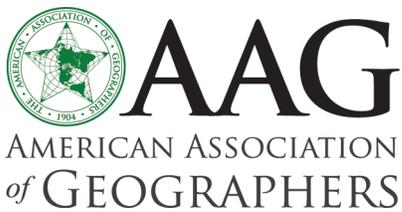


**Three-Year  
Strategic Plan  
2020–2022**

**American Association of Geographers**



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# AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF GEOGRAPHERS Three-Year Strategic Plan 2020–2022

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The American Association of Geographers (AAG) is uniquely positioned to represent the discipline and profession of geography. For more than 100 years, AAG has served academic and professional geographers and provided a crucial bridge between academia, government, and business. In an era of climate change, rising nationalism and social inequity, geography is more important than ever before. Yet, our profession is at risk from many directions: from challenges to its relevance within universities, professional challenges from other disciplines in business and government, and lack of diversity and inclusion, among other issues. At the threshold of these challenges, AAG foresees emerging opportunities to elevate its role, effectiveness, and efficiency in serving and supporting its members.



This strategic plan, approved by the AAG Council on April 7, 2020, was developed to advance the objectives of the long-range plan (2015 – 2025), by identifying the most urgent and achievable strategic priorities for AAG during the next three years. This strategic plan translates key elements of the long-term plan into three strategic core areas — geography as a discipline, world-class membership services, and strengthening AAG as a society — each with specific programs to inform tactical actions that can achieve measurable results.

Strategic core areas reinforce one another through goals and activities to create a higher profile for geography in the public imagination, in public policy, and in academia. The plan also reflects AAG’s commitment to member services, including a vastly improved website and member database, and the development of a code of ethics to support the field in the face of new pressures created by advancing technologies and human rights concerns. Lastly, AAG is deepening its commitment to staff, leadership, and workplace excellence, including key activities to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and a major renovation of its headquarters. This plan will be used to mobilize AAG Committee Members, Council Members and staff to finalize and execute action plans with clear milestones. This plan will also be used as a reference and a guide to inform annual operating goals as well as to track and communicate progress.

Woven into each core area and related programs are two crucial themes: diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and climate action. We recognize that AAG and geography must make substantial improvements in each area in the coming years; therefore, both themes are built into the goals and activities outlined in this plan in explicit and implicit ways. For example, each of AAG’s policy tenets for advocacy (Appendix 1) address social and racial equity, climate change, or both. Our educational programs, from GeoMentors to Healthy Departments, will focus on DEI as a key goal and metric.

Regarding climate action, AAG’s upcoming improvements to its physical headquarters and staffing will reflect awareness of the need to conserve natural resources and the need to diversify our staff. Much of our broad member support and the initiative for Healthy Departments will directly or indirectly support the critical work geographers are doing to address climate change, by helping to raise public and academic awareness and to secure the relevance and ascendancy of geography’s disciplinary commitment to protecting the planet. Even a program as seemingly neutral as the next-generation membership database can improve DEI in the field: by implementing a public dashboard that creates a transparent mechanism for accountability for AAG, and creating a report card on the field as a whole, based on our member data supplemented by trends in higher education and professional fields. We will seek to build and expand our work on these two themes throughout the three-year time period covered in this strategic plan.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'GML', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Gary M. Langham, Ph.D.  
AAG Executive Director

# STRATEGIC CORE AREAS

This strategic plan will provide the necessary focus to enable us to make significant progress in three critical areas:

## Advancing Geography as a Sustainable Discipline

In order for geography to thrive and grow as a discipline, it must be valued by key decision makers in government and higher education. We will look to further develop our advocacy policy arm to operate from a set of clear tenets to support effective and relevant policy actions. In addition, we will work to support and maintain successful geography departments through authoritative data collections, dissemination of best practices, and improvements to our Healthy Departments program.

## Ensuring World-Class Membership Services

To improve services to our members, we will evaluate our offerings and our model for service delivery, seeking opportunities to enhance their relevance. As part of this initiative, AAG will evaluate the effectiveness of its Annual and Regional meetings. We will also define a set of ethics, standards, and practices that will aid our members in the principled, responsible practice of geographic and geospatial disciplines. Significantly, we will be undertaking a long-awaited upgrade of our association membership database and website so that we can fully leverage these assets in the service of our members and ensure our capacity for growth.

