109
Management (all types)	93
Grant writing/funding	81
Teaching	60
Research (not specified)	57
Statistics	57
GIS/GPS	56
Communications, general	38
Computers or software, general	38
Verbal skills	34
Technical skills, general	28
Laws and regulations	27
Evaluation	26
Fieldwork, all kinds	23
Language, additional	19
Project or program design and/or development	16
Budgeting/finance	15
Analysis, all types	14
Community engagement/ organizing/development	12

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, *The Changing Face of Anthropology*

Graduates indicated that research and communications (particularly writing skills) were the most critical skill areas they needed for their professional development. Among the research skills noted were numerous methods (including qualitative, quantitative, research design, GIS, statistics, and fieldwork). Communication skills include general writing, grant writing, verbal skills, and languages. A number of management skills also ranked highly, including program design, development, general management, and budget/finance skills.

For greater detail on the types of skills needed in research, communication, and management, please see an additional analysis of the data using ATLAS.ti, which generated over 100 frequency categories and provides great detail on the types of skills and substantive approaches that MA anthropologists saw as useful. This can be found in Appendix B-29-30.

#### **SUMMARY—CAREER PATHS AND SATISFACTION**

The typical MA graduate is working in a full-time, permanent job (over two-thirds), rather than a term-limited, contractual job. MAs found their jobs by networking with friends and colleagues—the overwhelming choice—rather than using job postings, the internet, or campus recruiting services.

Of the MAs who took the survey, the highest percentage (20%) worked in the academic sector; however, the government/public sector ranked a very close second, and was the top sector among archaeologically focused MAs. The public sector included federal, state and local employment combined into one category. In the academic sector, jobs were not traditional tenure track faculty appointments in anthropology departments. Jobs were at university-based museums, in research institutes, university-based medical centers, and college and university administration. In short, they are part of the broad employment base of the academic enterprise.

While academic employment was the most frequent sector among all respondents, other sectors were very competitive. Where graduates worked depends on what degree focus they have. Archaeologically focused degree holders tended to work in consulting firms (16%), followed by federal (13%), state and local government (13%). Cultural/applied and other MAs worked in non-profits (15%), followed by federal (8%), state and local governments (7%). When government/public sector employment was combined, it ranked equally with non-profits at 15%.

To use the word “diverse” to describe the work of MA graduates would be an understatement, judging from responses identifying their domain of work and their job titles. The two survey categories of “education/outreach” and “administration/management” accounted for the largest proportions of activities that graduates engaged in. These two categories are people-oriented types of work that encompass a range of interactions with people (a) to instruct, educate, serve, write and analyze; and (b) to organize, lead, direct, and manage.

In terms of the substantive content of their work, archaeology, CRM, and historic preservation (three separate categories) were ranked highest, followed by “ethnography/cultural anthropology,” museum activities, health, and environment and natural resources. MAs with an archaeological focus were more likely to have a job title that reflected their specific background, e.g., archaeofaunal analyst or historic preservation specialist. Those who had a degree in cultural/applied or other anthropology were likely to have job titles that were anthropologically relevant but ambiguous as to whether anthropology training and skills were necessary, including such job titles as community organizer, immigration consultant, or senior social scientist.

How did MA graduates characterize their careers, jobs, and the relevance of anthropology? First, we wanted to know whether they identified themselves as anthropologists. Over 42% “strongly agreed” that they identify themselves as anthropologists professionally most of the time. This is a modest proportion, but another 20% “somewhat agreed” that they identify themselves as anthropologists, making moderate or strong identity the norm for the majority of respondents. Closely related was a strong belief that their degree plays a significant role in their overall career satisfaction: over 50% “strongly agreed” with this statement.

Is an MA degree helpful in their job or current position? Almost half of the respondents reported that their degree was very helpful in getting their job (47%). In addition, nearly 40% said that their degree is part of their job description, and also that it plays a significant role in helping them understand their job and meet the job requirements (42%). However, their supervisors were somewhat less likely to understand the contributions an anthropologist brings to the job (41%).

We wanted to know whether the set of skills and education in respondents’ Masters degrees was serving them well on the job, or whether they needed outside training to undertake their employment. We asked whether “skills learned outside anthropology” were important for their job. An extremely large group “strongly agreed” that this was the case (61%). Following up with an additional question on where they learned additional skills, only 31% said that they learned those skills on-the-job.

We asked about the top skills needed for their careers in the future. The top skills listed were writing skills, predominantly grant writing for funding but also general writing skills, research and methods training, and management skills. For a more detailed listing, please see Table 21 on page 42. In short, MA anthropology programs might consider directing students to resources for skill development offered within and outside the anthropology programs themselves as preparation for their careers upon graduation.

### C. Professional Organizations, Affiliations, and Views

In order to understand how Masters graduates perceive national, regional and other associations and their role in their lives and careers, the survey asked a number of questions about membership in anthropological and other professional organizations. Five questions focused on specific organizational affiliations, two elicited opinions about membership, and three other open-ended questions (including one at the end of the survey) assessed the value of membership in such organizations.

Respondents expressed mixed feelings overall towards anthropological associations, and attitudes varied by gender and type of degree. The most positive benefits of membership, mentioned most frequently, were the networking opportunities at annual meetings, access to information in journals, and access to current information in the field. On the negative side, high costs were the most often-cited reason that discouraged membership. The survey identified a range of other reasons for either not joining or discontinuing membership.

