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of the
**Association of American
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AAG Enhancing Diversity: Progress and Plans

Over the past six years, the AAG has undertaken a focused set of initiatives to enhance diversity within our discipline. This most recent institutional effort by the AAG to promote inclusiveness in our discipline, to broaden participation in our association, and to understand the overall state of diversity in geography, has generated important outcomes and resulted in informed plans for ongoing efforts. In this column, we review a few of the recent accomplishments, current activities, and continuing priorities.



Richardson



Solis

ing AAG funding proposals that enhance diversity at multiple stages from K-12 through university levels; and bridging to ongoing initiatives throughout the discipline.

The Task Force produced a final report that summarizes data from the departmental survey on diversity, documents progress made toward these ten targets, and

provides recommendations for departments, which are often best positioned to break the historical cycle of underrepresentation in geography given their role as the reproductive core of the discipline. The AAG Diversity Clearinghouse contains materials to help departments address recruitment strategies, departmental climate, student financial support, and curriculum offerings; provides links to scholarship and fellowship opportunities for minorities, women, and students with disabilities; and describes effective mentoring practices, including peer mentoring, known to support and retain underrepresented students. Both the report and clearinghouse are available at www.aag.org/diversity.

In recent years, this work has progressed through the establishment of a standing AAG Enhancing Diversity Committee, currently chaired by Lisa Marshall, which continues to work closely with AAG Council and AAG executive leadership to build upon and extend these ten action areas and other priorities, including engaging AAG members at regional division meetings, and other activities. AAG has thus been building a shared vision for enhancing diversity in the discipline, has strengthened com-

Ten Actionable Items

Launching a renewed effort in 2003, the AAG began by focusing on ten actionable items that were identified and addressed in coordination among the AAG Diversity Task Force chaired by Joe Darden, the AAG Council, and AAG senior staff. Early efforts centered on better understanding the status of diversity in the discipline and on developing a foundation for achieving substantial progress in diversifying geography. These actions included establishing an online diversity clearinghouse; developing strategic relationships with Howard University and other minority serving institutions; developing career information to promote geography to underrepresented groups; conducting a survey on the state of diversity in geography departments; co-sponsoring race/ethnicity and place conferences; continuing outreach to promote diversity in the AAG newsletter; encouraging participation of underrepresented students at the AAG annual meetings in part through the AAG Conference Assistants Program; develop-

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mitment within association leadership and membership toward diversity goals, and has positioned activities for enhancing diversity as an integral aspect of realizing the AAG's overall mission.

AAG Diversity Clearinghouse: Expansion and Updates

Initiated online in 2005, the AAG's Diversity Clearinghouse has been very well received and has had an important impact on making resources related to enhancing diversity available in geography. AAG seeks to continue to expand science-based information on broadening participation in research and education, particularly scholarly additions that draw from research in geography. The aim of the expansion is to explore how the latest research within geography could provide a basis for better informed, knowledge-based action toward geography's goal of enhancing diversity within departments and the discipline, recognizing that the breadth of geographic research itself may help strengthen efforts to broaden participation within the discipline in distinct ways. This approach acknowledges that effective recruitment/retention at the departmental level depends on sensitivity to the specific geographical context of departments, that "pipelines" are very spatial in nature, that effective plans for large urban schools should look different than for schools in smaller towns, and that where geography programs are, where prospective students come from, where they go, and the dynamics of origins-destinations matter a great deal. Geographic research can contribute to better understanding of these dynamics, including issues related to migration, residential and commuting mobility patterns, urban form, spatial decision support systems, economic geography, insight on intellectual questions of importance to underrepresented groups such as social-environmental justice or economic-political issues, politics of race and identity, integration in education, spatial modeling of decision-making behaviors, and other topics. AAG

welcomes suggestions for inclusion of citations of research or projects that may broadly inform efforts to enhancing diversity through its online form at: http://communicate.aag.org/eseries/Diversity/add_resource.cfm

AAG helps build Race, Ethnicity and Place Conference

AAG has played a key role in developing the Race, Ethnicity, and Place Conference (REP) into an independent, national scale event. In 2004, the AAG built upon its existing relationship with Howard University, the nation's leading historically black university, to co-organize with Howard and Binghamton Universities, the 2004 REP as a stand-alone national scale interdisciplinary conference, held on the campus of Howard University in Washington, DC. Through the efforts of many, this conference has now become a remarkable, multidisciplinary engagement around race, ethnicity, and place, held biennially at rotating locations. This past year at the Miami REP, the AAG senior elected and executive leadership jointly organized a special panel session to explore synergies and interactions of AAG's diversity and internationalization initiatives.

Enhancing Diversity at AAG Regional Division Meetings

This past fall, the AAG's Enhancing Diversity Committee engaged with organizers of AAG Regional Divisions to conduct special activities at regional meetings around enhancing diversity within geography. Adapting models for panel discussions held at AAG Annual Meetings over the past few years, the Committee arranged activities that supported AAG members in the East Lakes, West Lakes, and Southwest Regional Divisions. Special thanks to committee members David Kaplan and Wendy Jepson for their leadership. Regional divisions interested in organizing similar sessions at 2009 meetings are encouraged to contact Patricia Solís, psolis@aag.org.

AAG 2008 Enhancing Diversity Award honors Reginald Golledge

The AAG Enhancing Diversity Award honors geographers who have pioneered efforts toward or actively participated in efforts toward encouraging a more diverse discipline over the course of multiple years. Previous recipients include Joe Darden, Don Deskins, Saul Cohen, Janice Monk, and Jacquelyn Beyer.