## Enhancing AAG Excellence as a Membership Association

We will improve the capabilities and capacity of AAG as an association to better serve our members and to support geography as an enduring discipline, both in academia and as a profession in the private sector and government. We will undertake a comprehensive upgrade of our headquarters and add additional staff capacity to improve membership services. We will incorporate basic principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in our daily operating practices and update our operating procedures to improve staff effectiveness and efficiency. In addition, we will enhance our business model to ensure long-term financial viability, targeting investments in strategic growth areas and establishing a new fundraising capacity to support our growth objectives.

## STRATEGIC PROGRAMS

This section describes the underlying programs that are necessary to achieve our overall strategic goals.

### Advancing Geography as a Sustainable Discipline

#### PROMOTING GEOGRAPHY — OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

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**Situation:** The breadth and depth of geography, the expertise of its disciplinarians, and the educational and career opportunities (and importance) available within geography are relatively unknown and unseen to those outside of it. This lack of appreciation and understanding of geography’s relevance and significance hampers the status and stature of the discipline, detracting from academic enrollment numbers, the viability of geography departments, and the future workforce needed for a growing, in-demand field.

**Opportunity:** We have a strong organizational platform to speak from and a wealth of geographers (our members) from whom to draw experiences and stories. We can use our resources to produce engaging content for community outreach that showcases the richness of geography, challenges the core misperceptions of the discipline, and encourages audiences to explore what geography has to offer.

**Goals and Objectives:** We will develop an initial outreach campaign to convey the importance and relevance of geography to society and the exciting learning and career opportunities available to explore in the discipline. The campaign will generate products useful for multiple settings and audiences.

**Approach:** We want to respond to the expressed need from members, educators, and professionals for promotional and recruitment materials for geography. We will develop and launch an initial outreach campaign and look to develop our outreach approach over time. We will undertake the following:

- » **Audience Analysis and Campaign Concept Creation** — Working with a marketing and communications agency, we will conduct an audience analysis and develop a campaign concept that serves the promotional needs of the discipline.
- » **Development of Campaign Materials** — We will thoughtfully design and develop necessary multimedia outreach materials and elements for the campaign, such as branding, campaign design elements, core content, web presence(s), social media approach, and other dimensions of communications. This includes using AAG’s excellent membership network to gather and leverage compelling experiences and stories to share.
- » **Communications and Outreach Plan** — We will develop and execute a communications and outreach plan for launching, sharing, promoting, and distributing campaign materials to target audiences such as young adults and students (pre-career, pre-declared major), parents, school leaders and guidance counselors, non-geography organizational partners, and decision/policy makers.

## ADVANCING POLICY AND ADVOCACY

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**Situation:** In order to sustain geography as a discipline, AAG must be able to effectively advocate for key policies that can advance member interests as well as those of the discipline of geography. AAG currently lacks both the agility to activate advocacy work, and the clear guidelines by which we should engage our membership for such work. In addition to addressing relevant policy priorities, AAG must develop the necessary capabilities to mobilize its network of members with practices, processes, and tools to achieve desired policy outcomes as part of an AAG government relations capability.

**Opportunity:** There is an opportunity for AAG to create a system of stakeholder experts and a network of informed grassroots members that can be mobilized to advocate for our policy goals. We can also continue to leverage our professional partnerships to stay ahead of federal and state issues that affect our membership and the discipline.

**Goals and Objectives:** We seek to establish an effective advocacy and policy capability within AAG comprised of subject-matter experts who can serve as media/stakeholder representatives on policy issues, and a grassroots network of AAG members who can be mobilized to speak up on current and proposed policies that support the interests of AAG's mission.

