

## Geographers by Race and Ethnicity

Currently more than two-thirds of geographers in the United States identify as White Non-Hispanic; Asians are the largest minority group followed by Hispanic/Latinos, while Black/African Americans are underrepresented in geography when compared to the population as a whole.

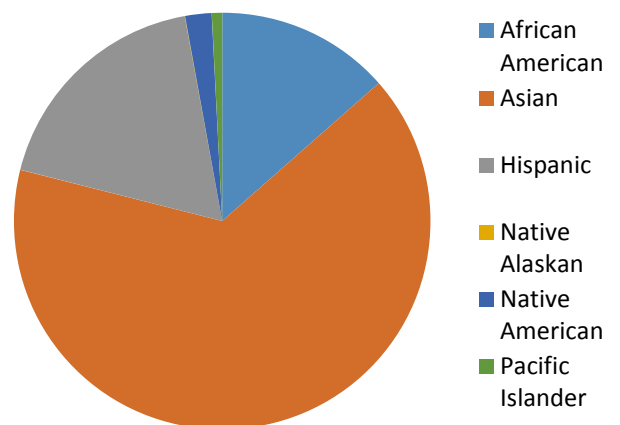
### AAG members

- 69% of current AAG members classify themselves as White Non-Hispanic and 31% report another race/ethnicity. See Table 1 for full breakdown<sup>1</sup>.
- Of the AAG members belonging to a minority, the greatest number (66%) are Asian; the next largest groups are Hispanic (18%) and African American (13.5%), as shown in Figure 1<sup>2</sup>.

**Table 1: AAG members by race/ethnicity 2015**

	Number	Percent
African American	389	4.2
Asian	1,885	20.6
Hispanic	523	5.7
Native Alaskan	1	0.0
Native American	59	0.6
Pacific Islander	23	0.3
White, Non-Hispanic	6,290	68.6
<b>Total Reported</b>	<b>9,170</b>	<b>100</b>

**Figure 1: AAG members reporting their race/ethnicity as minority, 2015**



<sup>1</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 2015; sample size 9,170 (82% of all respondents; 18% did not report their race/ethnicity).

<sup>2</sup> Source: *ibid.*

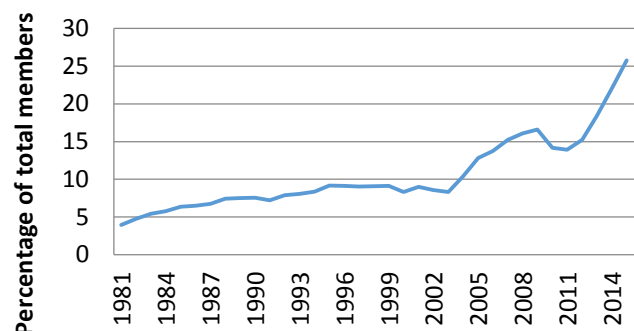
- It is difficult to make an exact comparison between AAG members and the US population as a whole for various reasons including different categories; however Table 2 certainly shows that the proportion of African Americans is much lower in the AAG than among the general population, while the proportion of Asians is considerably higher<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 2: Comparison between AAG members and US population by race/ethnicity, 2015**

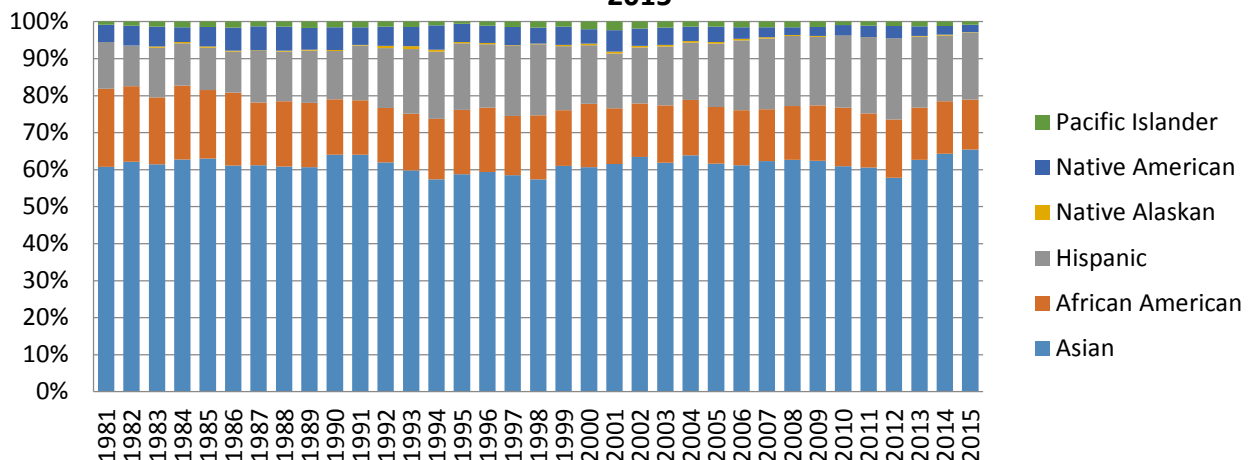
	AAG members	US population
African American or Black	4.2	13.26
Asian	20.6	5.59
Hispanic	5.7	N/A
Native Alaskan or Native American	0.7	1.25
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.3	0.24
White, Non-Hispanic	68.6	77.09
Two or More Races	N/A	2.57

