

**AAG Council Meeting Minutes
November 19–20, 2016 Washington, D.C.**

Present: Glen MacDonald, *President*; Derek Alderman, *Vice President*; Sarah Bednarz, *Past President*; Thomas Mote, *Secretary*; Julie Cidell, *Treasurer*; Douglas Richardson, *Executive Director*; Stuart Aitken, David DiBiase, Chris Hair, John Hayes, Shawn Hutchinson, Sriram Khé, Patrick Lawrence, Robert Mason, Cathleen McAnney, Gregory Pope, Darren Purcell, Susan Roberts, Susy Ziegler

AAG Staff: Candida Mannozi, Michael Solem, David Coronado, Becky Pendergast, Julio Arguello

Opening of the Fall 2016 AAG Council Meeting

President Glen MacDonald called the meeting to order at 9:00 am on November 19 and welcomed new and returning Council members and AAG staff.

Adopt the consent agenda. Sarah Bednarz moved, Derek Alderman second, motion approved unanimously.

MacDonald acknowledged approval of the spring Council meeting minutes on July 12, 2016.

President's Comments

President MacDonald asked Council to consider how the Association should keep regions vibrant and avoid fragmentation of membership. He shared concern from among the membership arising from a time of political change. He said the change in the U.S. is part of a worldwide change in political climate, and the Association must determine how to navigate and move forward. Finally, he asked Council to consider how to keep journals strong and vibrant, and how they can represent the diversity of the discipline.

Vice President's Comments

Vice President Derek Alderman thanked Richardson and MacDonald for the recent letter to the membership that set the right tone in the time of political change and demonstrates that the Association cares about member concerns. Alderman said that the Association will need to look beyond policies and procedures and consider the mission of the Association to address change in the political environment. He also highlighted the diversity theme associated with the upcoming annual meeting. Alderman said that he is concerned about issues of communication and the public image of the discipline, and he added that he will advocate for education efforts targeted to the public that demonstrate the value of Geography to society.

Past President's Comments

Past President Sarah Bednarz said that she has spent the last eight months working with AAG staff to implement initiatives from the San Francisco meeting. She highlighted the fellows program, which will be discussed later in the Council meeting. She also highlighted the effort to make the work of the Council more transparent. She thanked AAG staff and other officers and

Council members for their support during her terms as vice president, president and past president.

Reports from Regional Councilors

Shawn Hutchinson, chair of the regional councilors, said that reports of regional divisions will be provided in the Spring 2017 Council meeting. MacDonald highlighted the program for the best paper at regional meetings and raised the possibility of a reception for award winners. Richardson suggested that perhaps the winners could be invited to the Regional Division Chairs luncheon.

Student Representative's Comments

Student Representative Chris Hair discussed several issues raised in the Graduate Student Affinity Group. The affinity group seeks to advance the theme "building the graduate community." He said GSAG is looking for website assistance and seeks advice of Council and Association staff in this regard. Richardson offered the assistance of staff.

Discussion Question

Richardson addressed issues of data collection and mentioned the creation of a "disciplinary dashboard" that will be discussed later in the meeting.

Executive Director's Comments

Executive Director Doug Richardson mentioned the tight timeline for the meeting, and emphasized a need for efficiency in use of time at the meeting. Considering the compressed schedule, he abbreviated his comments and asked members to review the Council packet provided in advance of the meeting.

Consent Agenda

The following reports and action items were included in the consent agenda: Guide to Programs in the Americas; GeoHumanities journal; AAG News; AAG Resolution for K-12 Geography Education; funding for geography and science; proposals submitted or projects in development; AAG honors; Enhancing Diversity Award; Susan Hardwick Excellence in Mentoring Award; Harold M. Rose Award; Award to Recognize Outstanding Department; Harm de Blij Award for Excellence in Undergraduate; geography education; ratify changes to standing committee appointments.

Approve the consent agenda. Gregory Pope moved, Sriram Khé second, motion approved unanimously.