**Approach:** We will look to develop an effective policy and advocacy arm for AAG that can advance policies that support geography as a discipline and also engage our members in advocacy. We will focus on implementing the following:

- » **Policy and Advocacy** — We intend to formalize a Policy and Advocacy function, the creation of a grassroots network of members, and a professional network of government-facing associations who can collaborate with AAG in the policy arena.
- » **Policy Tenets** — We will define a set of AAG Policy Tenets (see Page 15) as guidelines that define AAG's policy goals and as a public-facing document to ground the organization in its explicit core guiding principles.
- » **Grassroots Network** — We will connect our grassroots stakeholders in a network that provides meaningful data on members' location and available contact information, enabling AAG to map strengths and weaknesses in the current network so that we can develop strategies to strengthen our capacity and better mobilize in key districts and states.
- » **Toolkit** — We will also develop an Advocacy Toolkit of basic documents and tools, including our policy tenets. This toolkit will enable our members to reach out to their elected officials on policy matters they find important, as well as to advocate for AAG's own positions.
- » **Media Fellowship** — We plan to develop a team of media/policy experts by tapping into our current AAG member expertise to promote the role of geography in the media as appropriate. We will establish a Media Fellowship Program to build our capacity of advocacy experts.

## CHAMPIONING THE DISCIPLINE — HEALTHY DEPARTMENTS

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**Situation:** Of the approximately 350 U.S. geography departments, many are increasingly under pressure or at risk of being eliminated due to declining or insufficient enrollments. By the time an at-risk department reaches out to AAG, it is often too late for a successful or meaningful intervention. AAG needs to develop a data-driven approach that can proactively assess the health of departments in our discipline, and the potential risks some of them face before they are under threat.

AAG can develop tools and approaches to carry out early interventions to pre-empt the risk of closure or other encroachments on geography departments. This will require investments in reinforcing the capabilities of the existing Healthy Departments Committee, developing tools to assess departmental health, providing new information and support to Department Chairs, Regional Divisions, and other AAG volunteers and leaders.

**Opportunity:** In responding to calls from at-risk departments, AAG is well positioned to leverage the breadth and depth of experiences from its Healthy Departments Committee as best practices for solving challenges to a department's viability. AAG also can draw on information from the Program Excellence Awards cohorts to identify departmental success factors.

**Goals and Objectives:** We seek to develop the necessary support systems, data, insights, practices, and tools to enable a revitalized Healthy Departments Committee.

**Approach:** We intend to review and analyze the different factors that threaten the viability of geography departments, and evaluate opportunities to strengthen the capabilities of the Healthy Departments Committee. Our plan will include:

- » **Strengthen the Healthy Departments Committee** — AAG staff will partner with the Committee to inventory processes, practices, and tools that have been applied to identify and codify appropriate best practices. We will also explore options for strengthening the Committee with added volunteer capacity, as appropriate.
- » **Rapid Response Team** — To augment the Healthy Departments Committee's capabilities, AAG will explore creating a Rapid Response Team of qualified member volunteers who can be called upon to assist any Department seeking preventive assessments of their health, or support to respond to potential risks or encroachments. This Rapid Response Team can share best practices and advice remotely, or it can be invited by a Department to provide insights and feedback in person.
- » **Data Collection** — AAG will perform discovery and data collection to identify the underlying risk factors to geography departments. Using this data, we will create the State of Geography database, which will serve as an early warning system that can recommend preventive interventions for departments that might be at risk, based on the presence of key indicators. The State of Geography effort will also draw on information about critical success factors, gleaned from AAG's Program Excellence awards.
- » **Toolkit** — We will develop a comprehensive tool kit of relevant materials and best practices that can be deployed by the Rapid Response Team.
- » **Training** — AAG will develop and provide training to at-risk departments in the use of data and insights, tool kits, methods, and practices, in order to strengthen our proactive, preventive approach, and to enable our rapid response to their needs.
- » **Outreach** — We will develop plans for an outreach program to department heads to give them information about the revitalized Healthy Department Committee, and to mobilize qualified members to participate in and support its work.

# Ensuring World-Class Membership Services

## IMPROVING MEMBERSHIP SERVICES, MODEL, AND GROWTH

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**Situation:** AAG's core purpose is to provide meaningful, valuable services and experiences to its members, support the common interest of furthering the discipline of geography, and raise the prominence and awareness of geography's importance to society. Historically and currently, AAG membership has predominantly consisted of geographers in academia (graduate students, instructors, professors, researchers).

**Opportunity:** We have an opportunity to build upon our strength in academic geography to connect with geographers studying, researching, and working in all areas and sectors, at all career levels. We need to research, reassess, and adapt our current membership model to better serve our current members and to expand and diversify our membership. This is an opportunity to increase our representation of the discipline and extend the impact of our organization.

