



# Fall 2020 AAG Council Meeting

## *Minutes*

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	5.2.6	<b>Request to approve memorial in Annals for Ronald J. Johnston</b>	Langham, Jepson, Naylor
(Cont. from previous day)	3.1.3	<b>Geography &amp; Military Committee recommendations: review by Council subcommittee</b>	Lobben, Choi
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	10.3	<b>Update re. Program Excellence Award Committee requests to improve award cycle procedures</b>	Buenemann, Youngs, (Mannozi)
	<b>7.0</b>	<b>* Policy and Outreach</b>	Langham (Kinzer)
	7.1	Policy Update – Fall 2020	(Kinzer)
	<b>8.0</b>	<b>* AAG Projects and Programs</b>	Langham (Mannozi)
	<b>11.0</b>	<b>Council</b>	Lobben, Langham
	11.1	Council Meeting Spring 2021 (dates?)	Lobben, Langham
		<b>Conclude any pending items (i.e., election of slate for Honors &amp; Nominating Committees, other)</b>	Lobben, Langham, Johnson-Webb
	<b>12.0</b>	<b>New Business</b>	All
	12.1	<b>Memo on compensation for AAG student leadership labor</b>	Naylor
		<b>ADJOURN</b>	

- 1.3 Consent Agenda (**Adoption of Consent Agenda**) – Lobben  
 Ratify Spring 2020 Council Meeting Minutes, approved July 3 – Johnson-Webb  
 Ratify June 23 Council Meeting Minutes, approved Sep. 29 – Johnson-Webb  
 Ratify any Committee Appointees –Johnson-Webb  
 AAG Journals Operations – Langham (Cassidento)  
 Guidelines to handle incidents such as “early release” of a committee report to Wainwright – Jepson  
 Update on AAG Communications and Membership Outreach and Services – Langham (Schamess, Pendergast, Ledoux)  
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 Accessibility Task Force Update – Lobben

## Fall 2020 AAG Council Meeting

November 7 – 8

(via Zoom)

### Minutes

#### **Present**

##### Executive Committee:

Amy Lobben, *President*; Emily T. Yeh, *Vice President*; David Kaplan, *Past President*; LaToya Eaves, *Treasurer, GPRM*; Karen Johnson-Webb, *Secretary, East Lakes*; Gary Langham, *Executive Director (non-voting)*;

National Councilors: Jennifer Collins, *National Councilor Chair*; Meghan Cope, LaToya Eaves, Wendy Jepson, Wei Li, Joseph Oppong;

Regional Councilors: Michaela Buenemann *Southwest and Regional Division Councilor Chair*; Woonsup Choi, *West Lakes*; Tracy Edwards, *Middle Atlantic*; Richard Kujawa, *New England St. Lawrence Valley*; Lindsay Naylor, *Middle States*; Shannon O’Lear, *Great Plains Rocky Mountains*; Selima Sultana, *Southeast*; Yolonda Youngs, *Pacific Coast*; John (Jack) Swab, *Student Councilor*.

Staff: Candida Mannozi, AAG Director of Operations

10:30 AM

## 1.0 Opening:

### **1.1 Welcome**

Lobben welcomed all to Fall 2020 Council meeting. She mentioned that the Executive Committee prepared for this meeting by reducing the time for open remarks and other non-decision related business, to reduce the time for all on Zoom. She welcomed all the new Council members Meghan Cope, Joseph Oppong, Tracy Edwards, Shannon O’Lear, Selima Sultana, and John (Jack) Swab. She expressed her hope that the entire Council be able to see each other in person soon.

### **1.2 Adopt the Agenda**

*Collins moved to adopt the Agenda, Li seconded the motion. The Agenda was unanimously adopted.*

### **1.3 Adopt Consent Agenda**

*Collins moved to adopt the Consent Agenda, Kaplan seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

### **1.4 Ratify Spring and June 2020 Council Meeting Minutes**

*Eaves moved to ratify the previously approved Minutes from the Spring and June 23, 2020 Council Meetings. Youngs seconded the motion. The motion passed with 12 votes in favor and seven abstentions.*

### **1.5 Regional Division Reports (see Appendix A for full reports)**

Li mentioned that MAD co-hosted their fall meeting with the Race, Ethnicity, Place conference. She also mentioned that the SEDAAG Councilor provided a very detailed report on her region, even though she recently suffered a severe loss in her family. Edwards will submit her final MAD report after the Council meeting, for inclusion in the Minutes.

Johnson-Webb asked whether there was any detail on the purview for the Student Councilor. Swab mentioned that the Graduate Student Affinity Group still counts the Student Councilor as part of their Board and welcomed some more clarification on his role. Langham suggested discussing this separately with GSAG and Swab.

Kujawa expressed thanks for the AAG assistance to the NESTVAL board for the virtual Fall meeting.

Buenemann mentioned that the Spring regional division reports will be more streamlined and asked for a few volunteers to help her develop a template for these reports. Kaplan added that creating a template had also been a request from the Regional Division Task Force.

Jepson asked whether it would be possible, for the Spring reports to include a question about the effects of the pandemic on the Fall 2020 meetings?

Youngs stated that she plans to send out a survey to department chairs and former Councilors in her region about the health of their programs and wondered if other regional councilors would like to work with her on creating a consistent survey across all regions? Buenemann invited Youngs to work this into the guidelines for the Spring reports. *Edwards and Kaplan volunteered to serve on this committee.*

Cope mentioned that the Diversity & Inclusion Committee is planning to canvass departments in January on racial justice issues, so perhaps colleagues might consider either combining the surveys or discuss how best to handle this.

Collins suggested also asking regions about successes and challenges they encountered with the virtual meetings.

### **1.6.1 Vice President's Comments**

Yeh welcomed everyone again and shared with Council that she does not plan to launch any new task forces, but to perhaps help existing ones complete or add to their momentum and work. She stated her particular interest in the Annual Meeting and the Climate Action Task Force and seeing that work continue. She also stated wanting to focus AAG and Departments on inclusion and diversity (tribal colleges, HBCUs, etc.). She also shared wanting to prioritize continued support for Regions, Geography & the Military, Mental Health, etc. She stated having a couple of ideas on possible meeting themes for the next in-person Annual Meeting, such as democracy-authoritarianism-fascism, global indigenous geographies, among others.