#### MEMBERSHIP

We wanted to know what kind of organizations Masters graduates were most likely to join and whether local or regional organizations had more appeal than national organizations. In a later question in this section, we also asked people to list any other professional organizations to which they belong, and those results are presented after the discussion of national, regional and local associations.

Starting with national anthropological associations, 66% of all respondents reported an affiliation with a national anthropological organization, from a pull-down list, as seen below in Table 22.

**Table 22. “Please check any national anthropological association of which you are a member.”  
(498 responses or 66% of entire respondent pool of 758)**

National Organization	Frequency
American Anthropological Association	222
Society for Applied Anthropology	165
Society for American Archaeology	145
Society for Historical Archaeology (SHA)	68
American Association of Physical Anthropologists (AAPA)	25
Archaeological Institute of America (AIA)	25
Other	142

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

In the “Other” box, 142 respondents noted 90 additional organizations, including national, international, non-anthropological groups, AAA Sections, and state or local groups. Most organizations were mentioned only once or twice. Only 21 of the 142 responses were national organizations; their frequencies are shown below in Table 23.

**Table 23. Membership in “Other” National Anthropological Organizations (n=142)**

“Other” National Anthropological Organizations (n=21)	Frequency
Canadian Archaeological Association	5
American Association of Museums	4
Canadian Anthropology Society-Société d’anthropologie du Canada (CASCA)	4
Paleopathology Association	4
American Cultural Resources Association	3
Society for Economic Anthropology	3

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

We asked respondents who were members of AAA to please check all Sections to which they belonged. We received 471 responses, and multiple responses were possible if people belonged to more than one AAA section. The top 10 sections are listed in the frequency table below.

**Table 24. Section Membership in American Anthropological Association.  
Top 10 AAA Sections (n=471)\***

Section	Frequency
National Association for the Practice of Anthropology	60
Society for Medical Anthropology	38
Archaeology Division	30
General Anthropology Division	27
Society for Cultural Anthropology	23
Society for Anthropology in Community Colleges	20
American Ethnological Society	18
Anthropology and Environment Section	17
National Association of Student Anthropologists	17
Society for Urban, National and Transnational/Global Anthropology	17

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

\*The frequency table is provided in Appendix B- 33-34.

We wanted to know whether respondents belonged to regional anthropological organizations and/or Local Practitioner Organizations (LPOs), since these organizations can offer geographic focus, proximity, and relevance that are sometimes hard to find in national and international associations. There were a total of 321 responses from pull-down menus and an open-ended “Other” question.

**Table 25. Regional and Local Organization Membership, by Frequency**

Regional and Local Organizations	Frequency
Southeastern Archaeological Conference	53
Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists	19
Midwest Archaeological Conference	17
Alaska Anthropological Association	17
Mid-Atlantic Archaeological Conference	12
Bay Area Association of Practicing Anthropology	10
Southern Anthropological Society	9
Sun Coast Organization of Practicing Anthropologists	8
Southwestern Anthropological Association	8
North Carolina Archaeological Council	8
High Plains Society for Applied Anthropology	6

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

We also asked about certifications and registers, since these are often discussed as options and/or possibilities when considering educational and career needs for anthropologists and particularly practicing and professional anthropologists. We asked whether respondents had obtained additional certifications and/or what registries they had joined. The results are shown in Table 26 below by frequency.

**Table 26. Certifications and Registers**

Register of Professional Archaeologists	89
American Board of Forensic Anthropology	1
American Academy of Forensic Sciences	1
American Cultural Resources Association	1
American Board of Pathology	1
American College of Sports Medicine (Certified Wellness Coach)	1
Certified Environmental Assessor	1
Institute for Archaeologists	1
National Board for Certification in Occupational Therapy, American Occupational Therapy Association	1
National Commission on Certification of Physician Assistants; Physicians Assistant	1
Pennsylvania Department of Education	1

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

**DO THESE ORGANIZATIONS MEET YOUR PROFESSIONAL AND CAREER NEEDS?**

Asked whether these organizations—national, regional, local and registers—met their current professional/career needs, nearly one-third of the 640 respondents answered “N/A”; presumably they are not members of any anthropological association. This is consistent with the fact that 66% of respondents noted at least one affiliation. Of those who presumably belonged to an organization, 35% responded “yes,” and 41% said “somewhat” to the question about meeting their needs, when “N/A” responses were not included. (n=444; “N/A” responses not included). Almost one quarter of respondents belonging to organizations reported that these organizations did not meet their needs (Appendix B-36).

When broken down by respondent subcategories, however, some interesting differences appeared. Among MAs, those with an archaeological focus were much more likely to indicate the organizations did meet their needs (answering “yes”) than those with a cultural/applied or other specialty focus. Also, males were more likely than females overall to answer “yes.” See Table 27 below. A full breakdown of the data is shown in several tables in the cross tabulation appendix (Question 36, Appendix C-73-74).