**Goals and Objectives:** AAG will thoroughly assess our membership demographics and trends to share new goals and strategies for membership, including the development of value propositions for current and prospective members and establishment of customer-service best practices.

**Approach:** AAG will systematically assess and define ways for improving our membership services and the corresponding membership model as follows:

» **Membership Model Analysis** —

- » Analyze membership demographics and trends, including sector and discipline/sub-discipline representation, retention, growth rate, and geographic distribution, among other factors. AAG will also identify membership gaps and potential growth sectors.
- » Perform a comparative analysis of membership value that includes a benchmarking of dues structure against those of comparable membership organizations, as well as calculating benefits offered (and who benefits).

» **Solution Options** — Based on the findings of the above analysis, we will develop appropriate action plans to address improvement opportunities. These may include:

- » Establishing membership goal metrics and timely, regular reporting of our overall AAG membership profile.
- » Piloting a new membership benefits structure.
- » Developing and implementing outreach efforts for new audiences of potential members as part of our growth strategy.
- » Creating and implementing a staff customer service guide.

## ENHANCING ANNUAL MEETINGS

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**Situation:** The Annual Meeting is the flagship event for AAG. In fact, many AAG members perceive the organization as synonymous with its Annual Meeting. Analysis of attendance data and feedback from past meeting surveys suggests opportunities to improve the meeting experience and grow attendance.

**Opportunity:** We have an opportunity to improve the Annual Meeting experience and increase attendance by exploring options for defraying attendance costs, reducing attendee turnover, and making other enhancements through a comprehensive improvement plan.

**Goals and Objectives:** AAG will improve our Annual Meeting experience and retention rate by addressing the key levers that affect these outcomes. In addition, AAG seeks to engage our members more effectively through strengthened strategic marketing for the Annual Meeting.

**Approach:** A comprehensive approach will enhance the Annual Meeting experience and grow our attendance as follows:

- » **Marketing and Communications** — We will engage a marketing firm to provide an assessment of the perception and branding for the event and develop the appropriate strategies and plans for us to execute in order to explore opportunities to personalize the participants' experience and shift our members' perception to our intended positioning of our Annual Meetings.
- » **Costs of Attendance** — We will explore different options to defray the cost of attendance, especially for students, through enrichment funds, corporate scholarships, student assistance programs, and other alternatives.
- » **Appealing to Students** — AAG will explore how best to create a unique participation experience for students, which we anticipate will be a key growth opportunity.
- » **Diversification of Content and Attendance** — To build from the current core content, which is primarily focused on upper-level academia, AAG will identify opportunities to diversify content and encourage the participation of professional geographers, especially by incorporating elements of applied geography such as GIS disciplines into our core meeting programs. We aim to create relevant connections between academia and the professional community to expand our members' appreciation for the extensive role that the discipline of geography plays in the world. This approach has the added benefit of creating a bridge from academia to professional career exposures expanding the understanding of geography as a viable career option across many fields, which in turn will help improve academic enrollments.
- » **Optimizing Meeting Retention Rates** — Our current retention rate for annual meeting attendance is between 40 - 50%. We will develop action plans to systematically address the different factors that affect our attendance retention, some of which include the factors described above.

## UPGRADING DIGITAL AND ONLINE PLATFORM

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**Situation:** Technology has changed exponentially in the past 10-20 years. AAG’s foundational digital platforms—the flagship website and the iMIS membership database—are in serious need of upgrade since their inceptions in 2010 and 2001. These platforms no longer adequately serve our members or staff’s current needs, not to mention our growing needs. Much staff time is taken up with time-consuming manual processes, system workarounds, and troubleshooting. Temporary solutions have created inefficiencies, redundancies, and inaccessibility for portions of these systems.

**Opportunity:** We will create a multifunctional digital platform that provides all users with a more accessible, personalized experience that makes self-service easier and gives staff an enhanced range of functions to make their workflows more efficient, productive, and even innovative.

**Goals and Objectives:** We will design an engaging digital environment serving as one source for all of the functions that are currently being performed by numerous third-party tools and platforms.