### **1.6.3 Current State of the AAG**

Langham stated that he believes the AAG is doing well, despite the challenges of the past six months. He stated being incredibly proud of the rollout of the COVID Rapid Response programs and that this additional work was done with no additional staff. He said he thought the AAG staff worked exceptionally hard and did a spectacular job. He stated that 6/9 regions are using AAG virtual meeting platforms and he wants to look at

this for the future, while also keeping our sights on a future in-person meeting. He stated wanting to experiment with this idea more for October 2021.

Langham stated that the AAG's financial losses have shrunk somewhat to \$1.6M. He also pointed to the challenges on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion effort and the unfortunate reaction that occurred from some of the SGs and expressed his hopes to repair the confidence and trust that was lost there.

He stated the AAG is very close to identifying a new member management database to help improve and automate some of the functions for staff who had to manually process over 6,500 refunds after the Denver meeting was switched to all-virtual. At the same time, he and staff are also pursuing a much-needed website upgrade. He therefore believes the AAG will rise out of the low point of the pandemic with many new and flexible processes in place.

## 2.0 Finance Overview

### 2.1 FYE2021 Budget (informational)

Eaves walked the Council through some of the informational materials in the packet regarding the financial state of the AAG. She stated the AAG is down \$2.2M from cancelling the Denver meeting, and that the Council will need to discuss later what to decide about the Seattle 2021 meeting. She stated that the AAG received PPP funding and this will be accounted for in the annual AAG audit. She stated that the AAG is in a solid position, thanks to previous Executive Director Richardson's stewardship of the AAG's investments and finances.

Langham stated that typically, at this time of the year, the Council sees interim results for the AAG's finances. The audit then delves in full detail into the AAG's financial transactions. He stated that the PPP loan of \$444,000 is expected to be forgiven and can then be added as revenue to the AAG's bottom line. He also noted that the AAG received a few more royalty payments, and that these should shore up the AAG's loss to less than \$1M.

He stated that the AAG's investments were down 8.5% in March, and have been improving since then, now showing a +4.5% gain in August.

Jepson asked about the Richardson endowment. Langham, stated that this Endowment typically received overages from operating cost, based on a Finance Committee and Council decision.

Jepson asked whether there is more of a development strategy for the AAG? She suggested Council review a development plan at the Spring 2021 meeting. Langham reminded the Council that the AAG hired its first ever Development Director 6 months ago. He stated he can share the 2021 Development Plan with Council in the Spring, which includes foundation outreach. He also stated the AAG received two approx. \$50K donations from Esri towards some of the COVID Rapid Response programs.

Eaves stated that a good part of the AAG revenue stems from the Annual Meeting. Langham elaborated that the AAG typically receives 15% of its revenue from membership dues, 30% from Annual Meeting income, and 25% from publishing royalties.

Johnson-Webb asked how moving to nodes will impact AAG revenue? Langham suggested to fully discuss this question in section 9.2, later in the meeting.

Kujawa asked about the budget projection and 50% membership reduction and asked why the projection is so dire. Langham explained that he and staff were projecting a 50% decline in membership over the next two years, and also projected very conservative Annual Meetings with far lower attendance, leaving the AAG with a projected \$1.6M deficit. Based on that projection, he then worked to cut those losses in half, bringing the AAG to \$800K in projected losses. He stated that the COVID Rapid response free membership support program is helping to offset the decline in membership numbers, and also pointed out that membership renewals are tied to AM registrations.

Collins asked whether AAG is doing anything to push lifetime memberships as a means to increase revenue? Langham offered to discuss this with the AAG Development Director.

Kaplan recalled suggesting during his previous term on Council that the AAG offer 5-year memberships as another option? Langham stated that the new member database will allow a whole world of possibilities for membership incentives etc.

## 2.2 2020 Event Cancellation lawsuit

Langham provided a brief overview of the situation.

**Redacted to Preserve  
Legal Privileges**

[Redacted content]

Redacted to Preserve  
Legal Privileges



*Collins moved to authorize Langham to proceed with Phases I through II of a lawsuit, [REDACTED], against the insurer of the AAG's 2020 Denver Meeting. Li seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.*

## 3.0 Committees and SGs

### 3.1 Committee on Committees update

Kaplan asked about question marks on the task force rosters. Mannozi explained that the Council motions that established them did not include the ending of 3-yr terms, hence the question marks. Kaplan offered to poll the Regions Task Force members re. serving until Fall 2021 or beyond.

Jepson proposed discussing this later, under the Governance Audit item.

#### 3.1.1 Nominating Committee Update (slate for Council election)

Slate shared with the Council. Discussion ensued. Comments on diversity, lack of experience and service to the AAG of one VP candidate, etc. Jepson suggested for Executive Committee to develop guidelines for the Nominating Committee for criteria for candidates for positions on Council, and to present these to Council for a vote. She also stated that the current rule establishing a three-year hiatus for Councilors who have just rotated off not being able to run for Council again for a minimum of three years causes a loss of institutional memory on the Council. Oppong stated that he had nominated a candidate for the International Councilor position but did not see that name on this slate and had not yet heard back from the Nominating Committee on this



outcome. Youngs and Eaves suggested involving previous Nominating Committees in developing standardized communications and processes around all the Council positions, including feedback to the nominators, and candidates. Given the difficulty in recruiting candidates to stand for election, Yeh also suggested decreasing the number of candidates being recruited for vacancies.

### **3.1.2 Elect slate for Honors and Nominating Committee**

Slate circulated. Votes requested by next day.

### **3.1.3 Geog. & Military Committee recommendations**

Yeh asked whether Council was voting on all recommendations in bulk Choi asked what next steps would be after a Council vote. Kujawa suggested having the AAG's legal counsel review the recommendations and to also encourage member feedback via the AAG website. Yeh suggested revising the subcommittee's responses. by putting them in a Google doc for all Councilors to be able to edit. There was general consensus to therefore move to vote on this the following day.

### **3.1.4 \*Guidelines to handle incidents of "early release"**

Jepson updated Council that this particular incident revealed the lack of structure for AAG task forces. Langham also added that the Publications Committee and AAG staff met with the editors to discuss this question with them and came to conclusions that helped resolve this particular incident. Naylor suggested developing clearer guidelines around the release or publication of a task force's or committee's reports, which Langham suggested to subsume under the forthcoming Governance Audit of the AAG.