*“All of these organizations keep me up to date on research in my field, allow me to present my research, and are useful for professional and personal networking..”*

MA, ARCHAEOLOGY FOCUS

**Table 27. Do These Organizations Meet Your Needs?  
Differences by Sex and MA Degree Focus\***

Satisfaction with organizations across sex and degree focus (MAs only)	Yes	No
Female, all respondents, all degree types (n=418)	21%	19%
Male, all respondents, all degree types (n=215)	32%	12%
Female, MA, archaeology focus (n=69)	30%	14%
Female, MA, cultural/applied or other focus (n=190)	11%	26%
Male, MA, archaeology focus (n=54)	46%	6%
Male, MA, cultural/applied or other focus (n=63)	13%	16%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

\*Note: Only the “Yes” and “No” responses are reported above. The “Somewhat” and “N/A” responses are available in the Appendix tables.

The prior question gives a general sense for whether organizations are meeting respondents’ needs; the data show that for respondents as a whole, they are meeting their needs. Strong endorsement was at 35%, and moderate (“somewhat”) endorsement was at 41%, so ultimately 76% responded positively. More men were satisfied than women, and more archaeologically focused degree-holders were satisfied than cultural/applied and other specialties.

We asked people to elaborate on their answers in an open-ended, follow-on question (Question 37). There were 218 responses. These answers have not yet been analyzed and are a valuable data base for future researchers.

**MEMBERSHIP IN NON-ANTHROPOLOGY ORGANIZATIONS**

As mentioned previously, we wanted to find out patterns of membership in non-anthropology organizations, reasoning that those organizations provide substantial training, exposure, and collegueship in important areas of respondents’ careers. Less than half of all respondents said they belonged to professional organizations outside of anthropology (n=675), a more insular finding than expected.

**Table 28. Membership in Professional Organizations outside of Anthropology**

	Frequency	Percent
No	391	58%
Yes	284	42%
<b>Total</b>	<b>675</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source AAA/CoPAPIA, *The Changing Face of Anthropology*

At the same time, in the open-ended follow-on question, respondents provided over 500 different associations where they carried memberships; many listed multiple organizations/associations to which they belonged. These organizations included health and medicine, history, education, libraries, and specific professions and specializations. Geographically, they ranged from local and state to international organizations. The American Association of Museums was the most frequently noted organization (35 mentions), followed by the American Public Health Association (19 mentions) and the American Evaluation Association (10 mentions). It is worth noting that the American Association of Museums and other museum-related organizations were mentioned over 70 times, although most organizations were mentioned individually only once or twice. The complete list of organizational memberships outside of anthropology is provided in Appendix B-41, Question 43.

#### **RELEVANCE OF PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

We asked about the relevance of national professional organizations to respondents across six general areas of peoples' careers and employment. We wanted to explore whether peoples' employers supported their memberships, whether annual meetings were perceived as beneficial, whether respondents saw clear ways to provide service to their profession through the organizations, whether membership costs were prohibitive, or whether they preferred applied and practicing organizations rather than academically based ones. The focus was on how respondents thought about or imagined the relevance of national associations in general, not targeted to any one organization in particular (we asked later specifically about the AAA).

Table 29 on page 49 shows the results in each of the key sub-questions. Forty three percent agreed that membership in national associations served their careers "strongly" or "somewhat well," compared with 22% who disagreed.

Nearly the same percentage (44%) agreed that meetings are relevant to their needs and careers, while only 23% were critical of meetings. Employers did not generally support membership in national associations—43% of respondents "Somewhat" or "Strongly Disagreed" that their employer supported membership or travel to participate in national organizations, while only 27% agreed. We asked whether membership costs were a factor in joining; 43% said they were not a factor, while 27% said they were a factor. These data suggest an additional analysis: whether membership costs were prohibitive across all income levels, such as among those with higher incomes compared to those with lower incomes.

Across all areas there were a strong number of "N/A" responses, ranging from 13% to 21% of the responses—presumably those who did not belong to national associations. It might be useful to re-analyze the data while controlling for the "N/A" responses.

Comparisons by type of degree revealed differences. At the MA level, those with an archaeological focus were significantly more likely to agree that "Membership in general serves my chosen career or occupation" than those with a cultural, applied, or other specializations. Among PhDs, 74% of those with an archaeological focus agreed with this statement, while only 39% of the remaining PhDs agreed. Conversely, levels of disagreement were similar: those



with cultural, applied, or other specializations were much more likely to disagree with the sub-question than those with an archaeological focus. The results for all respondents are shown in Table 29.

**Table 29. “In broad terms, how relevant are national anthropological organizations to you?”**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
(a) Membership in general serves my chosen career or occupation. (n=730)	17%	26%	21%	10%	12%	14%
(b) Membership costs are a factor in my joining or not joining. (n=733)	38%	28%	12%	6%	5%	11%
(c) Employer supports membership or travel (financially or otherwise). (n=728)	9%	18%	10%	11%	32%	21%
(d) Meetings are relevant to my needs and important to my career. (n=731)	20%	24%	21%	13%	10%	13%
(e) There are clear opportunities for service to the profession. (n=723)	13%	25%	29%	11%	7%	15%
(f) An applied/practicing national membership is a better value than an academically based national membership. (n=723)	16%	19%	33%	6%	5%	20%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

Cross tabulations for each of the sub-questions (a)-(f) by degree type, degree focus, and sex are provided in Appendix C-73.