The new system will seamlessly address many functions, which may include: member and specialty group interests, job opportunities, events, surveys and polls, related apps/sites, and billing. In addition, we will incorporate the ability to easily track and leverage analytics to identify membership trends, insights and conversions, while considering evolving data privacy regulations.

**Approach:** We will take appropriate steps to assess, design and build an innovative, personalized experience that will meet our current and future requirements. These steps include:

- » **Platform Discovery** — We will explore up to six platform solutions through vendor demonstrations to discover system capabilities.
- » **Gaps and Needs Assessment** — We will work with experts to identify current capabilities, gaps, needs, and future desires. Consultants will provide findings in a detailed analysis.
- » **Platform Identification** — Upon reviewing and assessing the report, staff will identify the platform, which will ultimately fulfill our requirements.
- » **Process and Implementation** — Working with our chosen platform vendor, we will set timelines and milestones and work efficiently and iteratively towards a final launch.

## FORMALIZING GEOETHICS, MEMBER STANDARDS AND PRACTICES

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**Situation:** The past three decades have seen an exponential trend towards using and collecting geographic information to support economic sectors, the environment, society, and the sciences. These datasets are now so massive that they are increasingly fed into artificial intelligence algorithms to generate new insights. At the same time, there is growing consensus for the need to bridge disciplines and promote collaborations in order to solve pressing societal and scientific challenges. The use of geographic information and methods often sits at the center of these collaborations. Together, these challenges are generating a new wave of concerns around ethics and biases in geospatial data collection and manipulation.

Even at a consumer level, location-enabled technologies have become an essential part of our daily life. In turn, our geographic information has now become essential to the business model of many service companies. This dependency causes concern today because the foundation of this relationship is lacking geo-ethical standards and practice. The general public lacks understanding about the high personal value their geographic data carries, and are often unaware with who and for what purpose they are sharing their real-time location.

**Opportunity:** As concerns about privacy emerge around location services, as questions about the role of geography in military actions continue, as big data and geospatial services come to market, we have an opportunity to show leadership on an issue that has reach to a broader and general audience. AAG has an

obligation to facilitate conversations on ethics in geography that help shape ethical standards and cultivate practices that can provide guidance to our members and beyond geography. We also have a leading role to play in cross-disciplinary collaborations in which the use of geographic data is central.

**Goals and Objectives:** AAG will build on its role as a convener to facilitate discussions about ethics in geography. Because AAG serves as a bridge for academics, policy makers, the private sector, and government agencies, it is well-positioned to establish standards that can prevent the misuse of geographic data within and beyond our discipline. We will also work to help policy makers and academic leaders recognize the heavy reliance on geographic data and methods across society and the necessity for continuous and early acquisition of geographic knowledge and thinking for civic participation and workforce preparedness. In short, geographic literacy and ethical data management practices are a necessity not only within the geographic community, but well beyond it.

**Approach:** We will facilitate discussions on ethics in geography that elevate the work and insights of our academic and professional members, and build institutional partnerships that bring those conversations beyond our disciplinary communities. Our work will include:

- » **Standards, Policies & Practices** — We will help policy makers and academic leaders recognize the pervasive reliance on geographic data and methods across society and the ascribed necessity for continuous and early acquisition of ethics related to geographic knowledge and thinking for civic participation and workforce preparedness.
- » **GeoEthics book and/or conference** — We will explore the potential for a GeoEthics book and/or conference in order to facilitate and elevate our members' and partners' insights on these issues.
- » **Institutional partnerships** — We will seek new partnerships and open discussions with institutions that can have direct impact on ethical standards and practices of using and collecting geographic information (e.g., ICPSR, NGS, GISCI, USGIF, NGA, Esri).

## Enhancing AAG Excellence as a Membership Association

### IMPROVING BUSINESS MODEL AND FINANCE

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**Situation:** The financial health of AAG is in excellent shape. AAG has strong reserves and a stable business model where AAG can strategically expand its services and staffing. However, there are market factors that can pose serious risks to AAG in the coming years that require prudent and proactive preparation. Sources of revenue should be diversified beyond membership, meetings, and the journal. In addition, managing reserves should include structured innovation funds to return benefits to members and yet be able to provide sustained reserves over time.