### **3.1.5 Harold Rose Award Committee proposals**

The Council then reviewed a request from the Harold Rose Award Committee, to add two features to this award: scheduling an annual Harold Rose Lecture at the AAG Annual Meeting, which that year's awardee can present, and to offer Rose Awardees the opportunity to submit their presentation for possible publication in *Antipode*. Eaves moved to approve the Rose Award Committee's request. O'Lear seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

### **3.1.6 Harassment-Free Task Force proposal**

Eaves updated the Council on the Harassment-Free task force's launch and activities over the past two years. She mentioned the task force's proposed activities for 2021 such as providing session chairs with training on how to manage online harassment in addition to in-residence; develop a more detailed proposal for the Spring Council meeting re. the possibility of providing an additional level of advocacy for AAG meeting attendees for persons who file a harassment report to the AAG. It appears that some members who have filed

reports of harassment at the meeting have also returned to harassing and bullying behavior in their home departments for filing the report. The task force's suggestions received general consensus.

### **3.1.7 Healthy Departments Committee proposal**

Kaplan provided some background on the procedure that led to this proposal before Council. Li stated agreeing with Ken Foote's notes and recommendations for this Committee. She asked for clarification on what exactly this committee would be doing, going forward. Kaplan explained that previously the committee served as an 11<sup>th</sup> hour intervention/support force. Kaplan stated that now the HDC would like to increase the data collection scope, to be able to identify depts. at risk earlier, and be able to champion existing or new services or activities that the AAG can offer departments in perilous times for the discipline. Cope cautioned about the focus on more senior people, which may complicate accomplishing also the diversity aspect of the committee. She also recommended that the AAG communicate more the purpose and service of the Committee to department chairs, so they are better aware of the support and resources available to them.

Youngs suggested using AAG social media for this purpose. She suggested Regional Councilors to also include information on the HDC for chairs in their region and linking them up to the committee.

*Eaves moved to approve the proposed activities, terms of service, membership and size of the AAG Healthy Departments Committee. Naylor seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.*

### **3.2 SG / AAG Annual Reports (summary of requests)**

Kaplan stated he thinks it's problematic that only 25 SGs submitted reports. Oppong suggested creating a committee to review SG activity and health. Eaves summarized the Exec. Committee's discussion to review SGs and AGs. Swab mentioned the existence of SG websites and their continuity as also being "spotty." Langham stated that the CMS upgrade will address access issues for Regions and SGs, and other member subsets. Cope suggested also looking at SGs that may want to sunset (i.e., their moment has moved on), others that might want to merge, etc. Lobben asked for volunteers for an informal subcommittee to address this question and provide a report to Council. *Collins volunteered, AAG staff member Ledoux was suggested as the staff liaison. Swab and Eaves also agreed to serve.*

#### **3.2.1 Critical Physical Geography SG Petition**

#### **3.2.2 Community Geographies Collaborative SG Petition**

#### **3.2.3 Pandemic & Epidemic Response SG Petition**

Council discussion included, among other things, comments about the AAG being perceived as not welcoming to physical geographers. Cope suggested perhaps in future considering a provisional status for SGs or a time-limit? By the same token, existing groups could be asked to report on their activities and services. Oppong agreed and mentioned the parallel with merging underperforming programs in institutions, etc. He suggested creating

guidelines for SGs that help determine their viability. Yeh suggested not splintering into more similar or overlapping SGs (the proponents are human geographers, not phys. geographers). Sultana concurred. She also pointed to the difficulty of publishing in some of the AAG journals and their impact factors steering many members' decisions. She suggested these proponents could "live" under Urban.

***Swab suggested postponing the decisions about the formation of these new Specialty Groups until after new guidelines are developed by the subcommittee and approved by Council. This met with general consensus.***

Cope stated that the limit to only six SG memberships also limits the number of members any SG can gain. She endorsed Swab's suggestion. The Council generally seemed to lean towards preventing the splintering and proliferation of Specialty Groups.

Lobben asked whether there was general consensus to post-pone this decision due to the larger revision that will be launched.

Kujawa pointed out that the Community SG petition needs to clean-up the references in their petition, which alternate between "SG" and "AG."

## 4.0 Meridian Place Operations

### 4.1 DEI initiative update

Langham provided a quick update on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion task force and the Council response to an Open Letter from a number SG Chairs. (CM get GL email language to Shannon re. reaching out to SG Chairs).

The Open Letter, Langham, stated, somewhat delayed the rollout of the DEI task force. D&I Committee stated wishing to play a more central role in this process and work more closely with the AAG consultant. He invited Cope, Swab and O'Lear to add to his comments. O'Lear summarized the D&I Committee's desire to streamline the communication and exchange of ideas between SG Chairs and the D&I Committee on the DEI strategic plan. Langham reiterated that the previous Council tasked him to deliver a DEI strategic plan, to move the needle on what the AAG can specifically do on DEI to ensure tangible progress on this issue. Cope also asked how the D&I Committee is included in the AAG Three-Year Strategic Plan.

Li stated she was excited to see the work being elevated and to see the D&I Committee so engaged in this critical initiative. She suggested surveying department chairs once, using a survey with different sections/topics (i.e., departmental health, diversity, AAG services, etc.), as opposed to reaching out to them multiple times.

### 4.2 Governance Audit proposal

Langham stated that it has become abundantly clear to him that AAG is in need of a governance audit, to bring its practices and procedures up to current standards, and in line with similar organizations. He proposed to Council to approve one of two options – authorize him to spend unbudgeted funds to hire an outside

consultant or propose a budget (approx. \$40-70K) for hiring an outside firm. Naylor suggested proposing a top limit of \$100K for this effort. Swab expressed concern at the cost. Langham reassured him he'd aim for far lower. Kujawa suggested that the eventual consultant be asked to provide the AAG with a platform that would allow staff and Council to periodically revisit these procedures. He expressed full endorsement of this idea. Oppong agreed that this is an important investment to bring the AAG in alignment with current best practices. Collins suggested tasking a staff member at AAG to connect periodically with a similar staffer at other organizations to compare best practices, similar challenges, etc.

***Naylor Collins moved that Council authorize Langham to spend up to \$100,000 to hire a consulting firm to develop a governance audit of the AAG. Johnson-Webb seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.***

## 6.0 \* Communications and Membership

### 6.1 Communications Update

Langham briefly summarized activities under this topic. Li suggested communicating more clearly with SGs and other affected member groups whenever Council decides about using funds for certain purposes, to avoid the Open Letter situation of the recent past.

### 6.2 Membership Update – COVID rollouts

Langham briefly stated that all nine COVID-19 Rapid Response programs have been largely successful. He stated that the mentoring support activities brought some participating graduate students to tears of gratitude.

