

## AAG Membership

The AAG currently has over 12,000 members, almost one-third of whom are international. Find out more about the characteristics of the membership including by gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, and employment type, as well as involvement in the AAG’s Specialty and Affinity Groups.

### Total membership

The AAG was founded in 1904 with 48 members. Membership was rather elitist, limited to people with a doctorate who had published substantial research contributions, thus membership grew by only a handful year on year.

The American Society for Professional Geographers (ASPG) was formed in 1943 for qualified and enthusiastic geographers who were somewhat dissatisfied at not being able to join the AAG with its stringent requirements.

The ASPG quickly attracted professional geographers and membership soon far outstripped the AAG’s slowly growing numbers, as shown in Table 1, until the two organizations merged in 1948.

**Table 1: Membership of AAG and ASPG in the 1940s**

Year	AAG membership <sup>1</sup>	ASPG membership <sup>2</sup>
1942	177	N/A
1943	191	143
1944	206	?
1945	230	300
1946	247	605
1947	274	805
1948	Pre-merger: 306 Post-merger: 1,262 <sup>3</sup>	1,094
1949	1,306	N/A

Thus began a new era for the Association which saw particularly strong periods of growth through the 1950s and 60s, and again since 2000, as shown in Figure 1.

In 2017 there were 12,446 members, of which 96% were individuals; the remainder comprised 444 organizations including academic departments, businesses, and other entities<sup>4</sup>.

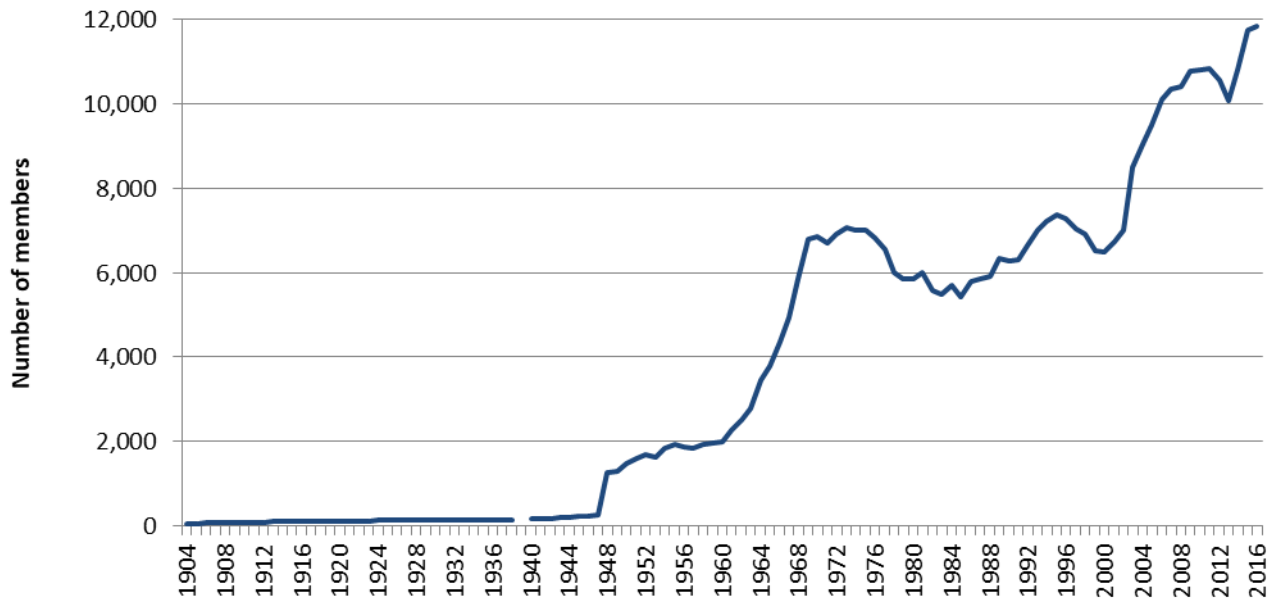
<sup>1</sup> Source: AAG Handbook 2016, p15.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Preston E. James and Geoffrey J. Martin (1978) *The Association of American Geographers: The First Seventy-Five Years, 1904-1979* (Washington, DC: Association of American Geographers), p94 and 102.

<sup>3</sup> Some people were members of both organizations thus the pre-and post-merger figures do not tally exactly.

<sup>4</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2017.

Figure 1: AAG Membership, 1904-2017



## International members

In 2017 there were 3,741 members from outside the United States, comprising 30% of all members<sup>5</sup>. 1,727 (46.2%) of international members were students.

