

### Appendix 3:

#### AAG Regional Division Reports, presented at Spring 2019 AAG Council Meeting

##### Association of Pacific Coast Geographers Spring 2019 REPORT

The 2018 annual meeting was held in Reno, NV. Much of the meeting took place within the Joe Crowley Student Union—a building named for the late Joe Crowley who was President at UNR for 25 years and, from our APCG perspective, the older brother of APCG stalwart and former president, Bill Crowley. In numbers: 115 papers; 40 posters; approximately \$12,000 awarded to students; and tons of fun ☺ Two students from California State University-Long Beach split the AAG award for graduate students: Katie Wade and Katherine Georges. We are delighted that AAG President—and APCG native— Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach attended the meeting.

The locations for the next three annual meetings have been determined: 2019: Flagstaff, Arizona 2020: San Marcos, California 2021: Bellingham, Washington

The 2019 meeting in Flagstaff will be held October 16th through the 19th. Flagstaff is close to Grand Canyon National Park, and 2019 is the centennial year of the establishment of Grand Canyon as a U.S. National Park. AAG could mark this historic occasion by holding its fall council meeting at Flagstaff. AAG specialty groups could also be encouraged to participate in the APCG meeting and field trips. The MA program at California State University, Long Beach, received “Honorable Mention” in the 2019 MA/MS Program Excellence Award category. Our congratulations to the wonderful team of faculty and students at CSULB. (For additional information, contact Christine Jocoy: [Christine.Jocoy@csulb.edu](mailto:Christine.Jocoy@csulb.edu)) At a time of worries over geography departments and programs being downsized, Geography at Portland State University has been growing. The Department added two new faculty members, bringing the total number of faculty to 15. (For more updates on this healthy department, contact Heejun Chang, [changh@pdx.edu](mailto:changh@pdx.edu), or read the [newsletter](#).) San Marcos, which will host the 2020 meeting, will formally inaugurate a new Geography major that academic year.

The APCG newsletter, *Pacifica*, which is published twice-a-year (fall and spring) has a lot more details about the activities in the region, and typically also includes at least one featured article. (For additional information, contact Lily House Peters: [lily.housepeters@csulb.edu](mailto:lily.housepeters@csulb.edu).) The annual journal, *Yearbook*, is timed for the annual meeting; it will be Volume 81 in 2019. (For additional information, contact Craig S. Revels: [craig.revels@cwu.edu](mailto:craig.revels@cwu.edu).)

A Regional Councilor will be elected later this spring. After the elections are completed, APCG’s president or secretary will update AAG with the name and contact information of the newly elected Councilor.

Submitted by Sriram Khé, Regional Councilor

## **East Lakes Division Regional Councilor Report Spring 2019 AAG Council**

**Bowling Green State University.** Department of Geography. School of the Earth, Environment and Society. Dr. Karen Johnson-Webb, Associate Professor.

We celebrated Geography Awareness Week having a set up in the Student Union that included students and faculty, real time weather maps, geoquizzes and information about the major.

Dr. Arthur N. Samuel, Chair and Dr. Karen D. Johnson-Webb were selected to be trained as faculty allies, by the BGSU ALLIES program. This is a three-year, \$984,484 project funded by the NSF's ADVANCE program, which seeks to develop systemic approaches to increase the participation and advancement of women in academic STEM careers. The goal of the program is to change institutional structures that prevent the advancement of women, rather than "changing" women faculty. To that end, BGSU ALLIES is developing a strong network of inclusive leaders at the ranks of department chairs, directors, deans, and senior administrators, as well as faculty allies who actively support gender equity, diversity, and inclusion. The faculty allies and inclusive leaders will work together to remove institutional barriers and reduce biases that hinder the career advancement of women and faculty of color.

**Calvin College.** Department of Geology, Geography, and Environmental Studies. Dr. Mark Bjelland, Co-Chair.

Calvin College will become Calvin University on 7/10/2019.

GIS continues to be critical to the success of the department. In summer 2018, we requested a replacement position for a retiring faculty member. We were turned down in the initial allocation of faculty positions. However, we succeeded in the second round in getting the replacement faculty line—but only because of growth in the geospatial area and the Provost's excitement about GIS. So, our position description was amended to include sharing in teaching responsibilities for the GIS program

We had two undergraduate students present their research at the 2018 regional AAG meeting (West Lakes). Three students presented at the 2018 national AAG meeting, and three will present at the 2019 national AAG meeting.