The Bridging the Digital Divide effort is creating new relationships and bridges to other organizations. Langham stated he would issue complimentary AAG memberships to the professors who received these funds. He asked Council how they might feel about issuing free AAG memberships to these same professors' students, using any unused funds in the membership renewal COVID fund.

Naylor wanted to state her gratitude and admiration for the AAG staff and all the extra time they have been putting in to roll out these additional efforts.

Kujawa suggested providing some social media content to Councilors for use on Twitter and other platforms. Langham explained that he and staff took a pause on this communication to wait for a calmer moment after the Open Letter, and that the communication will resume and increase soon.

## 9.0 Annual Meetings

### 9.1 Update from Climate Action Task Force

Langham stated not having plans for a 2026 AM location, and that he is focusing on ensuring the success of the next two years and a resolution to the pandemic, before considering 2026.

Jepson provided a brief update on the Climate Action Task Force, launched a year ago. She stated that since the pivot to a virtual meeting in Denver, the task force has been

identifying areas for improvement and ways to be more creative to enhance the social aspects of an in-person meeting. She also stated that the task force has identified a few key elements to help get the AAG to carbon neutral meetings. She pointed out that virtual meetings have an impact on the AAG's business model and on the culture and practice of the AAG. She stressed that how the AAG engages, communicates and dialogues with its members and attendees about these shifts will be crucial.

Yeh described the three proposed scenarios for future AAG meetings:

1. **Annual nodes:** Simultaneous regional/university/international nodes where people travel to their local/regional hub. This has many advantages: lower carbon travel, a possibility of in-person interaction, participation by those who may not be able to cross international borders (e.g. having nodes in various countries), possibly raising the profile of regions, while creating a sense of interconnection through simultaneous broadcasts of key events such as award ceremonies, presidential addresses, keynotes, etc.
2. **Biennial Meeting (every other year).** Reducing the travel to a very large biennial in-person meeting has the potential to nearly halve emissions. The “off years” would be either online and/or nodes (option 1 or option 3)
3. **Annual nodes + focus place.** This is a variation on #1 where there is one focused location with a smaller meeting, where the ‘national’ meeting + Council meeting would occur, but it would be significantly smaller than the current annual meeting, e.g. a 2000-person meeting. This is the model that has been proposed for the October 2021 in-person meeting (given that April 2021 is proposed to be only on-line). This is probably the model that makes the most sense as a transition period through 2025 given that hotel contracts have already been made from the current time through 2025. While it would be difficult to outright cancel the current meeting destinations, it would be significantly easier to lower attendance at each of these places by encouraging or mandating a much smaller “focus place” while directing resources to simultaneous nodes.

Yeh invited reactions from the Council to these proposed ideas. Jepson stated that in these discussions about change the task force is weighing questions of justice, accessibility and privilege, too.

Naylor supported the proposals, esp. the idea of pivoting away from the AAG being recognized primarily as a “meeting-only” organization.

Collins suggested that perhaps the Council could also consider meeting in person only once a year. Kaplan stated that he's not open to considering these options as the pandemic persists, and that canvassing membership on this question may be required. Kujawa asked whether he could report on the Climate Action task force's work at the upcoming NESTVAL meeting. Jepson agreed. Youngs agreed with Kujawa's suggestion to explore different cadences or rhythms to the AAG meetings. She also mentioned that the AAG AM can be large and overwhelming, but it is an essential way for students to make connections and network. She was also excited about the new ideas being put forward.

Li praised the task force's efforts. She stated that she would like to see financial aspects worked into the various proposals, to better understand their effect on the AAG's bottom line. She also cautioned that, in her experience, other international organizations took up

to three years to recover from canceling their annual meetings. She asked for more clarification on the design/purpose of nodes.

Jepson stated the nodes could provide smaller meeting venues in different world areas, under detailed AAG instructions and guidance, and would result in actually growing the participation of attendees in AAG meetings internationally. These nodes would offer a keynote speaker, sessions, panels, special events, etc. and be more easily accessible to attendees from that world area, limiting the longer-haul travel.

Opping stated that his experience of being able to go share a meal and have a casual conversation with others after an SG business meeting, for instance, is a valuable aspect of the in-person meetings that would go lost. He wondered how the AAG could recoup this, as this also concerns the needs for mentoring?

Yeh stressed that the AAG membership will have to be canvassed, and that in-person meetings will still have to occur. She also pointed to the costs for in-person meetings and the planetary crisis tie to carbon emissions.

Eaves suggested including the D&I Committee and BIPOC in these conversations. She underscored that minority women, the precarious or underemployed were already finding it difficult to attend the in-person meetings.

Jepson suggested that if the AAG shifted to a new model, it would no longer be confined to the same five cities for its conferences. She agreed that mentoring is a serious question and that the task force has been experimenting with some SGs to come up with mentoring opportunities for their students outside an in-person format. She also stated that these meetings would also offer spatial and temporal constraint (i.e., free women from finding and financing childcare during meeting attendance, etc.).

Kaplan suggested that the lower numbers of virtual attendees speaks to the preference among attendees between virtual and in person meetings. He agreed that smaller meetings allow for more geographical flexibility, but also argued that geographers need to go to places and meet there as part of the very nature of the discipline.

Sultana appreciated Jepson's and Yeh's work. She agreed with Kaplan that giving people the option to go virtual for a time being, but still also offer an in-person meeting when possible again. Collins agreed that the hybrid meeting options seem to satisfy a larger number of attendees.

Yeh advocated that nodes are options that offer more opportunity for others and pointed out that the AAG received requests for them, underscoring that this may be an unmet need.

## **9.2 Seattle decision / Fall 2021 Meeting**

Langham stated that the probability of holding an in-person meeting in Seattle is very slim. 77% of respondents to an AAG survey on the Seattle meeting stated they would hesitate to attend that meeting in person. He therefore suggested moving to a virtual-only meeting as soon as possible, in order to allow him to cut \$300,000 in costs.

Kaplan suggested getting a sense from membership about their "appetite" for a smaller meeting in the fall. Langham stated that without a vaccine, some of these decisions about incurring costs to organize an in-person meeting have to also take into account the fiduciary responsibility for the AAG's finances. Swab suggested that folks might skip the October meeting, if they've presented virtually in the spring, and/or might decide to wait until 2022.