#### **AMERICAN ANTHROPOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (AAA) SERVICES AND BENEFITS**

The survey asked one question, with eight sub-questions, specifically about AAA, whether respondents were a member or not. The proportions of responses in the “N/A, Don’t Know” column at the far right of Table 30 are relatively high, ranging from 29% to 52% of the respondent pool for each sub-question. These percentages are likely the responses of people who do not belong to the AAA, or they could be members who have not used those particular AAA services and are not familiar with them.

We asked the sub-questions in order to get more specific information about the most valued services and benefits as well as the ones of which people were more critical. For example, there was little support for the price of a membership in AAA compared to other professional organizations, with more people *disagreeing* that it was reasonable than agreeing, overall.

In contrast, questions about AnthroSource and AAA publications elicited higher positive response rates. Thirty-two percent agreed that these benefits of AAA membership were relevant to their careers, and only 14% disagreed. Still, 36% hadn’t tried them, didn’t use them, or didn’t know about these resources for members.<sup>2</sup>

*“They are as a rule very expensive to belong to and the journals have become so esoteric that relevant articles are few and far between. When I need the information, I can find it w/o being a member.”*

MA, ARCHAEOLOGY FOCUS

<sup>2</sup>AnthroSource provides electronic access to all AAA journals and Section publications, and was initiated in 2005.

Networking opportunities and information exchanges through AAA were also rated positively, with 36% agreeing that they were important. Only 14% disagreed that they were important.

Likewise there was support for professional enhancement offered at AAA meetings—workshops and training sessions on methodology, dealing with the media, etc. In this case, 31% agreed that the AAA meeting offered professional enhancement opportunities, while far fewer disagreed (14%). Taken together, this suite of services were the most positively portrayed by respondents.

Only 15% said AAA *career development* services were important, and nearly the same number—16%—disagreed. In a related question, we asked about employment services. Similarly, 14% agreed that they were useful, and again, nearly the same number, 15%, disagreed. Considering both questions together, only 30% of respondents had explicit perspectives on these two issues. Over half of the respondents for each sub question listed “N/A, Don’t Know” as their response.

We wanted to get a sense whether AAA was perceived as “practitioner-friendly” and encouraging of applied anthropologists, one of the long-term goals of AAA, PAWG and CoPAPIA, among other organizations. We explicitly asked whether the association “recognizes the needs of practicing and applied anthropologists,” and the results were ambiguous: 26% agreed that the AAA recognized their needs, while 21% disagreed. An even greater proportion (35%) said that the question wasn’t applicable or they didn’t know. It would be an important time-series data point if there were earlier (e.g., 5 years earlier) AAA surveys asking a similar question.

**Table 30. Respondent Attitudes towards AAA Benefits and Services**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Neutral	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A, Don't Know
Compared to other professional organizations, the AAA membership price is reasonable. (n=732)	5%	18%	16%	16%	8%	36%
AnthroSource and the publications available as a benefit of AAA membership are relevant to my needs. (n=730)	15%	17%	17%	9%	5%	36%
Opportunities for networking and information exchanges through AAA are important. (n=729)	11%	25%	21%	8%	6%	29%
AAA recognizes the needs of practicing and applied anthropologists. (n=730)	6%	20%	18%	13%	8%	35%
The annual AAA meeting offers professional enhancement. (n=726)	10%	21%	18%	9%	5%	36%
The annual AAA meeting is worth the registration price. (n=727)	4%	14%	17%	14%	9%	42%
Career and professional development services provided by AAA are helpful. (n=728)	5%	10%	19%	9%	7%	51%
The AAA employment services are useful. (n=728)	5%	9%	19%	7%	8%	52%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

Asked to elaborate on these responses, 126 respondents provided a brief answer. Responses were generalized into 24 different categories; the most frequent responses tended to be negative: AAA membership was too expensive (22); AAA membership is not important, relevant, or necessary (17). Other categories included “Other organizations serve me better,” (8); “Employment—too academic” (8); “Meetings not a positive experience” (7); and “too PhD-oriented” (3). However, there were also positive responses such as “good experience” (4) and “AnthroSource is good” (2). Keep in mind that the frequency listing is instructive as a view into respondents’ specific thoughts about AAA, and the reader is urged to read the full list in Appendix B-40, Question 41. Also note the large number of “N/A” responses tended to skew the percentages. A more useful analysis might be undertaken controlling for “N/A” responses.

**JOINING A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION**

In order to provide respondents with the greatest opportunity to offer opinions in their own words, we asked them to “Describe the benefits, services, or opportunities that would lead you to join a professional organization.” Of the 319 respondents who responded to this question, many cited multiple benefits or reasons. A sample of comments or suggestions is provided in the table below to give the reader a sense of the variability and usefulness of these comments.

**Table 31. Reasons to Join an Organization—Examples**

Something that would be helpful would be a reduced rate for people who are already members of a related, but not anthro specific professional association, or at least (reduced) member rates for professional meetings.
Free trial membership.
Broader employment opportunities for MA degree holders.
I look for organizations that provide information, tools, and education that help enhance my work and career. For example, the American Bar Association has excellent webinars and online courses on a range of affordable housing topics, which greatly enhance my knowledge in this area and are very relevant to my job.
I would LOVE a publication that caters to MA anthros and our wide array of professional careers - a forum to discuss challenges and opportunity for skill development.
Make the process very easy, application to AAA is a major turn-off.
Monthly/quarterly installment options for payment of membership dues.
(Provide opportunity for) more dialog among members with nonmembers.