- 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 25% in 2015. As shown in Figure 2, the increase in minority members was fairly steady until the early 2000s then started to rise more sharply<sup>4</sup>.
- Numerically the greatest growth has been among Asians but their overall proportion has only fluctuated slightly. However, Figure 3 shows that the proportion of AAG members that are African American has decreased as a proportion of minorities while Hispanics have increased<sup>5</sup>.

**Figure 2: AAG members reporting their race/ethnicity as minority, 1981-2015**



**Figure 3: AAG members reporting their race/ethnicity as minority, 1981-2015**



<sup>3</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 2015; sample size 9,170 (82% of all respondents; 18% did not report their race/ethnicity) / US Census Bureau population estimate 01 July 2015; sample size 321,418,820.

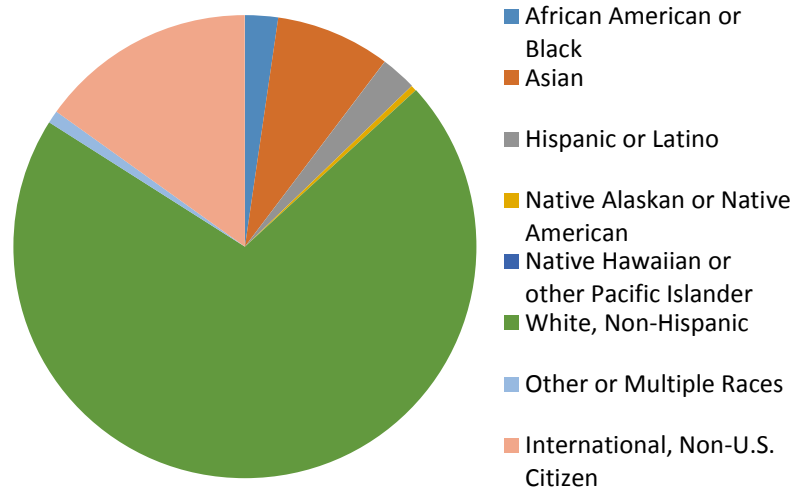
<sup>4</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1981 to 2015.

<sup>5</sup> Source: *ibid.*

## Geography faculty

- Currently 71% of faculty in university and college geography departments are White Non-Hispanic; of the minority groups Asian is the largest group represented (8%). 15% are Non-US Citizens whose race/ethnicity is not noted. See Figure 4 for full distribution<sup>6</sup>.

**Figure 4: Faculty in geography departments by race/ethnicity as minority, 2016**



- Over the last six years, there have been some small fluctuations in the distribution of geography faculty by race/ethnicity. As shown in Table 3, there has been an increase in international non-US citizens, Hispanic/Latinos, and Asians, but a decrease in White Non-Hispanics.

**Table 3: Change in proportion of geography faculty by race/ethnicity, 2010-16**

	2010 <sup>7</sup>	2016 <sup>8</sup>
African American or Black	2.5	2.3
Asian	6.2	8.0
Hispanic or Latino	1.2	2.5
Native Alaskan or Native American	0.2	0.4
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.2	0.0
White, Non-Hispanic	76.5	70.8
Other or Multiple Races	1.0	0.9
International, Non-U.S. Citizen	12.2	15.1

- When comparing faculty in geography departments with instructional faculty in postsecondary institutions across all disciplines, geography has a considerably higher proportion of international non-US citizens but only half the proportion of African American/Blacks as higher education as a whole. See Table 4 for full distribution.