*Youngs moved to cancel the 2021 Seattle in-person meeting. Oppong seconded the motion, which received a unanimous vote.*

Langham then explained that for the Fall of 2021 he'd like to experiment with the proposed idea of nodes and to host a larger AAG meeting (Council, papers, sessions, etc.) in conjunction with a Fall Regional Division meeting to test-drive some of these new ideas.

*O'Lear moved to authorize Langham to pursue and investigate options for a fall meeting in 2021. Li seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.*

Lobben adjourned the meeting at 4:00 PM.

\*\*\*

## Sunday, November 8, 2020

Lobben convened the meeting at 10:30 AM and invited Naylor and Jepson to lead the next portion of the meeting.

Cope asked whether anyone on the Publications Committee had considered the gender imbalance occurring with the submissions to the Annals. Naylor explained that due to gender considerations the AAG is not currently collecting that demographic from authors submitting their papers. Cope pointed to the fact that certain scholars (gender, BIPOC, etc.) are under so much stress and other priorities, that perhaps a statement about support for scholars undergoing additional or "special" stresses during this time might be helpful. Naylor welcomed the suggestion. Jepson also pointed to statements re. COVID and the challenges posed to scholars from the editors that are already posted on the journal sites.

Naylor and Jepson agreed to go back to the editors to craft a statement of support, and to also gather data on possible attrition that may have occurred for some authors who were in the process of submitting to the Annals and may have had to drop off due to pandemic-related new or additional challenges on their time and commitments.

Naylor reminded the Council that she and Jepson will rotate off next year, so she encouraged Councilors to consider volunteering for this role, and to perhaps consider another term as Co-Chair. Eaves suggested looking for Co-Chairs with staggered terms.

## 5.0 Publications

### 5.2.1 Proposed AAGBR Editorial Board

Naylor asked if anyone had questions about the proposed editorial Board for the AAGRB.

*Yeh moved to approve the proposed AAGRB editorial board. Li seconded the motion, which passed with 17 votes in favor and one abstention.*

### 5.2.2 Hanna and Bian – Publications Co-Chairs to ask if interested in 2<sup>nd</sup> term

*Eaves moved to authorize Publications Committee Co-Chairs Jepson and Naylor to ask Annals Editor Ling Bian and Cartography Editor Steven Hanna*

*whether they wish to continue serving for a second term. Cope seconded the motion which passed with 16 votes in favor.*

### **5.2.3 Increase stipend for Cartography Editor Steve Hanna by \$3,000 annually**

Discussion revealed support for this editorial position and its larger set of workload and challenges Kujawa suggested the following amendment: “In light of institutional support changes due to COVID 19, do you approve increasing Cartography editor Hanna’s: stipend by \$3,000?”

*Eaves moved, in light of institutional support changes due to COVID-19, to increase Cartography Editor Steven Hanna’s annual stipend by \$3,000. Choi seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.*

### **5.2.4 Butler addition to editorial board**

*Eaves moved to approve David R. Butler’s proposed addition of Richard Dixon to his editorial Board. Choi seconded the motion, which passed by a unanimous vote.*

### **5.2.5 SI topic from Meehan**

Li suggested more detail from the editor on the kinds of submission she’s looking for. Yeh expressed that she’d prefer the Council not get too closely involved in an editor’s work. Jepson pointed out that the editor did consult with the entire board on this SI topic. This resolved Li’s concern.

*Eaves moved to approve the proposed 2023 Annals Special Issue on “Race, Nature, and the Environment.” Yeh seconded the motion, which received a unanimous vote.*

### **5.2.6 Approve RJ Johnston memorials in Annals?**

Kaplan pointed out that other non-AAG Presidents have been memorialized in the Annals. Cope asked about the criteria guiding these decisions, pointing that the list of such exceptions is very male-heavy, and a balance would be helpful. Li agreed with setting up future parameters for such decisions. Swab also suggested considering space limitations or word counts for these, to avoid a “crush “of memorials in the journal. Langham also mentioned that maybe one of the new criteria could also include that proponents should also be willing to author the piece they are proposing. Jepson suggested that the Publications Committee develop these new criteria and present them to the Council for the Spring meeting. This suggestion met with general consensus. Jepson also suggested then publishing and sharing these future guidelines with the AAG membership.

*Kujawa moved to approve a memorial for Ronald J. Johnston in the AAG Annals, authored by its proponents. Cope seconded the motion which passed with 17 votes in favor and two abstentions*

Collins asked whether time-sensitive articles (e.g., the occurrence of a first Cat. 5 hurricane in Oct.) could be published online in an accelerated fashion? She argued that prioritizing articles in this manner could create more of a buzz for them and



the journal. The general agreement from the ensuing discussion is that this lies within the scope and purview of an editor's decisions.

Sultana asked why the publication of Annals articles takes months? Naylor indicated she would ask the AAG Publications Director for clarification.

Cope inquired why the terms of all *GeoHumanities* editors are ending on the same date and was told this is because the journal was recently launched and all these editors rotated on at the time of the journal's inception. She suggested perhaps offering staggered reappointment terms to the editors, to avoid a complete loss of institutional memory on this journal. Naylor concurred with this suggestion.

Yeh asked why the Nature and Society section has the longest turnaround time on submissions? Jepson suggested that the editor for this section was appointed recently, which could be part of the reason.

Lobben then brought the Council's attention back to the next Agenda item for discussion.

### 3.1.3 Geog. & Military Committee recommendations

Yeh had drafted and shared via email a 2nd draft of the responses to the Committee's recommendations. Lobben invited questions. Jepson made the case for specifying which agencies exactly fall under the purview of these recommendations. There was general consensus to add a list prefaced by "such as" or some qualifier indicating that it's not comprehensive.

Further discussion pointed out the problem with the first recommendation that AAG not enter into collaborations with military agencies. Langham stated that the AAG has relationships with defense agencies (recruiters, exhibitors, etc.). He suggested clarifying the AAG's code of ethics to address these questions, but not to limit the AAG's capacity to collaborate with such entities.

Opping also pointed out that one's research can be used by others later for purposes very different from the original researcher's intent.

Kujawa summarized the timeline of the launch of this task force in response to a petition, the report and recommendations, and the intent NOT to tie the hands of researchers and departments, but that an affirmative statement and the dissemination of the accepted recommendations will be an important signal to bring the AAG into to a wider discussion. Lobben thanked him for providing this context.

Council decided to vote on each recommendation separately.