This year, distinguished geographer Reginald Golledge of the University of California, Santa Barbara, has been named the 2008 recipient of the AAG Enhancing Diversity Award in recognition of



Golledge

his long-standing efforts to support and mentor underrepresented students in higher education, and particularly for his attention to those with disabilities. Since the early 1960s, Golledge engaged and mentored women and ethnic minorities in graduate level research, increased diversity of the department's faculty while Chair, and conducted a number of important research projects regarding women and minorities in the discipline. Golledge's well-known cutting-edge research on geography, spatial cognition, and disability has not only achieved the highest levels of excellence in scholarship, but has also helped to find ways to allow disabled people to become fully integrated into their communities around the world. The AAG will formally confer the award to Golledge at the Annual Meeting Awards Luncheon on Friday, March 27, 2009 in Las Vegas. Friends, colleagues, and students of Reginald Golledge are encouraged to attend.

Follow-up Departmental Survey on Diversity Progress in 2010

The AAG plans to conduct a follow-up survey of geography departments in 2010 to help assess progress toward

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diversification of undergraduate and graduate geography programs at universities, community colleges, and other educational institutions in the U.S.. The 2010 survey will provide an updated snapshot of the state of racial, ethnic, and gender diversity of students and faculty in geography departments, compared to baseline data gathered in 2004 by the AAG Diversity Task Force. Preliminary surveys will be sent to departments in early 2010. Responses from individual programs will be kept strictly confidential and data will be reported in aggregate form. Results from the baseline survey are reported on in the Diversity Task Force's final report to AAG Council, available online at www.aag.org/diversity and in the *AAG Newsletter* (June 2005, pp. 1 & 5; and April 2007, pp. 2 & 5).

AAG Annual Meeting Activities on Diversity

Numerous papers and sessions on diversity, ethnicity, inclusion, and related themes for research and education in geography will be part of the program of the AAG Annual Meeting 2009, to be held in Las Vegas, March 22-27 (www.aag.org/meetings):

A special session sponsored by the AAG on "Diversity, Professional Development, and the Culture of Graduate Education in Geography" will be held on Tuesday, 3/24/09 at 10:10 AM. Data and results from the AAG's Enhancing Departments and Graduate Education in Geography (EDGE) project will be presented by PIs and senior personnel.

The Geography Education Specialty Group is sponsoring a session entitled "Geographers in the Classroom" on Thursday, 3/26/09 at 10:10 AM. The session papers will address topics such as Using Scale to Teach Gender, Race, and Ethnicity, Interactions between College Students and Professors, and Teaching with an Accent. The Disability Specialty Group is sponsoring a paper session on "Disability in Education: Geographies of Inclusion and Exclusion" for Wednesday, 3/25/09 at 1:00 PM focusing on experi-

ences of students and offering perspectives from a range of international scholarship on the subject. A Panel Session organized by the Indigenous Peoples Specialty Group presents the topic of "Indigenous Methodologies: Teaching Indigenous Perspectives in the Academy" on Monday, 3/23/09 at 3:10 PM. Geographic Perspectives on Women Specialty Group is sponsoring two consecutive sessions on "Graduate Research on Gender, Feminisms and Geography I and II" which are scheduled on Monday, 3/23/09, at the 8:00 AM and 10:10 AM session times. Papers will center on geographical aspects of gender and feminisms in relation to welfare reform, civil society and public space, feminist pedagogy, social entrepreneurship, education and migration processes. Other sessions will present research that provides insight, methods, topics, and advances in geography that are relevant to understanding issues of diversity. These include sessions on Locating Contexts of Inequality, Ethnic Geography, and Mobility, Access, and Livable Places. The AAG Enhancing Diversity Committee will also hold their meeting in Las Vegas and welcomes visitors.

The AAG Annual Meeting will feature many papers and sessions on the interrelated theme of internationalization, including activities related to the AAG's Developing Regions Membership Program. Sessions related to African research and African geographies span the entire program. Speakers will include special guest Sives Govender from EIS-Africa, Lee Schwartz of the US State Department, and Jack Dangermond of ESRI on Wednesday afternoon, March 25. The AAG's annual session on Geography in the Americas on Monday, March 23, focuses this year on resources for supporting international collaboration, and includes panelists from the Fulbright Program, Inter-American Foundation, American Council of Learned Societies, National Science Foundation, and the Organization of American States.

In addition, a diverse group of graduate students will be serving as AAG Diversity

Ambassadors at the Las Vegas Meeting. Volunteers are willing to share their experiences and give advice about college life, graduate school, job searches, networking, navigating the annual meeting, and more to other graduate or undergraduate students. Faculty or employers who are looking to implement activities to achieve greater diversity in their programs and workforces, and who wish to converse about ideas and experiences are also welcomed. This informal venue seeks to provide an open forum to share recent success stories, engage in conversations regarding recruiting and retention strategies, understanding student and faculty mentoring needs, and other insights from the unique perspectives of the ambassadors. Volunteers will be available on Wednesday, March 25, from 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in the Jobs in Geography (JIG) area. Graduate students interested in volunteering may contact Nate Sessoms, sessoms@usc.edu.

Looking ahead, the AAG will continue to promote diversity as integral to its mission of advancing the discipline and as a key part of all of its research, education and outreach activities. Priorities include providing support to departments as key agents of measurable change; exploring how the latest research within geography can support better informed, knowledge-based efforts to enhance diversity in departments and the discipline; and developing external partnerships and funding proposals that facilitate the tools, information, knowledge, best practices, mentoring, and other resources that can build upon and extend the work of the AAG over the past six years. We look forward to continuing this work with you and encourage your comments and ideas. ■

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