**Eastern Michigan University.** Department of Geography & Geology. Dr. Rick Sambrook, Department Head.

In December 2018, the department moved back into the Strong Building after an 18 month, \$40 million renovation project. As part of the process, we were also able to move the Institute for Geographic Research and Education (IGRE), a highly successful institute on EMU's campus, back to the Strong Building, bringing all of the Geography components of the department back together on one floor. The department also retains several Earth Science upper division laboratory classrooms and several research laboratories in the decade old Mark Jefferson annex all of which now forms a completed Science Complex housed in LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified buildings.

Meteorologist Dr. Tom Kovacs was appointed the inaugural Chair of EMU's Sustainability Commission. The official opening and dedication of the Strong Building was held on Thursday, February 7th and was

followed by a highly successful “Because of You” event for EMU's top donors in the atrium of the renovated building. During the event, faculty and student members staged laboratory experiments and demonstrations to the great delight and enjoyment of our donor guests.

Our replacement faculty position request for a Resiliency Planner was ranked 4th out of ten ranked requests in the College of Arts & Sciences. We are very optimistic we will be searching for either a Resiliency Planner or Sustainability Science faculty member during the coming academic year.

Geography-GIS faculty Dr. Xining Yang is a co-PI (with faculty in the College of Health & Human Services) on a CDC grant with a focus on spatial aspects of chronic health issues among Asian American populations in the U.S.

**Michigan State University.** Department of Geography, Environment, & Spatial Sciences. Dr. Alan Arbogast, Chair.

David Roy and Geoff Henebry from South Dakota State have joined the department in the past year.

MSU had a successful search for a new coastal geomorphologist this spring. Ethan Theuerkauf from the Illinois State Geological Survey will join the department in August.

Dr. Julie Winkler won the William J. Beal Outstanding Faculty Award at MSU this spring.

**University of Toledo.** Department of Geography and Planning. Dr. Patrick Lawrence, Chair.

UT is now offering a non-thesis track to their MA Geography degree and is considering adding a new BS GeoScience degree in the future.

Along with Bowling Green State University and Owens Community College, we received an AAG/GTU Visiting Geographic Scientist Program Grant and hosted Dr. Derek Alderman on February 14-15, 2019. He met with our faculty and students and give a research colloquium presentation.

**Western Michigan University.** Department of Geography. Benjamin Ofori-Amoah, Chair.

Successes:

Geography received special mention at the March meetings of WMU Faculty Senate and the WMU Board of Trustees for winning the 2019 AAG Academic Program Excellence Award for MA/MS programs.

Dr. Lucius Hallett, Undergraduate Advisor, has won this year's Western Michigan College of Arts and Sciences Undergraduate Advising Excellence Award.

Mary Lou Brooks, Geography Administrative Assistant, won this year's College of Arts & Sciences Dean Appreciation Award.

We have successfully hired two tenure-track positions over the past two years. Last year's hire was for GIScience/Drone applications, and this year's was a conversion of a 12-year Latin American term position to a tenure-track position.

Two years ago, the Department of Geography voted to change its name to Geography, Environment, and Tourism, to better reflect what we do and offer as a department. However, the Institute of Environment & Sustainability felt that this was intruding upon its turf. Last fall, we started collaborating with the new Director of the Institute and formed a consortium of three environmental program units - Geography, Geological and Environmental Sciences, and Environment & Sustainability, to find ways to work together. Last month we finally got a letter of support from the Institute for our name change. If the paperwork goes through we will be known as the Department of Geography, Environment, and Tourism (GET).

Challenges:

Our student enrollment has been unsteady. We need to do a better job recruiting undergraduate majors.

We have a couple of very low enrollment courses that sometimes lead to class cancellations.

Our graduate assistantship allocation has stayed flat to the point that we now support more graduate students from our department endowments than the university, and this is not sustainable.