***Kaplan moved to approve and Yeh seconded each proposed recommendation from the Geography and the Military's report as follows:***

***Recommendation 1: The AAG as a professional organization will not initiate, develop, or participate in research collaborations or partnerships with military or intelligence agencies unless the objectives and outcomes of the research and partnership are in keeping with the AAG's Code of Ethics and commitment to the well-being of people, places, and environments. The AAG Central Office will make periodic reports to Council on any military/intelligence agency contracts. The motion was approved with 16 votes in favor and 3 against.***

**Recommendation 2:** *Revise the AAG Code of Ethics statement and policy as it relates to the ethical issues that may arise from military-funded research. This should include comparing the AAG statement (current and proposed) with the codes of ethics related to research developed by other disciplines such as the American Anthropological Association (AAA) and the American Psychological Association (APA) as well as the Department of Defense (DoD) statement of ethics as it relates to research. The motion was approved with 17 votes in favor and 1 abstention.*

**Recommendation 3:** *Update and revise the AAG Statement on Professional Ethics (every few years). With new and revised updates, encourage members of the Association to read them as part of the membership renewal and meeting registration processes. The motion was approved with 18 votes in favor and 1 abstention.*

**Recommendation 4:** *AAG will establish best practices and explicit guidelines for transparency in the disclosure of funding source reporting throughout the research process from the time that informed consent is requested from research participants to the dissemination of research results in publications and presentations in geography journals generally, and in AAG journals (e.g., PG, Annals), journals of AAG Specialty Groups (e.g. African Geographical Review), journals of AAG Regional Divisions (e.g. Southeastern Geographer), or partnered journals (e.g. Earth Interactions) specifically. Such transparency in the disclosure of funding source reporting should also apply to presentations of geographical research at AAG and AAG-affiliated annual meetings. The motion passed with 16 votes in favor and 2 against.*

**Recommendation 5:** *Langham recommended voting on the Subcommittee Response: “As with all other topics and themes, the AAG supports and encourages the organization of sessions on these topics, if AAG meeting attendees wish to organize them.” This response received 18 votes in favor.*

**Recommendation 6:** *Continue to advocate for funding for geography from non-military/intelligence sources and strive to make information about alternative funding opportunities accessible to members. (Langham indicated that “advocate” is the preferred verb to use, due to the AAG’s 501c3 status, which greatly limits lobbying). This motion received 18 votes in favor and 1 against.*

**Recommendation 7:** *Update the learning outcomes associated with the Department Chairs Workshop, Young Scholars Workshop and other appropriate aspects of the AAG’s Healthy Departments Initiative, by developing materials and/or activities (e.g., discussions) that better embrace the implications arising from military-sponsored research and teaching activities for individuals and departments.*

Council discussion centered around who is expected to implement this and led to a general consensus not to implement this recommendation. *Langham therefore suggested an up/down vote on the recommendation, which received 2 votes in favor, 15 against and 1 abstention. This recommendation was not approved.*

**Recommendation 8:** *Establish an implementation committee to assist with executing the above recommendations and foster continued dialogue on the ethical implications of engagements between geographers and the military.*

Li asked whether this is a request for a new standing committee or a subcommittee of Councilors? There was some hesitation on creating a new standing committee on this. Jepson suggested voting on whether Council agrees to create a new committee.

*Establish a Council subcommittee to execute the Council approved recommendations (#2-4) and foster continued dialogue on the ethical implications of engagements between geographers and the military. This motion passed with 19 votes in favor. **approval.***

The approval was followed by a call for volunteers: *Yeh and Kujawa volunteered, and Yeh indicated she would reach out for one additional member from the Geography & the Military Committee.*

(REGRETS: Lobben was absent in the afternoon, due to a family emergency.)

### 3.2.1 Elect slate for Honors and Nominating Committee

The overnight voting results were as follows:

**Honors A:**

Kavita Pandit

Michael Solem

**Honors B:**

Michael Emch

Alexandra Ponette-Gonzalez

Sujata Shetty

Megan Ybarra

**Nominating Committee:**

Shrinidhi Ambinakudige

John Harrington, Jr.

Edward (Ted) Holland

Helga Leitner

Kathleen Sherman-Morris

Mark Welford.

Collins recommended that the notifications include language letting candidates know the AAG Council would like them to consider running for next year for the next cycle and if they would like to, would they like to confirm that intention then – at that time they are notified.

## 10.0 Honors & Awards

### 10.1 AAG Fellows (ratify)

Cope pointed out that the AAG honors and awards that recognize more senior scholars seem to more easily default to a gender imbalance. She asked whether any language can be added to the criteria to assist in diversifying the submissions and selections?

The ensuing Council discussion covered a range of concerns from whether or how considerations for the diversity of candidate and nominee pools are established in the

honors, fellows, and other AAG awards guidelines and criteria; the need for a possible review of all these programs to identify the structural barriers in the nomination process so as to eliminate the barriers that seem to prevent the inclusion of diverse candidates; to perhaps involve certain Specialty or Affinity Groups to assist in developing nominations, and more. There were suggestions to also review recognition programs in other organizations that could possibly serve as successful examples.

Langham recognized that a review of these two programs is in order.

Jepson suggested that Council hold off ratifying on the current list of Fellows, review the process, and then revisit these candidates.

Kaplan echoed this suggestion. Yeh hesitated, citing all the work by the nominators that's gone into this cycle. Li and Oppong agreed on putting this list of Fellows on hold, rethinking the process, and then implementing a new cycle, in which the current dossiers are to be resubmitted following the future, revised guidelines and criteria.

Buenemann volunteered to serve on such a review committee.

***Oppong moved to pause the current Fellows pool, Johnson-Webb seconded the motion which carried with 19 votes in favor.***

***Langham suggested convening a task force to review the Fellows and Honors programs (composed of Councilors and a few senior AAG staff) to develop revisions of the AAG Fellows and AAG Honors criteria and guidelines by the next Council meeting. Volunteers: Buenemann, Cope, Kaplan, Li, Naylor, Oppong, Sultana, and Youngs.***

### **10.2 AAG Honors (ratify)**

Langham invited a discussion about this slate.

***Naylor moved to ratify the slate of 2021 AAG Honorees. Collins seconded the motion, which passed with 18 votes in favor and one abstention.***

Kujawa pointed to a few additional requests from the Honors Committee before Council and suggested these could be put before the just created task force, to be addressed.

Langham agreed to include these items before their review.

### **10.3 Program Excellence Award subcommittee update/procedure**

Buenemann provided a brief summary of the process behind this request from the Program Excellence Committee. She indicated that the deadline extension from June 30 to Sept. 30 helped generate more submissions, and that the subcommittee will now be revising the criteria for the award.