STATUS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Finance

Richardson and Treasurer Julie Cidell provided a review of preliminary FYE 2016 financial statements. Richardson directed Council members to documents in the Council packets regarding the annual change in net assets, cumulative change in net assets, and a summary of

the financial status as of August 31, 2016. Cidell stated that the association is not just healthy financially, but also has accounting processes in place that are robust, which bodes well for future financial health. In the Spring 2016 meeting, the Council lowered dues for graduate students, postdocs, and members earning less than \$35,000 annually. Cidell acknowledged that the changes slightly reduce income, but reminded members that the Council decided the change was worthwhile to promote membership. The Finance Committee will review the membership fee changes after three years. Cidell said that the ad hoc committee to examine socially responsible investing (Cidell, Alderman, Diamond, Gilbert) has not yet met, but Cidell encouraged new Council members who are interested in the matter to contact her. Richardson suggested that the ad hoc committee provide information and input to the Finance Committee, which can deliberate and provide a set of options for Council consideration.

Bednarz asked about the discussion of the investment strategy from San Francisco. Richardson indicated that he has met with the financial adviser and implemented the resolution passed by Council. Mason asked if there was a plan from the financial adviser on how new investments will be made. Richardson indicated that investment information is shared with the Finance Committee each year, and the Finance Committee will report to the Council in Spring 2017. Richardson said the final audited statement will be available in January, and the Finance Committee will meet on February 11, 2017. John Hayes asked about fossil fuel divestment. MacDonald indicated that this was discussed in a recent Council meeting, and the Association will continue to assess how to invest ethically and wisely. Bednarz directed members to the minutes of the Spring 2016 meeting for the resolution on investment strategy. Hutchinson asked when the reduced fee structure went into effect. Richardson indicated that has happened only within the last few months because of the time required by consultants to change the payment system. MacDonald recommended that Council members and AAG staff actively communicate the lowered fees. Roberts asked about projects in the income and expense statements in the Council packets. Richardson said not all activities are fully funded by external grants, but that a grant may subsidize a project. Richardson gave an example of the GeoMentors program, which receives \$50,000 per year in external support, but the Association invests much more than that because it is an important program for infusing Geography into K-12 education.

Membership

Richardson said membership has nearly doubled during his tenure, and the Association now has a membership of 11,735. He said current trends suggest a membership of approximately 12,000 at the end of the calendar year. Richardson directed Council members to look at the online member services in the Council packet. He indicated that the graduate student and postdocs categories will be separated to facilitate voting for a student Council member. Richardson suggested that the Council may want to consider changing the “partner” membership, which has the lowest fee, to “non-geographer partner,” or possibly remove this category. MacDonald asked about the privileges of partner membership, and Richardson replied that they are the same as any other member category. Mason asked what would constitute a “non-geographer.” Richardson said people could be asked to self-identify. David DiBiase said if someone joins the AAG, they should not be considered a “non-geographer.” Cidell indicated that a partner option

exists for registration for the annual meeting. Darren Purcell and Pope asked how many people are in the partner category. Richardson indicated the number is modest relative to the size of the membership.

Eliminate the category of partner from annual membership structure. Bednarz moved, Purcell second, motion passed with one abstention.

Richardson indicated that the Association has created Youtube outreach videos illustrating step by step processes for joining or renewing membership, signing up for Specialty Groups, and selecting AAG journals delivery. Richardson highlighted the outstanding paper award for each region to support travel to the annual meeting. He also pointed to the new AAG Student Opportunities Site (SOS) for graduate assistantships and postdoc openings, which has no fee for departments or others to advertise positions. Richardson discussed the international workshops conducted by the AAG and the international attendance at AAG Annual Meetings. He said international attendance at the annual meeting is now roughly one-third of total attendees. Richardson said that the growth in membership and annual meeting attendance during his tenure as Executive Director is unique among academic peer associations during this period. Patrick Lawrence asked what has led to such growth. Khé asked about developing countries membership, which is based on the countries' median income in U.S. dollars. He asked about using purchasing power parity, which might better represent the ability of geographers from these countries to participate. MacDonald commented on the growth of the Association and said that 9% of membership is now from developing countries. He said that the most promising source of future membership growth may be international and from developing countries.

