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AAG to Host NCGE Central Office

Effective July 1, 2007, the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE) will move into shared office spaces with the AAG in Washington, D.C. This decision comes more than a year after NCGE announced the search for a new home.

At the invitation of the NCGE, and following extensive dialogue with the AAG Council, AAG members, and NCGE officers, the AAG prepared a proposal outlining a comprehensive range of management and administrative support services to be provided by AAG as the host of the NCGE Central Office. After a series of interviews and site visits by the NCGE Relocation Task Force to several submitting organizations, and careful financial and logistical planning by AAG and NCGE, the NCGE Executive Planning Board voted unanimously in late March to relocate to the AAG's offices (see NCGE letter to AAG, page 12).

The AAG's agreement to host the NCGE central office is consistent with our members' view of K-12 education as foundational to geography's position as an

academic discipline, field of research, and vital area of employment. It is designed to build on a long tradition of collaboration between AAG and NCGE in K-12 geography, while charting new pathways for growing geography in American schools, where in many states it continues to suffer from a marginal position in the curriculum despite unprecedented growth of the discipline in higher education, the professional workplace, and society at large. The collaborative relationship envisioned by this agreement is designed to help NCGE achieve its long-term goals for organizational viability and effectiveness, while also strengthening the work of the AAG in K-12 geography education, a main pillar of the AAG's mission.

The AAG has always been strongly committed to improving the quality and status of geography in American schools through teacher professional development, curriculum implementation projects, and synergistic collaborations

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2008 AAG Annual Meeting to Take Place in Boston, April 15-19

Start making plans now to attend next year's AAG Annual Meeting in Boston. Known for its institutions of higher learning, multitude of cultural arts facilities, excellent restaurants, many popular sports teams and events, and rich cultural heritage, Boston remains one of the world's most dynamic and varied cities. Today, Boston continues its dynamic evolution with the influx of people from countries around the world, including Haiti, Vietnam, Brazil and Russia.

A geographically compact city of fewer than 90 square miles, Boston was originally

established on the Shawmut Peninsula and connected to the mainland by a narrow isthmus surrounded by the waters of both Massachusetts Bay and the Back Bay, a circumstance of history and geography which inflected its subsequent development in fascinating ways. The larger region which Boston inhabits exhibits an intriguing range of variation in geology, landscape morphology, and biogeography, and nearby Cape Cod, Martha's Vineyard, the Maine coast, and Vermont and New Hampshire offer opportunities for many exceptional field trips and excursions.

The 2008 AAG Annual Meeting will take place at the Copley Place Marriott and the nearby Westin Hotel. The call for papers will appear in the July-August issue of the AAG Newsletter.

Boston is easily accessible from points around the world through Logan International Airport, where the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) blue line connects the airport with Boston's downtown. We look forward to seeing you there. ■



The greater Boston region offers many excellent opportunities for field trips and excursions.

AAG Newsletter of the Association of American Geographers

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USPS 987-380 ISSN 0275-3995

The AAG Newsletter ISSN 0275-3995 is published monthly with July/August combined, by the Association of American Geographers, 1710 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009-3198. The cost of an annual subscription is \$25.00. The subscription price is included in the annual dues of the Association. Not available to non-members. Periodicals postage paid in Washington, DC. All news items and letters, including job listings, should be sent to the Editor at the address below or to newsletter@aag.org.

All Newsletter materials must arrive at the Association office by the 1st of the month preceding the month of the publication. This includes job listings. Material will be published on a space available basis and at the discretion of the editorial staff.

When your address changes, please notify the Association office immediately. Six weeks notice is necessary to insure uninterrupted delivery of AAG publications. To assist the AAG office in your address change, include the address label with your change of address.

Postmaster: Send address changes to AAG Newsletter, 1710 16th Street NW, Washington, DC 20009-3198, or address@aag.org.

AAG to Host NCGE Central Office from page 1

with organizations like NCGE. We consider hosting the NCGE Central Office to be a timely opportunity for building upon the momentum of recent collaborations in the areas of teacher education, public policy, and curriculum development, including the development of national geography standards and state-of-the-art teaching materials under the NASA-funded *Mission Geography* and Project GeoSTART initiatives, supporting the Teaching Geography is Fundamental Act legislative effort headed by National Geographic, and interacting constructively with educational societies and state legislatures in coordination with the Geography Education National Implementation Project.

We believe that the collocation of NCGE with AAG staff will result in a dynamic working environment in which innovation, creativity, and cooperation will thrive. Although NCGE will share office space with AAG, it will continue to exist as a separate membership organization with its own executive leadership, administrative committee structure, by-laws, long-range plan, and constitution. As host of the NCGE Central Office, the AAG will provide administrative support for NCGE operating finances, including management of staff payroll and accounting services, access to AAG's sophisticated accounting, membership, contract management, meeting registration, and telecommunication systems, as well as invoicing and grants management services, and equipment and facilities for two full-time NCGE employees.

Under the terms of the AAG's proposal, the NCGE Executive Planning Board will directly manage all NCGE Endowment funds and set the organization's goals, while the NCGE Executive Director will retain primary administrative responsibility for directing NCGE programs and activities. Doug Richardson and Michael Solem will contribute between 5-10% of their time to provide management support for NCGE. The cost savings to NCGE under this plan will eliminate duplicative costs and free up resources that can, in turn, be more productively invested into membership drives, new programs, and other areas of need.

The AAG has committed to host and support the NCGE Central Office for an initial period of 5 years, during which the AAG will invest considerable resources and energy to achieve the aims outlined above as well as other opportunities that promise to enhance the effectiveness of NCGE and of K-12 geography education. During the fifth year, both

the NCGE Executive Planning Board and the AAG Council will review whether to continue or disassociate from this arrangement. We hope a long-term collaborative relationship will provide both AAG and NCGE with the incentives and flexibility to think boldly and progress together toward meeting ambitious goals for K-12 geography education.

Both AAG and NCGE recognize that this model is a significant departure from past practices for NCGE, yet we are convinced that not only will it ultimately result in a stronger, more efficient, and more responsive NCGE, but also considerably expand and extend the existing work of the AAG in the K-12 environment.

The AAG evinces a future defined by a strong, long-term, and innovative partnership with NCGE to improve the status of geography in American education. We stand ready to strengthen the NCGE membership, financial foundations, annual meetings, and publications, and pledge to work together with NCGE

leadership and membership to enact enhancements to NCGE core programs at every opportunity. As both organizations begin to move forward in close synergy, we will benefit from a strong starting point established by the hard work and dedication of Michal LeVasseur over the past five years. We wish to extend our deep gratitude to Michal for her stewardship of NCGE, a record of leadership that has resulted in substantial progress for the organization and an impressive number of new membership services, which will continue to improve and grow in the coming months and years. We also recognize the significant contributions of the NCGE staff at Jacksonville State University, the NCGE Executive Planning Board, and the many NCGE and AAG officers and members with whom we consulted as we developed our proposal to host the NCGE Central Office.

At a time when geography has never been stronger or more appreciated in many segments of American society, it is necessary that we forge new ways to support geography education in the schools and to expand its outreach to the public, to other disciplines, and to policy makers. The AAG looks forward to working with NCGE to represent the needs and interests of geography educators in every state and across all levels of education. ■

Doug Richardson
Michael Solem



Richardson