REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF SAAP

prepared by

The Committee on the Future of the Organization

Morris Grossman, Armen Marsoobian, Henny Wenkart
Marjorie Miller (Chair)

This report, revised in light of discussions with the Executive Committee in December and in March, represents the results of the Committee's deliberations based both on our consideration of the thoughtful responses to the questionnaire we circulated and on our experiences over the years as active participants in the various phases of the evolution of the Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy.

We should like to begin by stressing that the ends to which the Society has traditionally addressed itself ought to be reaffirmed and developed: but that development, based on growth, must redirect our energy toward the implementation of formal mechanisms for communication, integration and continued productive expansion. Such mechanisms must be designed to facilitate exchanges among people who are CURRENTLY thinking, working, and publishing in fields of interest to our society, and to assure that the highest quality is maintained in the programs sponsored by SAAP.

We make the following specific recommendations:

Programming

I. Address both QUALITY and PARTICIPATION through utilization of blind reviewing for sections of each program, SUPPLEMENTED by the use of invited speakers, panels and other imaginative programs designed to ensure breadth and balance among participants.

A. Establish appropriate procedures for the blind reviewing of papers: papers to be sent in triplicate, with detachable cover letters, to the Secretary-Treasurer, who will forward papers (minus cover sheets) to the Program Committee.

B. Appoint program committees two years in advance so that there will be sufficient lead time both to utilize blind review procedures and to arrange for supplementary sessions to provide varied participation.

II. Resolved: Include as Suggestions and Guide to Program Chairs, the following:

A. We invite related work of current concern in philosophy in America, which may or may not grow directly out of the work of the "classic" American philosophers. Include invitations to persons outside of our tradition.
B. Develop a mechanism which would allow the membership to inform the program chair of their interests and backgrounds, so that session chairs and commentators can be selected in ways which are both intellectually defensible and efficacious in producing diversity among program participants.

C. Address the current research concerns or activities of our members—including discussion of work in progress.

D. Encourage work which goes beyond historical exegesis to original work growing out of and EXTENDING the American tradition. Emphasize the continuity and power of a tradition which continues to be productive in new ways.

E. Focus, occasionally, on less well known figures in the history of the development of the American philosophical tradition.

F. Experiment with varying formats. E.g.: a SEMINAR option giving a group of philosophers a long time to DO PHILOSOPHY on an appropriate topic, perhaps with an optional second session on the next day.

G. Apply to State Council on the Humanities for speaker grants to defray meeting costs.

III. Formalize dates and procedures to be followed by program committees. The President, Secretary-Treasurer and Program Chair are to determine these matters when the Chair is appointed.

Improve Communications Among Members

I. Our recommendation urges that the Society increase the importance of the Newsletter by separating the function of Editor from the position of Secretary-Treasurer. To this end, a motion was introduced at the business meeting, on March 6, 1987, to amend the Constitution of the Society in order to effect this separation. The motion requires that an Editor of the Newsletter be appointed, by the Executive Committee, to a renewable three-year term.

II. In response to our recommendation, the Executive Committee has accepted the following as priorities for the Society, to be pursued as resources become available:

A. That the Secretary-Treasurer of the Society, along with the Editor of the Newsletter, ought to develop a DIRECTORY OF MEMBERSHIP, communicating interests of members for purposes of selecting dissertation committees, speakers, contacts from community colleges, resources for students, and the further sharing of research interests.

B. That the Editor of the Newsletter provide a listing of current books, both by members and of interest to members.
C. That we appoint a "graduate fellow" to produce listings of current articles which may be of interest to our membership.

III. With respect to expanding outreach functions:

A. The Executive Committee resolved to continue our representation in the Council of Philosophical Societies and FISP, and to see to it that announcements of meetings, information about prizes (both in advance of awarding them and in publicizing recipients of awards which have been granted), as well as calls for papers, appear in THE PROCEEDINGS AND ADDRESSES of the American Philosophical Association, selected overseas journals, in THE TRANSACTIONS OF THE C. S. PEIRCE SOCIETY, and in THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION.

B. The Committee urged that we work on outreach to Canada and Latin America

   1. through mailings of calls-for-papers and announcements of awards and meetings to be sent to university philosophy departments, and

   2. through advertisements/announcements in appropriate journals.

C. We resolved to print a brochure with an attached membership form, which would be made available to the membership for distribution at other meetings, among colleagues, and in appropriate locations whenever SAAP is meeting — either alone or with a division of the APA.

Miscellaneous

I. Since we found no unified support for changes in either the times or the dates of meetings, continue current calendar policies—holding annual meetings on the last weekend in February or the first weekend in March.

II. Continue current dues schedule.

III. Expand contacts with other societies — but only as worthwhile opportunities present themselves.

IV. Continue the authority of program committees to develop imaginative and varied program formats.

Respectfully submitted,

Marjorie Miller, Chair
Committee on the Future of the Society