Cope needed to leave the Council meeting, so Langham thanked her for her time and service.

## **7.0\* Policy & Outreach**

Langham invited questions on the update materials in the packet. There were none.

## **8.0\*Projects & Programs**

Langham invited questions on the update materials in the packet. There were none.

## 11.0 Council

### 11.1 Spring 2021 dates

Langham explained that he will need a Council meeting in the spring of 2021 for budget approvals and other important procedural needs. He asked whether Council would prefer a meeting before the 2021 Annual Meeting or overlapping with the virtual meeting.

*The general consensus was to hold it just prior to the virtual 2021 meeting.*

## 12.0 New Business

### 12.1 Memo on compensation for AAG student leadership labor

Naylor provided an overview for the discussions leading up to the creation of the memo before Council which was requesting compensation for the students involved in developing proposals for the AAG's COVID-19 Rapid Response. She argued that traditionally valued items in academia are grants and publications, and that she'd like the Council to consider recognizing and elevating other forms of service to the discipline. Collins suggested providing other forms of recognition instead of monetary compensation (notifying their Chairs of their service, etc.). Oppong argued that compensation is especially valuable for graduate students, and more so under the current circumstances. Kaplan stated being more inclined to reward people for their service in other ways (i.e., registration discounts, waivers, etc.). He stated being sympathetic to the idea of compensation but advised steering away from a monetary form.

Kujawa stated that perhaps for the students working on the COVID-19 programs, if we can assess the level of their contributions, the Council should authorize Langham to issue a stipend to them, for stepping up and serving at a time of considerable challenge and stress, esp. to them.

Li overall supported the proposed initiative of compensating graduate students, even though it had been discussed but not approved at a recent Council meeting. She also endorsed the idea of AAG compensating graduate students (in-kind) for their contributions. Jepson concurred with Kujawa and Li.

Swab suggested wanting to see more detail on the compensation structure.

Naylor explained that this compensation is only related to COVID-19 rapid response, and the work on diversity-related SGs.

Langham countered that for implementation purposes he would need a uniform way to approve compensation, not an ad hoc approach. He also pointed out that compensation would change his dynamic with AAG members now working *for* him, not *with* him, etc.

Naylor replied that tenured faculty who are paid year-round don't need the compensation, whereas precarious students or early faculty could benefit from it.

Jepson asked what decision lies before Council here? Langham suggested that a few Councilors work with him and Mannozi to try to develop these criteria.

Yeh pointed out that the general discussion was about those special cases of extra service, not for any/all grad students serving on an SG.

Li argued that the grad students who worked on the COVID Rapid Response proposals already did the work and their LOE is known, so they ought to be compensated. She also suggested that Langham and others can develop criteria moving forward.

Kaplan indicated that the original calls for the COVID Rapid Response did not mention compensation and pointed out that if they had, it might have changed who responded. Oppong mentioned the pervasive situation with graduate students' mental health and stress and pleaded with the Council to consider approving this token of encouragement. Naylor offered to work up a more fully fleshed-out proposal for Council review in the Spring.

Swab suggested that asking the same students to be TAs on the same COVID-19 programs they helped develop is in essence being asked to do more work in order to get paid. He also stated that a fee like \$500 is such that it's unlikely to raise a protest as feared by those not being compensated.

Collins pointed out again her perception of the inequality of compensating some students and not others.

Johnson-Webb asked whether these payments could come from unexpended COVID-19 Rapid response funds? Langham confirmed that there are some unexpended funds available from the approved Y1 tranche.

Naylor suggested approving payments of a maximum \$500/each from unexpended Y1 COVID Rapid Response funds to compensate student labor on the COVID Rapid Response proposals they contributed to.

Langham, for context, also stated that due to the recent financial hit from the Denver meeting and the ongoing pandemic affecting the AAG's bottom line, he put a freeze on staff raises, bonuses, etc. (i.e., perceptions).

Li suggested stating clearly that this is a one-time bonus for a specific project.

*Naylor suggested she develop a more detailed proposal to Council for the Spring Council meeting. This met with general consensus.*

## **12.2 Council Student Awards**

Naylor had questions about how this fall's Council Award for Best Student Papers were issued at the Middle States Meeting. Kaplan, Naylor, Mannozi and Langham agreed to discuss this outside the Council meeting.

Langham thanked all the Councilors for their time and dedication to the AAG over the course of this weekend-long Council meeting, and adjourned the meeting at 3:25 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Karen D. Johnson-Webb, AAG Secretary and  
Candida Mannozi, Director of Operations

## **AAG Regional Divisions Report, Fall 2020**

### **East Lakes – submitted by Karen Johnson-Webb**

Our most significant success this year was the continued planning and hosting of the ELDAAG 2020 Conference on October 29-30, 2020. We held it virtually and we believe it was a great success. We were able to provide two fantastic virtual field trips. We would like to send a big shout out to Oscar Larson and his team for all their assistance. We also would like to thank our sponsors: AAG, SEES, the Ft. Meigs Historical Site, and The Ottawa National Wildlife Reserve.

The Department of Geography and Planning at University of Toledo expressed concerns for COVID-19 related budget and economic impacts from declines in state share of instruction support and lower than expected University enrollment. Daniel N. Warshawsky, Wright State University Geography Program faculty member, was awarded the Helen Ruth Aspaas SAGE Innovator Award. Faculty member K. Johnson-Webb is Co-I on a grant from Ohio Third Frontier (Ohio Department of Education). The team will be studying the social determinants of health in Lucas County, OH. The

### **Great Plains-Rocky Mountains – submitted by Shannon O’Lear**

Regional meeting: between me, the past Regional Councilor, Deb Thomas, and the Regional Meeting President Becky Buller (and Bob Watrel at South Dakota State U. who may have been involved with last year’s regional meeting...?) it was agreed to cancel this year’s regional meeting and not organize a virtual event. The AAG helped us to run a vote in the region in which there was strong support to have the University of Nebraska, Lincoln host the regional meeting in fall 2021 and retain Becky Buller in her position for that event. Michael Keables, the Chair of Geography at Denver University, agreed that his institution would then host the fall 2022 regional meeting.