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, The Changing Face of Anthropology

To make sense out of the answers to the open-ended question above, answers were coded into 20 different categories of benefits or reasons to join. Two additional codes (categories) were applied to responses: (1) comments that were too general, and (2) respondents who did not belong to an association. The most striking result, seen in Table 32 on page 52, is the substantial number of respondents who noted that opportunities for networking were an important consideration for them for joining and organization.

*“Much of my work life focuses on skills that are not specifically anthropological in nature and so I reach out to other organizations for those needs. I find both AAA and SfAA less than fully engaged with and supportive of professional anthropology. Gaining support and value, especially from AAA, continues to need to be enhanced.”*

MA, APPLIED MEDICAL/  
PHYSICAL FOCUS

**Table 32. Reasons to Join Professional Organizations (n=319)**

Description	Frequency	Percentage
Networking of various kinds (professional, collegial)	144	45%
Access to journals and publications	74	23%
Continuing education, keeping up with current trends and knowledge in the field	67	21%
Conference attendance	59	18%
Professional development opportunities, trainings and workshops, certification opportunities, career advancement	51	16%
Relevance of organization to current employment	50	16%
Affordability of services	48	15%
Employment services	35	11%
Ability to publish in journals and publications	14	4%
Internet-based resources	13	4%
Advocacy of profession	8	3%
Availability of insurance	7	2%
Professional affiliation is important	6	2%
Access to funding/fieldwork/fellowship opportunities	6	2%
Service or support to profession/organization	6	2%
Employer support for membership	5	2%
Interested in more practitioner-oriented services/support	5	2%
Publishing and/or promotional assistance or opportunities	5	2%
Availability of mentoring	4	1%
Access to potential clients	3	1%
<b>Other Responses</b>		
General comment	24	8%
Not a member	5	2%

Source: AAA/CoPAPIA, *The Changing Face of Anthropology*

The survey responses reflected a range of broad information related to how various members and non-members view their membership in anthropological and non-anthropological associations. These responses provide indications for how organizations wishing to expand their membership among MA anthropologists might wish to focus their services and incentives for membership.

#### **SUMMARY—PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, AND VIEWS**

As more and more graduates enter careers that are not associated in traditional ways with departments of anthropology, it is important to understand their needs for affiliation with professional organizations. One motivation comes from the need for associations themselves to maintain membership and meet new needs of members, with the challenge of a growing and changing profession. Another reason to understand affiliation to attract members from MAs to PhDs is for the collective good—the experiences and knowledge of non-traditional anthropologists are an important resource for the discipline and profession, and feed into the development of theory, concepts, practice and evaluation.

We asked first about national, regional and Local Practitioner Organization (LPO) membership. Among all respondents we found that 66% belong to national anthropological associations (Table 22). Approximately 42% belonged to regional and LPOs, based on the number of responses and the overall respondent base, although this is a rough estimate since multiple responses per individual were possible. The Southeastern Archaeological Conference, Washington Association of Professional Anthropologists, Midwest Archaeological Conference, and Alaska Anthropological Association were the top four mentioned. The Register of Professional Archaeologists was by far the most frequently mentioned register or certification.

We asked “Do these organizations meet your needs?” The responses were a lukewarm endorsement for all professional organizations. Of those who belonged to an organization, 35% responded “yes,” and 41% said “somewhat” to the question about meeting their needs, so ultimately 76% responded positively. Almost one quarter of respondents reported that these organizations did not meet their needs. More men were satisfied than women, and more archaeological degree-holders were satisfied than cultural/applied and other specialties (Table 27, page 47). Forty-two percent of respondents belonged to over 500 different professional organizations outside of anthropology. The complete list of organizational memberships outside of anthropology is provided in Appendix B-41, Question 43.

Responding to a question on the relevance of national professional organizations, 43% agreed that membership served their careers; about the same percentage (44%) agreed that meetings were relevant, compared to only a quarter who said they were not. We asked whether applied/practicing national memberships are a better value than academic organization memberships. On balance, they were perceived to be a better value: 35% “strongly” or “somewhat” agreed, while 11% disagreed (see Table 29, page 49, for responses to all sub-questions on relevance).

We asked a number of questions specifically on perceptions of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). They ranged across most of the services and benefits provided by AAA. There was little support for the price of membership, for example, but questions on AnthroSource and AAA publications showed strong support, as were networking opportunities and information exchanges (Table 30, page 50).

We wanted to know what combination of benefits and services would lead people to join a professional organization. The top four most frequently mentioned benefits were “networking” (45%), followed by access to journals and publications (23%), “continuing education” (keeping up with trends in the field) (21%), and conference attendance (18%). Networking of various kinds, specifically professional and collegial—was by far the most important motivation for joining a professional organization (Table 32, page 52).

The results of this survey provide an initial perspective on the current and prospective benefits of professional organization members for anthropologists with an MA degree. Additionally, respondents have identified constraints they have experienced regarding affiliation with such organizations and ideas for making organizational membership more relevant to their professional and personal lives.