International members represented 100 different countries, as shown in Figure 2; the ten countries with the most members are shown in Table 2.

Figure 2: Global distribution of AAG Members<sup>6</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2017.

<sup>6</sup> For an interactive version of this map visit [https://ktaylorag.carto.com/viz/6d263f84-8701-426a-b5b9-707e8ad2df3f/public\\_map](https://ktaylorag.carto.com/viz/6d263f84-8701-426a-b5b9-707e8ad2df3f/public_map)

1,100 (29.4%) of international members were registered as part of the AAG’s Developing Regions Program<sup>7</sup> representing 60 different countries; the ten developing regions countries with the most members are shown in Table 3.

**Table 2: Other countries with most AAG members, 2016**

Country	Number
Canada	810
United Kingdom	609
China	553
Germany	127
South Africa	118
Australia	108
France	100
Sweden	83
India	80
Republic of Korea	78

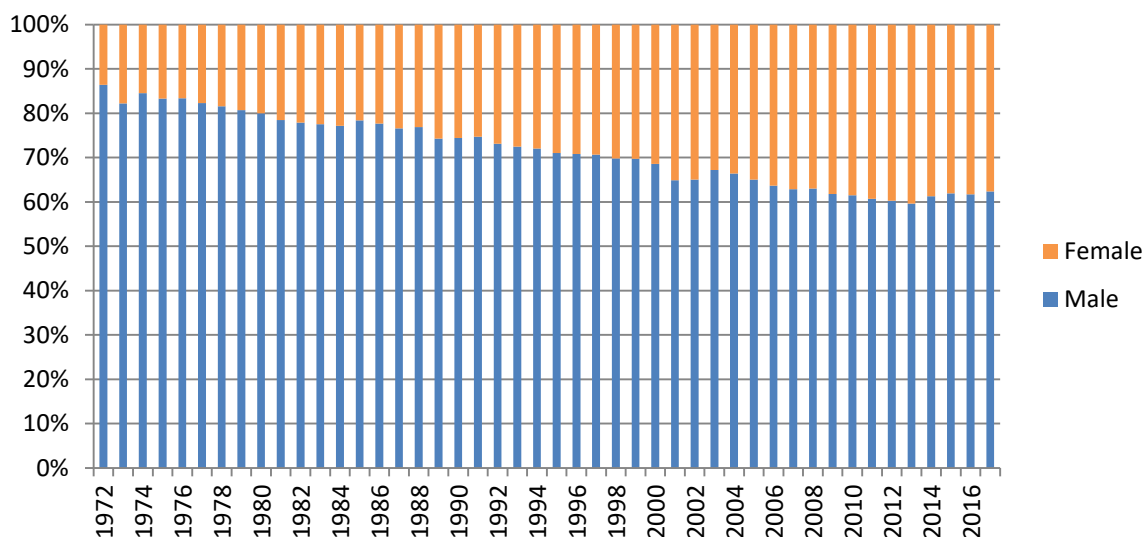
**Table 3: Developing Regions countries with most AAG members, 2016**

Country	Number
China	553
South Africa	118
India	80
Brazil	57
Nigeria	39
Mexico	29
Turkey	27
Hungary	26
Chile	23
Colombia	20

## Members by Gender

- Currently 62% of AAG members are male and 38% are female<sup>8</sup>.
- When the Association was established in 1904, just two of the original 48 members were women. The proportion of female members has been rising very steadily since.
- Figure 3 shows comparable membership records dating back to 1972 when 14% of members were female<sup>9</sup>.

**Figure 3: Change in gender balance among AAG members 1972-2017**



<sup>7</sup> The Developing Regions Program enables people from particular countries who have an income of less than US\$25,000 per year (US equivalent) to join the AAG at a heavily discounted rate. For list of eligible countries see [http://www.aag.org/cs/membership/developing\\_regions\\_membership\\_program/eligibility](http://www.aag.org/cs/membership/developing_regions_membership_program/eligibility)

<sup>8</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2017; sample size 5,613.

<sup>9</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1972 to 2017.