<sup>6</sup> Source: AAG supplemental survey to geography departments, 2016 (sample size 50 departments, 837 faculty).

<sup>7</sup> Source: AAG supplemental survey to geography departments, 2010 (sample size 112 departments, 1,455 faculty).

<sup>8</sup> Source: AAG supplemental survey to geography departments, 2016 (sample size 50 departments, 837 faculty).

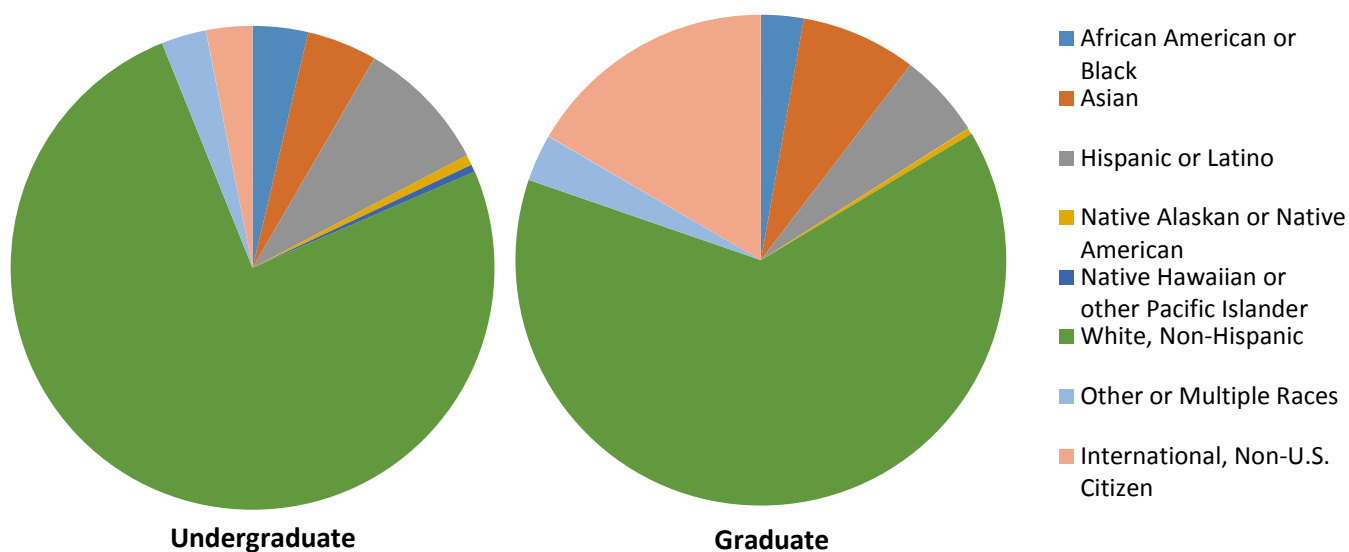
**Table 4: Comparison between geography and higher education as a whole of proportion of faculty by race/ethnicity**

	Geography <sup>9</sup>	All <sup>10</sup>
African American or Black	2.3	5.5
Asian	8.0	9
Hispanic or Latino	2.5	4.2
Native Alaskan or Native American	0.4	0.4
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0	0.2
White, Non-Hispanic	70.8	72.7
Other or Multiple Races	0.9	0.7
International, Non-U.S. Citizen	15.1	4.9
Race/ ethnicity unknown	0	2.5

## Geography students

- Currently, 75% of undergraduate students and 64% of graduate students are White Non-Hispanic. The largest minority group among undergraduate geography students is Hispanic/Latino and among graduate geography students is Asian. See Figure 5 for details.

**Figure 5: Geography students by race/ethnicity, 2016**



- Over the last six years, the proportion of geography students who are White Non-Hispanic has fallen notably at both Undergraduate and Graduate levels. There has been growth in the proportion of students who are Hispanic/Latino and Asian, as well as International Non-US Citizens. See Table 5 for full distribution.