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## Conclusions and Commentary

The intent of the 2009 AAA/CoPAPIA MA Survey was to learn more about where Masters graduates “go” once they get their degree, enter the workforce, craft their careers and join professional organizations. The survey provided an opportunity for MAs to reflect on their education, career trajectories, and the role of professional organizations in their lives. These responses led to some recommendations for MA alumni and current students, departments of anthropology, and professional organizations.

The “bottom line” for the field of anthropology is that the proportion of Masters graduates in anthropology compared to PhDs continues to grow, as seen by the frequency of MAs granted each year by colleges and universities (Figures 1 and 2). When compared with recent surveys of anthropology PhDs and data reported by departments of anthropology to the AAA (Rudd, et. al. 2008:3 and AAA 2010), the number of MAs graduated each year is approximately three times the number of doctoral graduates. Yet despite their numbers, the perception is that MAs “disappear” from professional organizations, departmental alumni networks, and the social landscape of anthropology.

The face of anthropology is changing, subtly and in consequential ways. Masters degree holders do not disappear, but they do disperse—through a wide variety of employment sectors and jobs. Even though “academic” is the most commonly reported employment sector (about 21%, Tables 16a and 16b), less than one-quarter of respondents worked within the academic enterprise—and in most cases, not in traditional faculty appointments in anthropology. Government/public sector jobs (combined federal, state and local) were the second-most frequently mentioned employment sector for all respondents (Table 15). When the sectors were analyzed by degree specialization, the public sector outranked academia as the top job destination for archaeologically focused degree holders at 26% (Table 16a). Taken together, public sector employment, non-profit, and private sectors such as consulting firms and small businesses employed the majority of MA anthropologists. As a result, employment typically brings MAs into contact with a wide range of other disciplines, occupations, and many “publics” in a way that more traditional academic jobs may not.

MAs are often the “face” of anthropology that the public experiences, since an impressive number of MAs identify themselves professionally as anthropologists or archaeologists most of the time (62%). You may meet them in National Parks as rangers, specialists, or contractors; and in state government as historic preservation officers. You may meet an MA as an organizer of a public festival—perhaps the Smithsonian’s Folklife Festival, or a neighborhood festival in Chicago. Many MAs go into education (in the broadest sense), public relations, communications, or media. “Education/outreach” was the most frequently selected descriptor of MA’s domain of work—explaining and describing things to other people, communicating ideas and concepts, whether through museums, community programs, or in schools (Table 17a).

The survey provided a number of interesting results, not all of which were surprising or actionable, and many which may be subject to differing interpretations. As a group, most MA graduates were satisfied in general with their education and careers. Overall they are pleased with their Masters degree and felt that it enhances their careers. Most are working full-time at jobs that use their anthropology skills, and almost two-thirds of them identified professionally as anthropologists (62%). The majority of respondents are women (66%) in the age range of 30 to 49, who have domestic partners or who are married. Most MAs stay connected to their field through meetings in their specialized areas; two thirds of the entire pool belong to at least one national anthropological organization (e.g., AAA, SAA, or SfAA), and 33% belonged to national professional organizations outside of anthropology such as the American Public Health Association or the American Evaluation Association. In general,

## IV. Conclusions, Commentary and Recommendations



respondents were somewhat less satisfied with their professional organizations than they were with their education and careers. The interpretation of the survey team is that there is a propensity to join professional organizations that meet their needs and career requirements, but overall MAs are not fully connected to national professional organizations in part due to their hesitation about cost and relevancy to their professional lives.

While there was great breadth of participation in the survey across North America and universities (128 academic institutions), the top six universities (Table 2) make up nearly one-third of the entire respondent pool. With respect to date of graduation, most respondents graduated in the past seven years. Respondents were predominantly white, which is consistent with other surveys of anthropologists.

### **REFLECTIONS ON MA EDUCATION**

Reflecting on their educational experiences as a whole, respondents were quite positive. About 80% reported being “somewhat” or “very satisfied” with the breadth, depth and quality of education they acquired during their MA program. They felt equally strongly that their degree was relevant to their career and enabled their career advancement opportunities.

A recurrent theme was that MAs are very practical and resourceful individuals and desired more “practicality” in their educational programs. In support of this theme, the most highly ranked substantive/content area recommended for inclusion in MA curricula was “case studies and readings in applied anthropology and archaeology.” They also wanted more “collaborative participatory and community-based methods,” which would provide experience for working with organizations, communities and other social groups. We asked for recommendations for “workplace skills” to include in graduate education. The two top-ranked skills were instructive because they were similarly related to real-life employment needs and job requirements: technical writing for proposals and grants, and project design and management. Table 8 provides a useful reference for graduate programs and departments in understanding what their students need, based on recommendations from those in the field.

We found that people with archaeology-focused specializations (including cultural resources management and historic preservation) entered their MA program with the expectation of receiving very specific sets of job skills—in contrast to the comparison subgroup of those with cultural/social, applied and other specializations. In fact, this objective was voiced twice as frequently by the MAs with archaeology-focused specializations. This result, along with others in the report, provides a picture of a clearer career or employment path for archaeologically focused graduates than for cultural/social, applied and other specializations.

It could be speculated that archaeological MA careers are more structured and definable than their counterparts. As seen elsewhere in the survey, job titles of “archaeologist” or “historic preservation specialist” are much more frequent than, for example, “cultural anthropologist.” Thus, a degree focus in archaeology tended to lead to a job and career in a closely related field; this was not always the case with some other specialties.