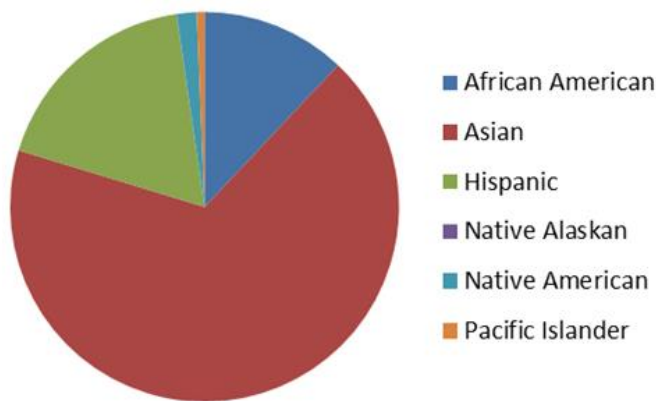
## Members by Race/Ethnicity

- 87% of current AAG members classify themselves as White Non-Hispanic and 13% report another race/ethnicity. See Table 4 for full breakdown<sup>10</sup>.
- Of the AAG members belonging to a minority, the greatest number (28%) are Asian; the next largest groups are Hispanic (7.5%) and African American (5%), as shown in Figure 4<sup>11</sup>.

**Table 4: AAG members by race/ethnicity 2017**

	Number	Percent
African American	511	5
Asian	2,212	28.1
Hispanic	588	7.5
Native Alaskan	1	0.0
Native American	54	0.7
Pacific Islander	21	0.3
White Non-Hispanic	6,831	86.7
<b>Total Reported</b>	<b>10,218</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 4: AAG members reporting their race/ethnicity as minority, 2017**



- Over the last 25 years, the proportion of AAG members reporting their race/ethnicity as minority has grown from under 4% in 1981 to over 28% in 2017. As shown in Figure 5, the increase in minority members was fairly steady until the early 2000s then started to rise more sharply<sup>12</sup>.
- Numerically the greatest growth has been among Asians but their overall proportion has only fluctuated slightly. As shown in Figure 6, the proportion of AAG members that are African American has decreased as a proportion of minorities while Hispanics have increased<sup>13</sup>.

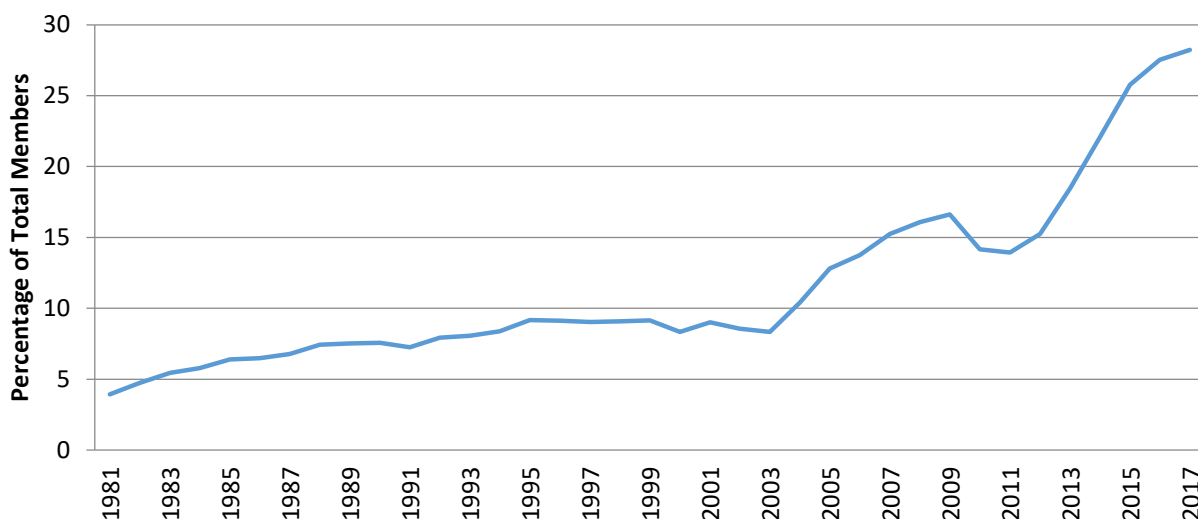
<sup>10</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2017; sample size 10,218 (85% of all respondents; 15% did not report their race/ethnicity).