Two big changes are on the horizon at Western Michigan University - the first is a complete overhaul of the general education courses which will be introduced next academic year (AY2019-2020) and the second is implementation of a responsibility centered management (RCM) budget model to be implemented in AY2020-2021. We have strategically participated well in both. In the general education overhaul, Geography was the first department on campus to submit all of its new course proposals to a college committee, and for that reason we received special mention at the university level, and we have Geography faculty serving on both College and University Committees reviewing the proposals. With respect to the RCM budget model, I took it upon myself to chair the college task force committee to look into how the model will impact Arts & Sciences. There are still uncertainties about how the implementation of these two changes will impact Geography.

Respectfully submitted by,

Karen D. Johnson-Webb, East Lakes Division Regional Councilor

## Middle Atlantic Division

### Report for the Spring 2019 AAG Council Meeting

MAD had a successful annual meeting at Morgan State University on November 2-3, 2018. The theme this year was Bridging Divides: Places, People, and the Environment. We had 20 presenters and 87 registered attendees, and the keynote address was given by my AAG President Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach with the AAG National Council in attendance. MAD's Advancing Geography Meritorious Award (MAGMA) was given to Charollette Masoncup, an undergraduate at Frostburg State University. Molly Pickel of Towson University was given the annual AAG Council Award for Outstanding Graduate Student Paper. The title of her paper and presentation was "Navigating Māori Fishing Rights under the Quota Management System."

The next annual meeting will be held on November 15, 2019, at the U.S. Geological Survey Water Science Center in Catonsville, Maryland.

With the retirement of Vice-Chair Martha Geores from the University of Maryland – College Park and the end of the term approaching for Michael Ratcliffe of the U.S. Census Bureau as Division Chair, we will be holding an election this year to select their replacements. We thank them for their dedicated service to the Division over the past several years.

Respectfully submitted by

Rebecca Kelly, MAD Regional Councilor

### **Middle States Division Spring 2019 AAG Council Report**

The Middle States Division Report will be brief as responses to requests for updates from units and programs were lacking.

This councilor is pleased to report that the division is maintaining its peer-reviewed journal, which is now in its 50<sup>th</sup> volume and we have an e-newsletter that reaches our registered members.

Our current President, Pankaj Lal reports: This past fall, we hosted our annual meeting at Montclair State University. More than 194 attendees this year were treated to paper and poster sessions highlighting and disseminating cutting edge research by students and faculty, as well as outreach sessions for academic growth. With scientific research proving more valuable and urgent than ever, the poster and paper sessions of the attendees were a heartening sneak peek at upcoming research by faculty, graduate

students, and undergraduate students alike. Presenters from the Middle States region as well as from as far as Jamaica, furthered their research and gave insightful presentations on a number of topics.

Papers and posters, while impressive, were certainly not the only events of note during the conference. Because we face many persistent problems as geographers, this conference hosted several panels, meant to bring experts in the field to the forefront to discuss solutions and activities. Though these panels were made up of expert academics in their respective fields, in order to gain broader perspective, MSAAG also invited speakers from outside academia, including the NJ Department of Environmental Protection, the NJ Board of Public Utilities amongst others. These panels were open to all attendees, and included discussions on clean energy, the future of food, and integrating public concerns into research. Perhaps most relevant to students and faculty were panel sessions by Antoinette Winklerprins of the National Science Foundation (NSF). Her interactive panels were designed to help attendees improve their proposals for NSF grants, and offer some insight into the processes that can potentially grant huge boons to any researcher. To close out the conference, John Wertman of AAG was in attendance to give the keynote speech, delivering congratulations to those in attendance and his take on the future of the field.

Also, in our region, an MSAAG member from the City of Philadelphia reported that the City of Philadelphia has rolled out 3 new processes that are geographic/GIS-based. The City of Philadelphia's "Asset Intelligence" program is based on applied geography and GIS. They also have a GIS-based asset management application (Called IWAMS – Integrated Workplace Asset Management System), a CAD-to-GIS Building modelling and space management application and a Multivariate-Geostatistically based tool that analyzes capital program decisions for police and fire departments in the city. Additionally, the asset management system has been named one of the critical application to the new "Smart City Philadelphia" roadmap. Our member provided links to the article and roadmap, which can be found below:

Article: <https://technical.ly/philly/2019/02/05/phillys-brand-new-roadmap-to-becoming-a-smart-city-is-a-long-term-one/>

Actual Smart City Roadmap: <https://www.phila.gov/media/20190204121858/SmartCityPHL-Roadmap.pdf>

The University of Delaware is also pleased to announce a new hire in human geography at the Assistant Professor level: Dr. Julie Klinger will join us in the spring of 2020.