Just over half of all respondents agreed that they hoped to combine the anthropology MA with other education or training in pursuit of a specific job or career. This suggests that those programs having joint degrees with other programs (e.g., combined MA/MPH degrees) are meeting a desired need among students. The survey did not solicit specifics with this question as to what the other training might be, but responses from other questions suggest these would include specialized areas of research, communication skills such as writing and speaking, community based research methods, and the areas of health, business, environment, history, education, international development, and public administration. (See Question 14 in Appendix B-13.)



Although 70 percent of respondents said they were seeking education or training for a specific job or career, nearly as many said they were motivated by a general interest in anthropology rather than a specific career goal. These two different and sequential questions were worded in a way that rendered them not mutually exclusive. The point of the questions was to determine why people selected anthropology for graduate studies at the MA level. The results show that there was high interest in both subject matter (e.g., anthropological theory and approach) and the careers that are available as a result of specific anthropological training (e.g., archaeological or ethnographic careers).

### **CAREER PATHS AND SATISFACTION**

In the area of career trajectories and jobs, MAs were generally positive about their degree, their careers, and their professional identity as anthropologists. MA graduates believed that their degree played a significant role in their overall career satisfaction: over 50% “strongly agreed” with this statement.

Anthropologists are nothing if not flexible in the job market, as the career pathways analysis showed (Figure 9). Among MA respondents, most were able to find a job within six months of receiving their degrees. MA anthropology jobs were spread generally across all employment sectors, including academic enterprises (see Table 15), but there were identifiable differences in the profiles of the sectors where archaeologically specialized respondents worked, compared with those who have cultural/applied and other specializations (see Table 16a and 16b).

The archaeologically focused MAs seemed to have a clearer career path—they had more specific educational objectives prior to entering graduate programs, more clearly identifiable potential job titles, and more clearly defined target occupational sectors (state and federal government and archaeological consulting firms) than did the other MA graduates.<sup>3</sup> Further, a number of questions indicated that Masters degree holders with an archaeological focus found their educational and career tracks more clearly defined and satisfactory, while Masters holders of other specialties are somewhat less satisfied, less clear about their career tracks, and more likely to consider a PhD as a further career enhancement. Colleges, universities, and professional organizations have a challenge to make career pathways more apparent for anthropology specializations and more available to graduate students by fostering relationships and internships with organizations across different sectors.

The data analysis did not break out applied anthropology specializations such as medical, urban, and business anthropology due to relatively small numbers of respondents in each category. In some of these specializations there may be a clearer career path, perhaps more similar to those in historic preservation, CRM, and archaeology; this is a question which should be culled and tackled in future analyses. What can be said about careers for cultural/applied and other specializations is that an MA is a remarkably flexible degree that provides a solid base of knowledge and skills for a great number of varying career options.

Do MA graduates identify themselves as anthropologists professionally? This is a question often posed for anthropologists working outside of academia. With the caveat that quite a number of people stated in an open-ended response that they identify themselves as Archaeologists rather than Anthropologists, over 42% of the respondents “strongly agreed”

<sup>3</sup>With the caveat that the analysis did not break out specializations of biological and physical anthropology nor linguistics from the “Cultural/applied and other specializations” group. It might be expected that these specializations might also have a clearer career path than the Cultural/applied and other anthropologists, but the number of respondents was small in each specialization.

and 20% “somewhat agreed” that they identified themselves as anthropologists professionally most of the time. In short, there is a strong tendency to self-identify as anthropologists among MA alums.

In addition, nearly 40% say their anthropology degree is part of their job description, and that it played a significant role in helping them understand their job and meet the job requirements (42%). However, we also asked whether “skills learned outside anthropology” were important for their job and over 61% “strongly agreed” that this was the case. These questions argue that the anthropological skills learned only in their graduate programs were not enough for their job requirements, and lend support to the argument that a MA combined with other specialized degree, certificate program, or courses focused on a substantive area would be very marketable. Many (~70%) sought additional training off-the-job after receiving their MA.

### **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AFFILIATIONS, AND VIEWS**

How do MA graduates view the relevance and benefits of professional organizations? We found that 66% belong to national anthropological associations (Table 22); and approximately 42% belonged to regional and LPOs. This is a rough estimate since these were posed as separate questions and, therefore, multiple responses per individual were possible.

When asked whether these organizations in general met their needs, the response was a lukewarm endorsement for all professional organizations: 35% responded “yes,” and 41% said “somewhat” to the question about meeting their needs. Almost one quarter of respondents reported that these organizations did not meet their needs (Appendix B-36), which is interesting in light of the large proportion who reported belonging to professional organizations. Apparently respondents persist in their membership even when the organizations do not meet their needs in an unambiguous way. In another series of questions, we asked respondents specifically about AAA programs and services. There was little positive support for the cost of membership. However, questions about AnthroSource and AAA publications showed strong support, as did networking opportunities and information exchanges (Table 30) at annual meetings and electronically.

We wanted to know what combination of benefits and services would lead people to join a professional organization. The top four most frequently mentioned benefits were “networking” (45%), access to journals and publications (23%), “continuing education” (keeping up with trends in the field) (21%), and conference attendance (18%). Networking of various kinds, specifically professional and collegial, was by far the most important motivation for joining a professional organization (Table 32). There are a growing number of graduates who are using their anthropology concepts and theories and skills in their careers, yet professional organizations as well as the discipline overall have no systematic way to benefit from their feedback, insights, and recommendations.