**Opportunity:** AAG has an opportunity to create a fundraising team and establish a diversified portfolio of revenue sources. AAG will establish clear management and distribution protocols for reserves which balance innovation and stability and define strategic investments that advances AAG strategic goals and objectives.

**Goals and Objectives:** Our goal is to establish an effective fundraising function that can diversify our sources of revenue and to leverage our reserves to fund strategic investments that can enable innovation and growth for AAG.

**Approach:** We plan to adopt a pragmatic approach to enhance the business and financial model of AAG to ensure long-term viability as follows:

- » **Revenue Diversification** — We intend to establish a fundraising function by recruiting a Development Director and assigning up to two staff to the team. This team will assume the responsibilities

of fundraising and building out the necessary practices and processes to raise the necessary funds from different alternative sources that can provide AAG a diversified base of revenue sources. In addition, we aim to establish a culture of fundraising where all other staff can engage in the fundraising process. Our plan is to set fundraising goals, cultivate a pipeline of different categories of donors, seek sponsorships, prepare and propose grants as part of the overall ethos of fundraising.

- » **Reserve Investment Optimization** — We will establish a new approach to managing reserves that allows us to leverage these funds to enable for growth with inflation and implement a spending rule that average returns over three years. Spending in a given year is the average return rate minus inflation. In addition, we will develop a system where funds are applied to strategic investments and innovation projects where the prudent deployment of seed money to pilot many ideas that can likely lead to stable programs. Some will grow, some will not. Those ideas which thrive can be presented to major donors and foundations as evidence that funding will take the idea to scale.

## FORMALIZING HUMAN RESOURCES AND OPERATING PROCEDURES

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**Situation:** AAG's employees and volunteers are the backbone of the organization. Yet, we do not have clear and consistent procedures and policies to help them do their jobs. Because of this, they operate on an ad-hoc basis confronting problems as they arise, rather than referring to official protocol. In addition, council and committee volunteers need more complete policies, processes and procedures to help them manage as they take on their newly elected roles, and to remind more seasoned members to share their experiences before their terms expire.

**Opportunity:** The staff and volunteers of AAG are critical to its successful day-to-day operations. We will improve effectiveness and productivity for all staff and volunteers by identifying areas for improvements in policies, processes and practices. Our analysis will provide clarity, efficiency and effectiveness in our roles to support service to our members. Additionally, we will strive to approach new hiring opportunities with a focus on equity and inclusion in order to grow and maintain diversity among employees and volunteers.

**Goals and Objectives:** We will improve the productivity of AAG staff and volunteers through better documentation of internal policies, practices and processes that will guide their roles and responsibilities.

**Approach:** We will engage our staff and volunteers in a comprehensive approach to solicit ideas for improvement:

- » **Establish a Human Resources Role** — We will institute a well-defined human resources function that supports the development of our AAG staff through effective policies and practices.
- » **Internal Survey** — We will conduct a survey of current employees and volunteers to help identify areas that will benefit from clarification of policies, practices and processes. We will prioritize key areas for drafting new or evaluating existing guidelines that support staff and volunteer productivity.
- » **Employee Handbook** — We will review the employee handbook for necessary changes and additions to achieve clarity for staff. We will conduct staff meetings to roll out any new updates ensuring that all employees adopt the updated document.
- » **Distinct Employee and Volunteer Orientations** — We will develop and implement a new employee and new volunteer on-boarding process with all the necessary supporting documentation and resources with policies, guidelines and practices enabling an effective start.
- » **Volunteer Guidelines/Handbook** — We will interview current volunteer council/committee members for feedback regarding current online guidelines and their experiences in order to define and act on areas for clarification and improvements.

## UPGRADING MERIDIAN PLACE

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**Situation:** Meridian Place is a row house located in the heart of the Dupont Circle historic district, a neighborhood in downtown Washington, DC. The building is owned outright by AAG and serves as an important asset for the Association. The last building upgrade to Meridian Place occurred in the 1990s. Meridian Place urgently needs a complete overhaul in order to become compliant with current building and occupancy codes. The building also needs to be redesigned to provide a contemporary, energy-efficient, user-friendly workspace for all staff and visitors.

**Opportunity:** Upgrades to AAG headquarters will offer room for growth in staff, reflecting the goal to provide world-class services to its members, and upgrades to HVAC and accessibility, reflecting the goals to create an inclusive and climate friendly environment.

