American Anthropological Association Selects Museum Director as President

Columbia, MO. – Alex W. Barker, Director of the MU Museum of Art and Archaeology, has been chosen as President-Elect of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). AAA is the world’s largest professional and scholarly anthropological organization, representing cultural anthropology and ethnology, archaeology, linguistics, and biological and medical anthropology, with a worldwide membership of more than 12,000 anthropologists. Past presidents of the AAA include Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, Aleš Hrdlička, Edward Sapir, A.V. Kidder and Margaret Mead.

“I’m excited and honored to have been elected” Barker said. “The discipline offers critical insights into many of the most pressing issues confronting modern society, and addresses the biggest questions in human culture” He describes anthropology as an “intensely and perhaps uniquely interdisciplinary field, embracing all aspects of the human career, past and present, from genomics and paleobiology to poetics and visual studies.”

An anthropological archaeologist whose work examines the rise of ancient political hierarchies in both the southeastern US and among Bronze Age societies of southeastern Europe; Barker has also been active in issues of anthropological ethics, museum anthropology and cultural property. He has served as Director of the MU Museum of Art and Archaeology since 2006.

Barker previously served on the AAA Executive Board and as convenor of the 40 scholarly societies forming the AAA Section Assembly. He previously served as President of the Council for Museum Anthropology, and on the Board of Directors and as Treasurer of the Society for American Archaeology. He has just completed a four year appointment to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) Review Committee, a federal advisory committee established by Congress to review implementation of the NAGPRA statute.

Barker assumes the duties of president-elect following the 114th Annual Meeting of the AAA in November, 2015, and becomes AAA President at the conclusion of the 116th Annual Meeting of the AAA in 2017, in Washington, DC.

The Museum of Art and Archaeology is located at Mizzou North, and the corner of Garth and Business Loop70W.. The only accredited museum in the University of Missouri system, and the only accredited art museum in mid-Missouri, it houses more than 15,000 objects in its permanent collection, ranging from prehistory to contemporary art. Visit the museum’s web site at http://maa.missouri.edu.

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