New Communications Policy for Anthropology St. George

Every week our department receives literally hundreds of requests to post, and sometimes edit or re-post, announcements ranging from lectures and conferences, through field schools and special courses or workshops, to social invitations and political messages. Often the requests are to post on multiple media: listserv, newsletter and website. As you can imagine, posting even a fraction of these announcements not only takes up a great deal of staff time but, more importantly, results in information overload. Most of us, I am sure, simply delete or ignore the vast majority of these messages.

The deluge of messages also presents the very real danger that people will overlook the messages that we urgently want people to see — messages about fellowship deadlines or job talks, for example. There are also risks that we will post inaccurate or out-of-date information in our duplication of messaging whose original source is elsewhere.

Consequently, I have asked our website committee (to be renamed Communications Committee) to develop new policy and guidelines for what kinds of announcements we will post, where, how, and for how long. I am also asking them to repurpose the newsletter to focus more on news that is likely to be of interest to alumni, and to fine-tune the website so that it can be the go-to place for most events and information that directly relate to the department.

In the interim, to stem the ever-rising tide of messaging, and place more focus on key Anthropology-related information, we will substantially reduce the volume through the following measures:

1)   We will no longer advertise coming events or field schools in the newsletter. We still welcome newsletter submissions concerning recent milestone events, such as books published and awards received by faculty or students.

2)   Anthropology events and talks by Anthropology faculty will be advertised on the departmental website, with links directing to relevant event websites (e.g., Archaeology Centre, Development Centre, AGSU). We will normally only use the listserv to send reminders about especially important departmental events (such as job talks), and otherwise you will be expected to check the website to find information related to events.

3)   We also encourage people to post open events through the UofT website; by providing the event ulr link to the Faculty of Arts and Science communications unit who will forward it onward. (note: further details to follow)

4)	Rather than have multiple postings, we will provide links on our website to "home" websites that post the authoritative version of your information. For example, rather than posting AGSU-related information on our site, we will direct people to the AGSU website, to which our website already provides a link. We are happy to help you by adding links, where warranted, if they do not already occur on our website.

5)	Other changes will be coming, once the Communications Committee has a chance to deliberate. If you have views about these issues, please bring them to one of the committee members (http://anthropology.utoronto.ca/resources/department-committees-2016-17/#website)

Thank you for your cooperation. I suspect you will be thankful when you find your inboxes much less cluttered with Anthropology emails.

Currently, to request an event be added to the department website;

Please send only one email with all the necessary information, from one committee member, to either Anthro.officeofthechair@utoronto.ca OR stephanie.michell@utoronto.ca (not both), that includes the following information:

- name of event
- who is speaking, hosting or sponsoring; include titles if applicable
- event type (talk, seminar, etc.)
- date and time of event; must include an end time
- location/room number; if outside of the Anthropology building, must include name of building, room number and street address
- if you are not the committee Chair, copy the Chair/Professor who is responsible for the event/committee
- If you require an rsvp, you must provide a location and the official room capacity

The department will link events to an original source site when possible, to capture details and/or changes to events.