<sup>11</sup> Source: *ibid.*

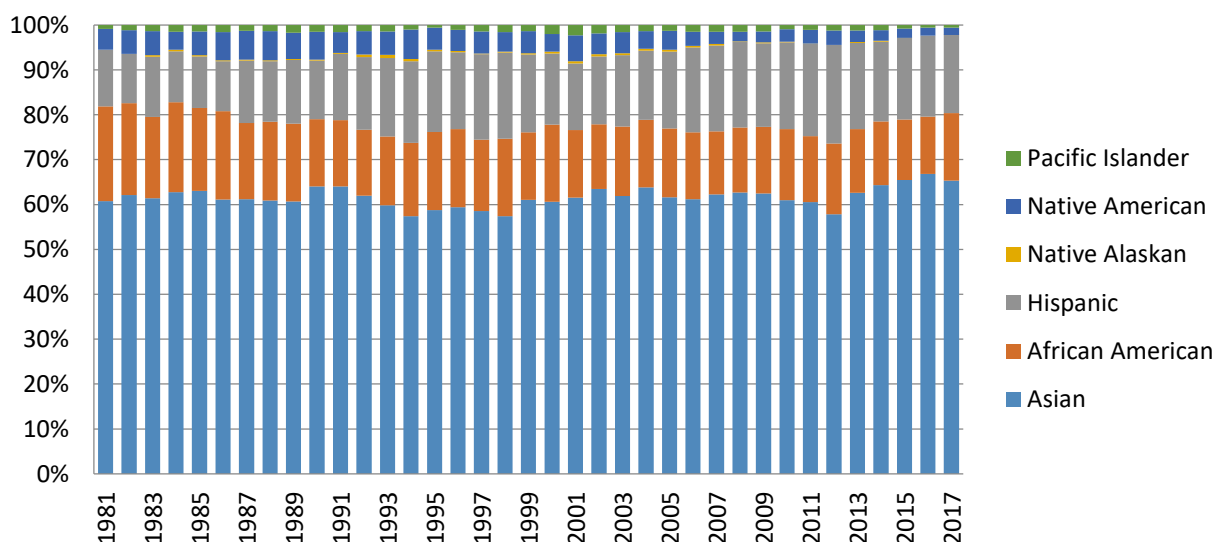
<sup>12</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1981 to 2017.

<sup>13</sup> Source: *ibid.*

**Figure 5: AAG members reporting their race/ethnicity as minority, 1981-2017**



**Figure 6: AAG members reporting their race/ethnicity as minority, 1981-2017**



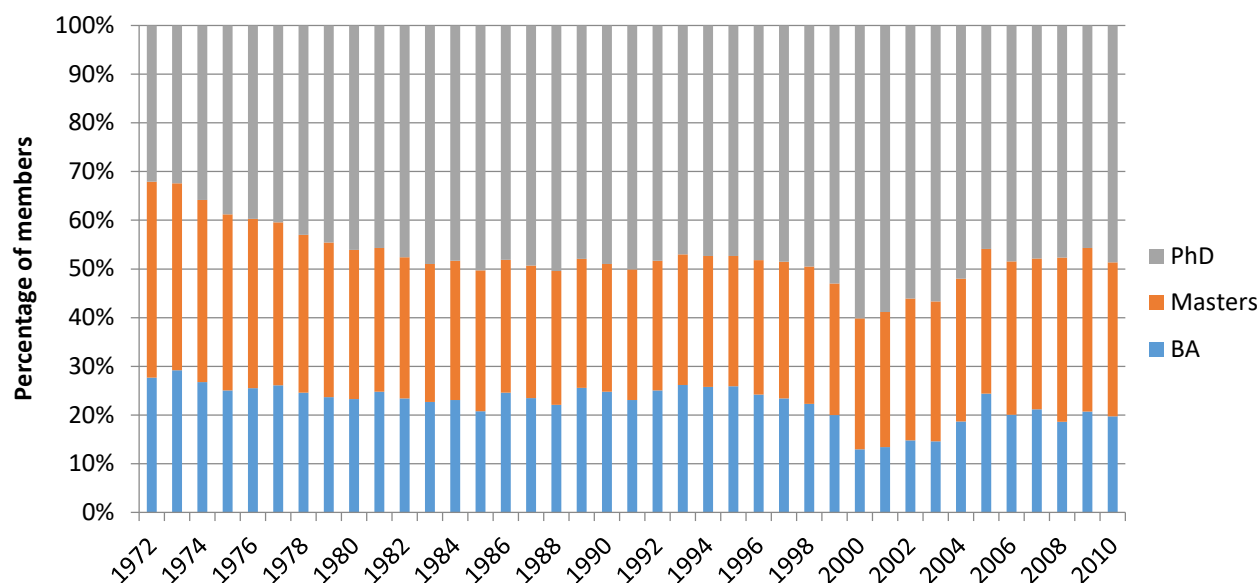
## Members by Educational attainment

In the most recent year for which data was collected (2010), almost half of AAG members had a PhD. A master’s degree was the highest educational qualification attained by 32% of members and 20% of members had only a bachelor’s degree. Figure 7 shows the change over time, revealing a steady increase in members with a PhD<sup>14 15</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1972 to 2010; relative proportions calculated by excluding the people who did not declare their educational qualifications.

<sup>15</sup> Apart from 2000-2004 where the data are slightly skewed by educational attainment being optional to declare and 15-30% of respondents choosing not to give this information.