I have no idea how COVID has affected geography programs in this region since I have not specifically been in touch with any institutions about that directly. However, as a sidebar, I’ve been working with Ken Foote to organize two webinar series this semester, one focused on Leadership issues and one focused on Early Career concerns. Our fourth of six events for the semester will be this Friday. These events have been very well attended (about 180 attendees at the first Leadership event with Alec Murphy, Marie Price, and Dave Kaplan, and more recently we had about 83 at an Early Career session on preparing for the tenure process). We have coordinated these events with regional meetings when we can. We will continue this webinar series in the spring with three more events each with Leadership and Early Career topics. That effort is motivated, in large part, by the Covid disruption of normal networking and interactions at regional meetings. The strong attendance at all of the events so far suggests that these sessions are meeting some needs out there!

### **Middle Atlantic – no report**

### **Middle States – submitted by Lindsay Naylor**

We worked very closely with Oscar Larson to hold a virtual meeting. There were 67 registrants at final count. There were 6 paper sessions with 4 presentations each and a single poster session with 14 posters. There were two keynote talks, a COVID-19 on Long Island panel, facilitated networking session, and regional geography bowl. We gave out paper and poster awards to both graduate and undergraduate attendees. We have not held elections for our regional board to date.

### **New England-St. Lawrence Valley – submitted by Richard Kujawa**

The annual conference for NESTVAL is being hosted by Salem State University on November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. The meeting is being run on a virtual basis. In cooperation with the AAG Central office, registration and submission of abstracts has been handled by the AAG. The theme for the meeting is Coasts, Climate Change, and the Future. There will be a Geography Bowl, a keynote titled “Creating a Living Coastal Shoreline in Salem MA as We Enter the Climate Crisis”, concurrent paper sessions, and a competition for student papers and posters.

### **Pacific Coast – submitted by Yolonda Youngs**

Pacific Coast region and the Association of Pacific Coast Geographers (APCG) cancelled our division meeting this year due to ongoing travel and health concerns related to the COVID-19 pandemic. We will hold a meeting next year, in 2022, hosted by CSU San Marcos in San Marcos, California (date TBA). The *Yearbook* of the APCG and our newsletter *Pacifica* will be published in the 2020 - 2021 year. Geography programs in our region seem to be doing well. An assessment of the region will be sent from the AAG Regional Councilor to department chairs in the region in early Spring 2021.

### **Southeastern – submitted by Selima Sultana**

The SEDAAG 2020 virtual meeting will be held from Nov. 6–7, 2020 with 94 total paper and poster submissions, and 173 registered conference attendees. This year’s submission total is 44% of the submission total that was received in 2019 for the Wilmington, NC meeting. However, registration and paper/poster submission totals were more than what SEDAAG had expected for a virtual meeting. Submissions came from a wider range of academic and professional geographers (e.g., USDA, local planning commissions and smaller colleges) than in most years, but the majority of these were from the graduate students. Fifteen paper/panel sessions and the World Geography Bowl are scheduled. The meeting will end with the Awards Ceremony and AAG President Amy Lobben will be the Guest Speaker. The SEDAAG membership has dropped substantially, likely because membership is often tied to meeting registration. The 2021 Meeting will be in Florence, AL – NOV 21–22, 2021 and the 2022 meeting will be in Atlanta, GA.

*Southeastern Geographer*, the flagship journal of the SEDAAG since 1961 published by the University of North Carolina Press the journal has encouraged submission from geographers spanning the spectrum of career development from graduate students, early- through late-career faculty, and even retired faculty and continues to do so. The journal is published quarterly in both online and traditional hard copy format and highly regarded in the region and broadly read including internationally. The editorial teams have been actively trying to close the gender gap in publications by women as first authors and they have been successful so far. During the past five years (2016–2020), the number (46 percent) of publications by women as first authors in *Southeastern Geographer* is above the gender distributions of current (2018) female faculty (34.6 percent) and closely matches that of female graduate students (47.5 percent) in college and university geography departments.

The geography programs across the region have been impacted by changes in the higher education landscape, and by the Covid-19 pandemic, and some are faring better than others. While larger and mid-size programs (with graduate programs) are still steady, smaller programs (e.g., Emory & Henry College in VA) in some places are suffering with faculty layoffs despite their stable enrollment and growing interest in geography courses. Loss of faculty members at institution means their offerings will decline for the foreseeable future until the position can be replaced. Some geography programs have been dissolved (e.g., Concord University in West Virginia, Morehead University, KY). Some geography



programs (e.g., University of Southern Mississippi and Western Kentucky University) are integrated into new Schools and renamed and have seen a continued decline in the numbers of faculty, especially human geography faculty. Along with the restructuring, curricular revisions have occurred. At the same time, the stress level of geographers is high with the ongoing budget cuts, particularly given that in some places, geography programs are being scrutinized more closely due to the lack of understanding about the value of geographic education and research.

All departments reported that geography graduates are well placed in jobs associated with GIS/RS and related fields such as in planning, marketing, city and state regulators and policy makers, surveyors, construction, defense intelligence, precision agriculture, and locational analysis. PhD graduates have found positions in research institutions including faculty appointments. In general, students tend to find more jobs in geospatial-related positions.

#### **Southwestern – submitted by Michaela Buenemann**

SWAAG has been working closely with the AAG to hold a virtual meeting November 17-19. The theme for the meeting is “Anywhere and Nowhere”. In addition to paper and poster sessions, a number of special events will be held, including: student paper and poster competitions; a World Geography Bowl; virtual field trips; a graduate school roundtable; AAG workshops on “What's in a Name? Undergraduate Student Perceptions of Geography, Environment, and Sustainability Key Words and Program Names” and “Getting the Word Out about Geography: how to extend your work beyond the academy”; and invited presentations by Emily Yeh, AAG Vice President, and Serena Prammanasuhd, United We Dream OKC. The originally planned in-person meeting in Oklahoma City has been postponed to 2021. The New Mexico Doctoral Program in Geography, a team effort by the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of New Mexico and the Department of Geography at New Mexico State University, was launched in Fall 2020 and has a cohort of ten students.

#### **West Lakes – submitted by Woonsop Choi**

This year’s regional division meeting, organized by Stacey Brown-Amilian (Southern Illinois University Edwardsville), will take place virtually on 13 November. A special issue of *International Journal of Geospatial and Environmental Research* composed of articles from the 2019 West Lakes Regional Division meeting has been published and is [available here](#). As part of DePaul's COVID-19 research initiative, Geography professor Euan Hague and GIS Coordinator Cassie Follett will examine COVID-19's disproportionate impact on lower-income communities of color with colleagues at Rush University.