Publications

Richardson discussed the addendum to Routledge publishing agreement. Richardson said the he is anticipating net income of \$16 to \$22 million, depending on the Consumer Price Index, between 2018 and 2028 from agreement extension. The Association has an obligation to provide a minimum and maximum amount of content and will provide an option, for members who wish to do so, to receive their journals online. Richardson recently negotiated a second addendum to the addendum stipulating that any reductions in printed copies are to be interpreted as goals only and that print copies will continue to be available to all members who desire them through the life of the agreement.

Publications Committee chair Stuart Aitken offered a recommendation, on behalf of the committee, to remove the section headings in the Annals of the AAG. Aitken said Publications Committee members were concerned that the sections are not helping physical geography in the way originally intended and are discouraging certain kinds of articles that do not neatly fit into one section. He directed Council members to review the membership comments about this recommendation. Aitken said 59 of 73 responses were in favor of removing the sections. Hayes spoke in favor of the sections as an aid to journal readership among physical geographers. Alderman indicated that this change needs to be done in conjunction with an affirmative move to create space for physical geography. Aitken argued that the selection of the new

Environmental Sciences editor will be critical to enhance the number and quality of submissions in physical geography.

Remove the sections of the Annals of the AAG and to start the transition on January 1, 2017. Aitken moved on behalf of the Publications Committee, motion approved 17 yes, 1 no, 0 abstentions.

Approve the editorial board recommendation of Kent Mathewson for the AAG Review of Books. Robert Mason moved, Cidell second, motion approved unanimously.

Aitken said that the Publications Committee supports the publication of commentaries at the discretion of the editors and, in appropriate cases, commentaries could be solicited by the editors. The current practice is not to publish commentaries in the Annals. Gregory Pope asked about online only commentaries and whether the committee considered models from other journals. Aitken said examples were shared that were known to the committee members. Bednarz referred to the Publication Committee report and asked about the Figshare service and whether it could be used for commentaries. Mason suggested that an online format would expedite the process. MacDonald shared several positive attributes of commentaries but indicates that it adds an extra burden to the editors of the journal. Richardson suggested that if commentaries become part of the practice of the Annals, the Publication Committee could consider requiring that they be peer reviewed. Following Derek Gregory's written recommendation that appears in the Council packet, Alderman suggested an Annals lecture at the annual meeting that would allow room for public commentary. Aitken said he will share the comments with the Publication Committee for further consideration.

Darren Purcell asked about the move of the AAG journals from Biological, Environmental & Earth Sciences subject group to the Politics, Sport, Planning & Area Studies subject group by the publisher. Bednarz and Richardson responded that this is an internal staffing issue with Taylor and Francis and does not reflect a change in journal content.

The Council conducted interviews with three candidates for the Environmental Science section editor of the Annals.

Council select David Butler as Environmental Sciences editor for the Annals of the AAG. Purcell moved, Bednarz second, motion approved with one abstention.

Communications

Richardson presented the draft communication plan. Council members conducted Q&A with AAG communication team (David Coronado, Becky Pendergast, Julio Arguello) focusing on several issues, including outreach to the broader public and the effective use of social media. Alderman presented recommendations that he had offered to the Executive Committee regarding potential communication strategies. He asked how the Association might bring a greater media attention to scholarship presented at the annual meeting. He also asked how geographers can be trained to work with the media and communicate with the broader public.

He said that department heads have been seeking videos that can be used for recruitment of students. Alderman said that in the long term, the Association needs to develop programs that focus on raising public awareness in addition to serving the membership. MacDonald appointed a media task force for the upcoming annual meeting of Alderman (chair), Purcell, DiBiase, and Catherine McAnneny.

Meridian Place Operations

Richardson discussed staff reorganization, including the appointment of Deputy Director Candida Mannozi for operations and Deputy Director Michael Solem for research and education, and the addition of new staff during the past year. Richardson also discussed maintenance completed during the year at Meridian Place.

Policy and Outreach

Richardson discussed the large amount of AAG staff time dedicated during the past decade to support K-12 geography education, now represented in Every Students Succeeds Act (ESSA), the successor to No Child Left Behind (NCLB). He also discussed letters of support provided regarding the difficult situation that academics face in Turkey, ongoing collaboration with the Coalition for Science Funding and many other coalitions, and the new membership of the National Academies Geographical Sciences Committee.