### **Recommendations**

The 2009 AAA/CoPAPIA MA Survey builds upon the groundwork and recommendations of the PAWG report (2006), the COSWA survey of practitioners (Bronzo, et. al. 2008), and the CIRGE report (Rudd, et. al. 2008), among other efforts to understand anthropology graduates and practitioners. Our recommendations are addressed to the three major stakeholder groups of the survey: Masters alumni and current graduate students, anthropology departments, and anthropological professional organizations.

### **MASTERS ALUMNI AND CURRENT GRADUATE STUDENTS**

- Given the importance of networking, it is important to develop a professional network or, minimally, a list of contacts of relevant colleagues with whom you maintain contact. This could include peers, alumni, faculty, and specialists in your career area.
- Develop and maintain at least one strong mentor relationship from your MA experience.
- Find at least one professional organization that meets your needs and maintain an active membership, whether local, regional, or national.
- Consider additional training, education, specialization or experience that enhances your career objectives and interests.

### **ANTHROPOLOGY DEPARTMENTS**

- Advisor/mentor relationships in departments should be designed to facilitate open and productive communications regarding the application of their anthropological education to career development.
- Departments should engage anthropologists based in the local community to serve as resources and outside mentors for students and to serve on student committees.
- Graduate programs should develop systematic programs or methods for linking graduate students with internships and job opportunities, building relationships across departments and Schools, and with companies, community-based organizations and non-profits.
- Develop an effective process to track and maintain alumni connections, and utilize these to connect alumni with current students. MA graduates who get jobs at local non-profits, state or local governments, the federal government, and other sectors are excellent resources for internships and networking for future alumni. Alumni can become an invaluable asset of the department and the MA program in teaching, mentoring, and collaborative scholarly work. Placement of students in community-based projects, practica, and jobs can be greatly increased by the incorporation of alumni into the life of the department.
- Provide opportunities for students to conduct research in the local community, an intentional community, or a voluntary or professional organization. At some point in their coursework, MA students should gain some practical experience utilizing data and the latest software used by social science researchers. GIS skills were also highly rated by MA graduates and should be available through course-work or workshop.
- Provide course material on qualitative methods, quantitative methods, research design, and data management. Provide or point to opportunities to improve writing skills, technical writing skills, and communication skills.
- If it has not already been developed, MA programs should consider providing internship or practica opportunities as an effective way to learn how to apply their anthropological knowledge and experience.

### **ANTHROPOLOGICAL PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

- Develop proactive strategies to communicate with students and recent graduates regarding services the organization provides and how these services meet their professional needs.
- Evaluate the dues structure of the organization and consider incentives for current graduate students and recent alumni to join the organization.

## For AAA

- AAA could provide responses to member departments of anthropology regarding specific educational data (e.g., questions 8–16 and 27–31). Additionally, the AAA could provide the data to departments that had enough respondents to protect anonymity. These reports would include both the overall respondent results and the results from individual departments' alumni with five or more responding.
- AAA could package the results of the survey into a document about MA careers aimed specifically at Masters students. This could be made available to all AAA member departments, as well as being posted on the AAA website.
- To ensure the widest possible use of the MA Alumni Survey data, and to expand analyses and interpretations, the AAA could provide selected portions of the raw survey data to interested departments and other interested organizations. Results reported by users would be posted to the CoPAPIA web page on the AAA site.
- Responses from membership in specific AAA Sections could be provided to the relevant Section leadership, to help them understand better the needs and perspectives of their MA alumni members.
- It is important to continue research regarding the question of educational experience, career trajectories, and affiliation with professional organizations of MA alumni from anthropology programs. MA alumni constitute a significant portion of graduates of anthropology programs in the United States, warranting continuing assessment of their educational and professional experiences. The AAA is the most appropriate organization to conduct this research, but given the fact that graduates with an archaeological focus constitute a significant component of the MA alumni respondents, conducting joint projects with the Archaeology Division of the AAA and the Society for American Archaeology might be considered.
- Costs of membership and travel to annual meetings appear to be a deterrent to membership and meeting participation. Student membership rates in AAA are high compared to some other national anthropology organizations, and section membership adds additional costs, even though sections have student membership rates too. Consider waiving the AAA-level student membership costs or reducing them to encourage membership and enhance the attractiveness of annual meetings. In short, revisit the financial structure for student members in the AAA.
- Since networking and 'keeping up with the field' were two of the most valued aspects of annual meetings, along with access to publications, the AAA meetings might incorporate more formalized or structured networking opportunities for students and new members or first-time attendees. This could be jointly sponsored by sections in order to encourage student connection to the AAA overall and to an area of specialized interests of first-time attendees, including students.
- Continue to innovate with new ways to connect students at the undergraduate and graduate level to the breadth of anthropology activities at the meetings and in the organization. For example, a "Student Saturday" event targeting regional undergraduates was piloted at the 2009 AAA meetings with a minimal registration fee for the day. Given the positive response, it will be repeated in 2010 at the AAA meetings in New Orleans. We encourage this kind of model to counterbalance perceptions of high meeting costs and the need for attendees to feel invited and connected.

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