**Goals and Objectives:** We will engage in the comprehensive architecture, design and execution of the building upgrade for Meridian Place.

**Approach:** We will engage the appropriate architects and building contractors to solicit the appropriate bids to complete the mechanical, engineering, structural, and functional renovation of Meridian Place that includes the new MEP infrastructure, IT structure, workstation layout and furniture and universal design, accessibility. Once we have decided on the specific proposals, we will commence with the Meridian Place upgrade.

## NEXT STEPS

This plan serves as a broad, action-oriented outline for driving internal goal setting and measurable progress. AAG staff will conduct detailed planning for each of the key programs within the core strategic areas, including the development of performance measures. Each program area will be monitored for progress and an overall scorecard will be developed and shared with the Executive Committee and Council Members at regular intervals.

Staff will also coordinate closely to discover and strengthen the linkages and complementary objectives among these areas and programs. This effort, in turn, will make better use staff time, promote collaboration, and contribute to a unified program of work that realizes AAG's vision as a world-class membership organization that represents, supports and enriches both the discipline of geography and professional geographers.

We are confident that the successful implementation of the three strategic core areas and relevant programs described above will establish a foundation for AAG's growth over the next three years, and effectively position AAG to fulfill the vision of the long-range plan.

# APPENDICES

## Policy and Advocacy Tenets

The AAG serves its membership by strengthening and protecting the broader geography community through just and equitable public policy and advocacy. The following tenets act as guiding principles:

### **Equitable Geography: Fair and Open Mapping by Governments and Communities**

Mapping by governments and communities must be done in transparent and inclusive ways. All levels of government in the United States—local, state, and federal—play a key role in determining access to resources by drawing maps that lay out Congressional districts, apportion resources to vulnerable communities, determine risk factors associated with the physical environment, prioritize responses to federal emergencies and public health crises. Similarly, as the global populations become more urbanized, urban planning around the world has significant impacts on people and their quality of life. The highest standards of data, analysis and presentation are imperative factors for fair maps and the creation thereof must include the expertise of professional geographers. *(Examples: US Census, redistricting, urban planning with secondary cities, and licensing and best practices.)*

### **Protecting Geography: Academic Freedom and Public Access to Data**

Academic freedom and scientific discourse are essential components to a just and well-functioning society. Protecting members—educators, academic and professional geographers—from interference in the pursuit of their work benefits the public good and entrepreneurial, private enterprise alike. Access to information and opportunity must remain open and accessible to all. *(Examples: Maria Caffrey, Geospatial Data Act/Brooks Act, ICPSR, etc.)*

### **Protecting People: Human Rights, Environmental and Climate Justice**

Human rights, including environmental and climate justice, are basic components of global, regional, and local societies. The AAG will advocate for any geographer facing direct infringement of their fundamental human rights, especially when the case is severe. Geographers are central to understanding and mitigating the effects of the global climate crisis, and uncovering the injustice suffered by peoples most severely affected. As human populations and the environment shift in response to a changing world, the AAG advocates for transparent and equitable studies and processes. *(Examples: Tashpolat Tiyip, Scott Warren, Paris Climate Accords.)*

### **Preserving the Arc of Geography: K-12/Higher Education/Career/Retirement**

The AAG seeks to sustain geographers from the beginning of education through retirement. This includes support of the individuals as well as the institutions from which they gain basic understanding and later pursue their livelihoods. Bolstering the institutions, advocating for funding, supporting programs, and utilizing assessments are essential to preparing well-informed citizens and sustaining a well-prepared workforce and academic community. *(Examples: K-12 funding, NSF funding, NAEP Assessment funding, Rapid Response for Geography Dept.)*

### **Geography for Everyone: Promoting Equity, Diversity and Inclusion**

The AAG has a duty to ensure that all geographers feel welcome, have a voice, and can enjoy individual freedom. Social and racial justice demands equal access to resources, training, meetings and professional opportunities. Vigilant support for these principles in the workplace, classroom, journals, and AAG annual meeting is essential. *(Examples: Anti-harassment at AAG meetings)*



**AAG**

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION  
of GEOGRAPHERS