**Figure 7: AAG members by highest degree attained, 1972-2010**



## Members by Employment type

Working in higher education dominates the AAG membership. Of those members who reported their employment type in the most recent year, just over half were faculty or researchers affiliated with colleges, universities or community colleges, while a quarter were students. The full distribution is shown in Table 5<sup>16</sup>.

**Table 5: AAG members by employment type, 2017**

	Employment Type	Number reported	% of reported
Education & Research	Community College / College / University	1,770	48.4
	Research Center	65	1.8
	Student	1,201	32.66
	K-12 teacher or administrator	12	0.3
Government	Federal Government	95	2.6
	State/Local Government	91	2.5
	Other Government	21	0.6
Other	Private Industry	110	3.0
	Nonprofit	40	1.1
	Military	6	0.2
	Self-Employed	35	1.0
Not employed	Unemployed	32	0.9
	Retired	181	4.9
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,677</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>16</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2017; sample size 3,677; a further 7,631 people did not report their employment type.

As a large and increasing number of people choose not to report their employment type, it is not very instructive to examine the actual numbers in each category; however, the proportion of members reporting each category does reveal some trends for the data available over the last four decades<sup>17</sup>.

- The proportion of members reporting their employment as College/University has increased gradually from 41.5% to 48.4%, and as Research Center from 0.5% to 1.8%.
- The category of K-12 has dropped gradually from 5% to 0.3%, and Military from 1.7% to 0.2%.
- The categories of Federal Government, State/Local/Other Government, and Private Industry have experienced fluctuations but shown an overall decline.
- The categories of Non-Profit, Self-Employed, and Retired have fluctuated but stayed around the same level.

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<sup>17</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1972 to 2017.

## Specialty and Affinity Group membership

The AAG has 63 Specialty Groups representing different sub-disciplines of geography, thematic areas or geographical regions which members can opt to join.

Currently the most popular Specialty Groups, each with over 1,000 members, are: Urban Geography, Geographic Information Science & Systems, Cultural and Political Ecology, Spatial Analysis and Modeling, and Cultural Geography; the full distribution for the most recent year is shown in Table 6<sup>18</sup>.

**Table 6: Membership of AAG Specialty Groups, 2017**

Africa	414	Geography of Wine, Beer, and Spirits	167
Agriculture	571	Geomorphology	335
Animal Geographies	158	Hazards	597
Applied Geography	497	Health & Medical Geography	529
Asian Geography	468	Historical Geography	393
Bible	56	History of Geography	102
Biogeography	332	Human Dimensions of Global Change	575
Black Geographies	202	Indigenous Peoples	308
Business Geography	176	Landscape Geography	328
Canadian Studies	79	Latin American	543
Cartography	537	Legal Geography	73
China	624	Middle East	155
Climate	638	Military Geography	117
Coastal and Marine	287	Mountain Geography	168
Communications	115	Paleoenvironmental Change	151
Cryosphere	92	Polar Geography	86
Cultural and Political Ecology	1105	Political Geography	844
Cultural Geography	1015	Population	316
Cyberinfrastructure	162	Qualitative Research	424
Development Geographies	637	Recreation, Tourism, and Sport	280
Digital Geographies	150	Regional Development and Planning	605
Disability	74	Religions and Belief Systems	129
Economic Geography	891	Remote Sensing	749
Energy and Environment	577	Rural Development	377
Env. Perception & Behavioral Geog.	361	Sexuality and Space	194
Ethics, Justice, and Human Rights	370	Socialist Geography	755
Ethnic Geography	196	Spatial Analysis and Modeling	1066
Eurasian	129	Study of the American South	100
European	163	Transportation Geography	414
GI Science & Systems	1622	Urban Geography	1886
Geographic Perspectives on Women	457	Water Resources	660
Geography Education	437		

<sup>18</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2017.



The AAG also has six Affinity Groups for people with shared characteristics. Their membership is shown in Table 7<sup>19</sup>.

**Table 7: Membership of AAG Affinity Groups, 2017**

<b>Affinity Group</b>	<b>No. members</b>
Caregiving	22
Community College	195
Retired Geographers	103
Stand Alone Geographers	243
Graduate Students	1533
Undergraduate Students	236
Caregiving	22

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*Prepared by Dr Jenny Lunn*

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*American Association of Geographers*

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*Updated by Jolene Keen*

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***The full datasets used to compiled this report are available to download from the Disciplinary Data Dashboard:***

***<http://www.aag.org/disciplinarydata/aagmembershipdata>***

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<sup>19</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2017.