

Expanding Support for AAG Journals

I'm pleased to announce that the Association of American Geographers has completed negotiations on a landmark publishing agreement for the Association with Routledge publishers, a division of Taylor & Francis. The new agreement will significantly advance our efforts to enhance the quality of our two flagship journals, the *Annals of the AAG* and the *Professional Geographer*, and to extend their international reach, readership and impact.

The recently completed agreement will take effect on January 1, 2008 and is the culmination of an extended process of research and analysis of our journals' readership, international presence, citation patterns, and impact in today's rapidly evolving scholarly publishing landscape. Based on this analysis, the AAG developed a detailed Request for Proposals targeting numerous key areas of journal quality, marketing, production, online and hard copy distribution, intellectual property guarantees, and finances. This carefully crafted RFP formed the comprehensive framework for the submission of proposals by four leading international publishers and subsequent focused negotiations with each of these publishing firms. The agreement ultimately negotiated with Routledge meets all of the AAG's RFP priorities, providing an extensive set of new features and publishing support for our journals, as well as a remarkable long-term financial foundation of very substantial guaranteed annual income to the Association throughout the AAG's next decade.

Among the many new features and benefits which we will be providing to the Association and our journals as part of this new agreement are the following:

- *Mandarin Chinese and Spanish language translations* of all abstracts for both the *Annals* and the *PG*.



Richardson

- *Thirty-two pages of color in each issue* of the *Annals* and the *PG*, at no charge to the AAG, for maps, charts, photos, and other graphics; this will greatly enhance authors' ability to effectively convey their research to the reader, and will increase readership internationally.
- *Online access directly through the AAG website* to both journals to meet the needs of the AAG's new Developing Regions Membership Program (see Richardson, "Is it Time for AAG Developing Regions Membership Program?" *AAG Newsletter*, Dec. '06).
- *Option for a fifth issue of the AAG Annals* each year, focused on special themes or cutting edge topics, at no charge to the AAG.
- *Intellectual property*: As mandated in our RFP, the AAG will continue to hold full ownership of the journals and copyright of the papers and content published. Editorial policy in the selection of editors and content for the journals will continue to be the exclusive domain of the AAG.
- *Complete digitization of all past issues of AAG journals*, at no cost to the AAG. This will complete the digital archive of both the *Annals* and the *PG*, making all past AAG journals content available online for the first time.
- *State of the art online publishing* to enhance content and speed distribution. In addition to hard copy, the AAG journals will be available online in Routledge InformaWorld, in both PDF and HTML formats. All articles will be fully indexed by Google and Google-Scholar. Individual articles will appear online as soon as they are ready, in advance of hardcopy publication. This

benefits authors and readers by providing more rapid publication, and also increases the citation window on which an article's impact factor is measured. Extensive cross-referencing functionality allows linking to other articles or to supplemental article material, such as databases, photos, digital maps, etc.

- *Strong international outreach program.* Routledge and the AAG have designed a detailed multi-year outreach program to international researchers, authors and readers. Its many features include strong engagement with East Asia, an emerging research powerhouse of the twenty-first century, as well as continuing collaborative programs in Europe and major new cooperative outreach to developing regions in Latin America, Africa and the Middle East. The AAG's subsidized Developing Regions Programs are geared to enabling our journals and other activities to contribute to the development of genuinely inclusive global research communities.
- *Free delivery of both hard copy and online versions of both AAG journals* as a benefit to AAG members, with a new option to elect online only, if desired.
- *One additional subscription at no charge for each AAG member* to another Routledge geography journal of his or her choice, from a selection of several leading journals spanning the range of disciplinary interests. Examples include *Gender, Place and Culture*,

the *Journal of Geography in Higher Education*, and the *International Journal of Geographical Information Science*, among others.

- *Extensive support for AAG authors and editors* will be provided, including access to and training on leading internet online systems for article submission, peer review, and editing, at no charge to the AAG. Additionally, special workshops for editors will be organized around a wide range of editorial issues, including the journals' citation and impact factors worldwide, detailed statistical feedback on article readership, and trends in scholarly publishing.
- *Sustaining content quality.* Of course, maintaining and increasing the quality of the content of our journals is the single most important goal in planning for their future. Broader international presence, as well as many of the other new features listed above, such as abstract translation into Chinese and Spanish, will help insure that the AAG journals will continue to attract talented editors and even more leading authors from rapidly expanding new centers of research and scholarship around the world.
- *AAG member feedback.* As always, we value your input. To further enhance our journals, the AAG and Routledge plan to undertake a special survey of all AAG members in 2008, regarding your views on content and other features of the journals, and will incorporate this feedback into an ongoing program of continuous improvement of our journals.

In a joint press release with the AAG announcing our new publishing agreement, David Green, Global Publishing Director of Routledge Journals, said: "Routledge Journals are delighted to have been selected as the future publishing partner of the AAG and look forward to a long and fruitful relationship with the Association. These two AAG journals are flagship publications among international geography journals, and our partnership plans aim to build on their current success. This exciting development also reinforces Routledge's position with the top tier of international publishers in Geography. We are honoured by this opportunity to work with one of the world's most prestigious scholarly associations."

I look forward to working together with Routledge and our AAG editors, authors, and members to enhance the quality of our journals and to expand their international reach and readership. I would like to thank David Green and the talented senior staff at Routledge for their professionalism, creativity, and good humor during the lengthy and sometimes arduous negotiations involved in developing this innovative and far-reaching publishing agreement. I believe we have now put in place an excellent framework with which to meet the many challenges of a rapidly changing scholarly publishing world over the next decade, and a strong long-term financial base from which to continue to strengthen and grow the AAG and its programs in the years ahead. ■

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