AAG Projects and Programs

Richardson directed Council members to the numerous projects in which AAG is engaged. Richardson highlighted a recent three-year NSF-funded research project on the unique nature of geospatial data and the confidentiality implications (Addressing Challenges for Geospatial Data-Intensive Research Communities: Research on Unique Confidentiality Risks & Geospatial Data Sharing within a Virtual Data Enclave). He also highlighted the recent NIH-funded research on Geospatial Frontiers of Health and Social Environments, and the GeoMentors program (AAG-Esri ConnectED GeoMentors Program).

Michael Solem updated the Council on the AAG proposal for an advanced placement GIS&T course, funded in part by the GENIP consortium, which has been forwarded to the College Board and now is in the process of outreach to high schools. The proposal needs 250 high schools to sign an “attestation,” and AAG staff is working through the geographic alliances and GeoMentors to achieve this.

CONTINUING AND NEW BUSINESS

Honors and Awards

Bednarz announced the Presidential Achievement Award will go to Roger Downs for promoting geography education. MacDonald and Richardson announced that the Executive Committee selected James Hansen as the 2017 Honorary Geographer. Richardson announced that the Atlas Award Committee selected Noam Chomsky for that award. MacDonald announced that the Executive Committee selected David Harvey to receive the AAG Stanley Brunn Award for

Creativity in Geography. Thomas Mote announced that the Harm de Blij Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Geography Education is pending until January 2017.

Bednarz discussed the process for the implementation of the Fellows Program, which was approved in the Spring 2016 Council meeting. The process involves integration of this program into the Honors Committee activities.

Annual Meetings

Richardson shared the three themes of the upcoming 2017 annual meeting in Boston, MA. Richardson also discussed upcoming annual meetings in 2018 in New Orleans, LA, and 2019 in Washington, DC, and planning for annual meetings in 2020 to 2023. MacDonald indicated that there are a limited number of cities that have the capability to handle a conference this size both in terms of membership and the number of concurrent sessions. Richardson updated Council on the child care arrangements for the annual meeting.

Committees, Specialty and Affinity Groups

Mote announced the Nominating Committee slate for President, Vice President, and National Councilors. The Council elected the following individuals from the slate provided by the Committee on Committees for the upcoming election ballot: (Honors A, one to be elected) Joshua Inwood, Wendy Jepson, George Malanson; (Honors B, two to be elected) Ryan Burns, Lisa DeChano-Cook, Rebecca Lave, Reuben Rose-Redwood; (Nominating, three to be elected) Jacob Bendix, Perry Carter, Dan Hammel, Shannon O'Lear, and Jennifer Rahn.

Richardson and Bednarz discussed a proposal for AAG Honorary Historian position.

Create the position of AAG Honorary Historian and invite Geoffrey Martin to serve as the first Honorary Historian, as proposed to the Archives Committee. Pope moved, Bednarz second, motion approved unanimously.

Mote presented petitions to form three new specialty groups: Digital Geographies, Legal Geography, and Black Geographies. MacDonald and multiple Council members expressed concern about the proposed Digital Geographies specialty group constitution.

Approve the Digital Geographies specialty group. Bednarz moved, Alderman second, motion defeated by a vote of 0 yes, 16 no, 2 abstentions.

Approve the Legal Geography specialty group. Bednarz moved, Lawrence second, motion approved unanimously.

Approve the Black Geographies specialty group. Bednarz moved, Alderman second, motion approved unanimously.

MacDonald raised a question about how proposals for new specialty groups are prepared and whether proposers are required to contact related specialty groups. Cidell suggested that new

proposals include language about how the proposed specialty group differs and/or complements existing specialty groups. Alderman suggested the proposals should also include evidence of notification to related specialty groups.

Mote presented requests for three name changes to specialty groups: Russian, Central Eurasian and East European Specialty Group to Eurasian Specialty Group; Communications Geography Specialty Group to Media and Communications Geography Specialty Group; and Middle East Specialty Group to Middle East and North Africa Specialty Group.