<sup>9</sup> Source: AAG supplemental survey to geography departments, 2016 (sample size 50 departments, 837 faculty).

<sup>10</sup> Source: NCES Full-time faculty in degree-granting postsecondary institutions 2013; sample size 791,391.

**Table 5: Change in proportion of geography students by race/ethnicity, 2010-16**

	Undergraduates <sup>11</sup>		Graduates <sup>12</sup>	
	2010	2016	2010	2016
African American or Black	2.6	3.7	3.1	2.8
Asian	3.2	4.7	5.2	7.6
Hispanic or Latino	4.0	8.9	3.5	5.6
Native Alaskan or Native American	0.3	0.7	0.8	0.4
Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander	0.2	0.5	0.2	0
White, Non-Hispanic	86.4	75.4	78.5	63.9
Other or Multiple Races	2.4	3	1.7	3.1
International, Non-U.S. Citizen	1.0	3.1	7.0	16.6

- When comparing geography students with students across all disciplines, there is a considerably higher proportion of White Non-Hispanics and Hispanic/Latinos in geography but a much lower proportion of Black/African Americans than the general student population. See Table 6 for full distribution.

**Table 6: Comparison between students of geography and all disciplines by race/ethnicity**

	Undergraduates		Graduates	
	Geog <sup>13</sup>	All <sup>14</sup>	Geog <sup>15</sup>	All <sup>16</sup>
African American or Black	3.7	14	2.8	12.6
Asian	4.7	5.9	7.6	6.5
Hispanic or Latino	8.9	17.1	5.6	7.9
Native Alaskan or Native American	0.7	0.8	0.4	0.5
Native Hawaiian / Other Pacific Islander	0.5	0.3	0	0.2
White, Non-Hispanic	75.4	55.4	63.9	56.8
Other or Multiple Races	3	3.4	3.1	2.1
International, Non-U.S. Citizen	3.1	3.1	16.6	13.3

<sup>11</sup> Source: AAG supplemental survey to geography departments, 2010 and 2016 (figures combine geography majors, minors, certificate and other non-degree seeking students); sample sizes: 6,183 in 2010 and 4,918 in 2016.

<sup>12</sup> Source: AAG supplemental survey to geography departments, 2010 and 2016 (figures combine masters and doctoral students); sample sizes: 1,934 in 2010 and 1,335 in 2016.

<sup>13</sup> Source: AAG supplemental survey to geography departments, 2016; sample size 4,918.

<sup>14</sup> Source: NCES Student Fall enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions 2014; sample size 17,292,787.

<sup>15</sup> Source: AAG supplemental survey to geography departments, 2015; sample size 1,335.

<sup>16</sup> Source: NCES Student Fall enrollment in degree-granting postsecondary institutions 2014; sample size 2,914,582.

## Further information

### The Landscape of Diversity in U.S. Higher Education Geography

By Joy K. Adams, Patricia Solís, and Jean McKendry (2014) in *The Professional Geographer* 66 (2): 183-194

### Diverse Experiences in Diversity at the Geography Department Scale

Patricia Solís, Joy K. Adams, Leslie A. Duram, Susan Hume, Al Kuslikis, Victoria Lawson, Ines M. Miyares, David A. Padgett, and Alexander Ramírez (2014) in *The Professional Geographer* 66 (2): 205-220

### A Commentary on the Whitening of the Public University: The Context for Diversifying Geography

Audrey Kobayashi, Victoria Lawson, and Rickie Sanders (2014) in *The Professional Geographer* 66 (2): 230-235

### Discourses on 'Diversity': Perspectives from Graduate Programs in Geography in the United States

M. Beth Schlemper and Janice Monk (2011) in *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 35 (1): 23-46

### Foreign-born Scholars in US Universities: Issues, Concerns, and Strategies

By Kenneth E. Foote, Wei Li, Janice Monk, and Rebecca Theobald (2008) in *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 32 (2): 167-178

### Mapping race and gender in the academy: the experiences of women of colour faculty and graduate students in Britain, the US and Canada

By Minelle Mahtani (2004) in *Journal of Geography in Higher Education* 28 (1): 91-99

### Minorities in Geography: Some Disturbing Facts and Policy Measures

By Nanda R. Shrestha and DeWitt Davis Jr. (1989) in *The Professional Geographer* 41 (4): 410-421

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

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

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