Respectfully submitted by Middle States Regional Councilor, Lindsay Naylor.

### **Regional Councilor Report from the New England-St. Lawrence Valley Division (NESTVAL) for the Spring 2019 Meeting of the AAG Council**

**Last Annual Meeting:** NESTVAL held its annual meeting on October 12-13, 2018 at Keene State College in Keene, NH. The meeting began on Friday afternoon with a World Geography Bowl competition between six teams, coordinated by Prof. Stephen Young of Salem State University for the 12<sup>th</sup> year in a row; UNH won the competition with Southern Connecticut State University receiving the runner-up trophy. On Saturday AAG President Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach gave the keynote address. Several awards were announced at the annual Business Meeting including the AAG Council Award for outstanding graduate research paper, the David Frost Undergraduate student paper award, the NESTVAL Student

Research poster award, and the Faculty Research Grant. The Division's annual peer-reviewed journal, *The Northeastern Geographer*, had recently put out a Call for Papers for its 11<sup>th</sup> volume to be published in 2019. The journal is edited by Steven Silvern of Salem State University. **Councilor John Hayes** reported there were several recent name changes among departments in the region:

Westfield State - Geography, Planning and Sustainability

Keene State - Geography, Outdoor Recreation and Planning

Bishops University (in Quebec, Canada) - Environmental Studies and Geography

Southern Conn. State (as a result of a merger) - Environment, Geography, and Marine Sciences

NESTVAL Treasurer, Tim LeDoux, reported a healthy balance of just over \$12,500 in the combined checking and savings account of NESTVAL.

**Upcoming Annual Meetings of NESTVAL:** The Fall 2019 annual meeting will be held at Framingham State University on October 18-19. The local program chair is George Bentley of FSU. The planning is well underway with more information to be reported at our April 27 meeting of the NESTVAL Executive Board. The 2020 annual meeting will be held in Salem, MA and hosted by the Geography Department of Salem State University.

**Call for Nominations to Elect New Regional Councilor:** NESTVAL Vice President Darren Bardati has issued a Call for Nominations to the membership via email. Nominations, including self-nominations, are due by midnight (11:59 PM) of April 5. The election will be conducted via email shortly after the CFN deadline has passed. The voting period will be across five business days. Councilor John Hayes' three year term ends on June 30, 2019.

**Request for Proposals for the 2019 Faculty Research Grant Competition and the 2019 Master's Thesis Research Grant Competition:** NESTVAL provides support for geographic or geo-information science-based research in the form of grants up to \$750 to faculty performing research in any geographic specialty and who are full-time members of a geography or geo-information science program within a four-year college or university in the NESTVAL region. NESTVAL also provides support for master's thesis research in the form of small grants of up to \$500 to Master's candidates of any geographic specialty attending a graduate program of geography or geo-information science in the NESTVAL region. The deadline for completed applications for both of these awards programs is May 15, 2019. Information, including application forms, are available at the NESTVAL website and also from VP Bardati.

**World Geography Bowl Team for AAG-DC Meeting:** NESTVAL Secretary Patrick May has organized NESTVAL's World Geography Bowl team to compete at this year's 2019 annual AAG meeting. NESTVAL contributes money to each team member to support their travel, in addition to the support from the AAG.

**Annual Peer-Reviewed Journal:** NESTVAL continues to publish its peer-reviewed journal, *The Northeastern Geographer*. Volume 10 (2018) has gone to the printer and will soon be mailed out to Full Members of NESTVAL. Planning for Volume 11 is ongoing and looking good. A Call for Papers went out last Fall and this winter. The journal is available on EBSCO and the early volumes are available at the NESTVAL website - although Editor Silvern informs me that he has tried to have more volumes put on our website.

**Newsletter:** NESTVAL has had an annual Newsletter on a sporadic basis over the past 20+ years. Councilor Hayes was editor back in the mid-to late 1990's. The Division is hoping to recruit an e-newsletter editor to continue this important tradition and service to the organization.