Approve the three name changes. Bednarz moved, Purcell second, motion approved unanimously.

Mote presented the proposed Undergraduate Student Affinity Group (UGSAG) bylaws.

Approve the Undergraduate Student Affinity Group and its bylaws. Alderman moved, Pope second, motion approved unanimously.

Shawn Hutchinson be named the faculty representative to the UGSAG. Mote moved, Hayes second, motion approved with one abstention.

Richardson presented the revised Caregiving Affinity Group Bylaws.

Create the Caregiving Affinity Group and accept the bylaws. Pope moved, DiBiase second, motion approved by a vote of 14 yes, 1 no, 1 abstain.

Richardson presented a request from an external group for a member survey on mental health services. The Council debated liability and other considerations and recommended that the Association should not participate in the survey.

Bednarz shared the discussion of the Task Force on Public Policy Statements, including a recommendation for creation of guidelines and a process for feedback from membership on creation of official statements. One question arose within the task force about “rapid response” issues, and the task force recommended that the Executive Director and Executive Committee should respond to such matters. Roberts asked about petitions that do not request public statements or instances in which the Council wishes to make a statement independent of a petition. Richardson noted that members can bring proposed resolutions to Council for discussion and possible consideration, subject to the rules and requirements of the AAG Constitution and Bylaws. MacDonald suggested a preamble that would indicate that the Council is empowered to act on behalf of the Association, not individual specialty or affinity groups, and that the Council has flexibility to respond rapidly when necessary through the Executive Committee and Executive Director.

Council adopt the following operating procedures as part of the AAG standing rules regarding member requests for public statements. Statements are made only with

approval of the Council, and when cases clearly align with the AAG Constitution and Bylaws. Rapid response statements can be made as necessary in pre-approved areas by the Executive Director and Executive Committee. Cidell moved, Alderman second, motion passed unanimously. [Note: If the procedures or guidelines proposed in this resolution conflict with the rules and requirements of the AAG Constitution and Bylaws, the provisions of the AAG Constitution and Bylaws shall take precedence.]

Step 1: *Proposal/Petition. See 6 (A) bylaws. Can come from AAG members (e.g., 50 +) or AAG Council or Executive Director 30 days prior to Council meetings in the Fall or Spring (500 words).*

Step 2: *Assessment. Relevance and appropriateness of the proposal evaluated by Council. See bylaws 6 (E). Decision should be based on whether the proposal falls under the Objectives of AAG (Article II of AAG Constitution).*

Step 3: *Formation of Study Panel/Task Force. See bylaws 6 (C). If the proposal falls within the scope of the Objectives of the AAG, a group is constituted to conduct a study, providing relevant research and evidence to evaluate the proposal.*

Step 4: *Study Panel/Task Force prepares a draft report with pro and con arguments, following research, study, and discussions, within three months. See bylaws 6 (B).*

Step 5: *Review, revision, comment, approval. The draft report is reviewed by Council and then the proposal/petition is discussed or modified by the AAG Council until it is either approved or rejected. If approved, it is then posted for AAG membership to comment for a period of time of at least 30 days. See bylaws 6 (B). The Study Panel reviews any comments, and submits a final statement to Council for its final approval or disapproval, or further modification.*

Step 6: *Dissemination. If the statement is approved, it will be disseminated on the AAG website and through other appropriate media.*

Council

Richardson discussed future meetings of the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee, the Spring 2017 Council meeting, and 2017 regional division meetings.

Richardson reviewed changes required to the AAG Constitution to allow the addition of a Student Councilor to the AAG Council.

Proposed changes to the AAG Constitution to enable the addition of a student councilor, via a referendum vote on the upcoming ballot. Mason moved, Lawrence second, motion approved unanimously.

Richardson discussed the need to appoint a new parliamentarian to fill a current vacancy.

Approve Tom Baerwald as parliamentarian. DiBiase moved, Alderman second, motion approved unanimously.

Adjournment

There being no further business, MacDonald adjourned the Council meeting at 11:15 a.m. on November 20, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Mote
AAG Secretary