**Website:** NESTVAL's website can be found at: <http://aagnostval.wpengine.com/>

**Report from RI State Rep, Mark Motte:** Rhode Island College continues to be the home of the only geography program in Rhode Island. Mark is Director of the Geography Program, faculty advisor to RIC's student government, academic advisor to the Social Science Educators' Association, and a member of the College Council (RIC's faculty senate). Mark was recently appointed by the RI governor's office to the Technical and Policy Committee of the State Planning Council. Professor Seth Dixon serves as Chief Reader of the AP Human Geography Program. Seth has ended his leadership of the RI Geographic Alliance which (as in many parts of the NESTVAL region) has been dissolved as a result of the cessation of funding from the National Geographic Society. Seth also maintains and hosts the website: [geographyeducation.org](http://geographyeducation.org).

**Respectfully submitted by John Hayes, NESTVAL Regional Councilor**

### **Southeastern Division (SEDAAG) Report for AAG Council: Spring 2019**

Held in Johnson City, TN and hosted by East Tennessee State University, the 2018 SEDAAG meeting was a success, with 312 attending, more than half of whom were students. The meeting featured more than 30 paper and panel sessions and nearly 80 posters. Our invited banquet speaker, Dr. Marshall Shepherd (Univ. of Georgia), was a big success, as was a walking tour of Johnson City that focused on flood mitigation strategies and urban redevelopment. The upcoming annual meeting is scheduled for Nov 24-25, 2019, in Wilmington, NC, with local arrangements handled by the Univ. of North Carolina – Wilmington. Future meetings will also include Florence, AL (2020). SEDAAG membership currently stands at roughly 350.

At the annual Business Meeting, Dr. Joann Mossa (SEDAAG President) announced an editorial transition of the *Southeastern Geographer* effective in summer 2019. She particularly acknowledged the efforts made by outgoing editors, Hilda Kurtz and Deepak Mishra, for improving the journal in many ways, including taking steps towards getting an impact factor, increasing its global visibility (with downloads from 82 countries), and financial success (providing financial returns to SEDAAG). The new editors will be Drs. Selima Sultana and Paul Knapp of UNC Greensboro. Dr. Mossa also announced the election results, including these new officers: Bill Graves (Vice-President) and Shrinidhi Ambinakudige (Secretary). In response to concerns raised by AAG Executive Director Doug Richardson, Dr. Mossa and I presented revisions to the SEDAAG by-laws that would bring the process for electing our Regional Councilor into compliance with the methods used by other regions. Specifically, this will involve opening the voting process to all AAG members located within the region, not just those who are members of SEDAAG. We also approved creation of a new award for Excellence in Undergraduate Mentoring to go along with existing awards recognizing excellence in research, teaching, and service.

*Southeastern Geographer*, the official journal of SEDAAG, has been published since 1962 and has been distributed by the University of North Carolina Press since 2004. Published quarterly in both online and

traditional hard copy formats, the journal emphasizes geographic research that engages with conditions and events in “the south”, broadly construed, as they relate to conditions and events that extend over broader geographical reaches. In 2018, it included a Special Forum titled “In the Aftermath of the Hate Rally in Charlottesville”. An internal analysis of citation metrics showed that *Southeastern Geographer* compares favorably to other journals focused on global regions.

Around the region, the health of departments continues to be variable. Among larger graduate programs (e.g., Tennessee, South Carolina, Virginia Tech, Mississippi State), state representatives were generally optimistic about the state of their departments. Similarly, a number of undergraduate or undergraduate/masters programs reported stable or even increasing enrollments (e.g., James Madison, Mary Washington, Marshall, Richmond, Radford, Western Carolina). On the other hand, the Department of Geography and Geology at Southern Mississippi was absorbed into a new School of Biological, Environmental, and Ecological Sciences and will no longer be offering a PhD after completion of students currently enrolled in the program (the undergraduate program will continue). The Kentucky representative noted that graduate programs within the state were healthy, but that undergraduate enrollment and majors were declining at many of the smaller programs within the state. Not surprisingly, the state of individual units across the region often reflected the ‘territory’ of the unit on its home campus, that is, how Geography was positioned vis a vis interdisciplinary programs and technology offerings (e.g., GIS degrees, certificates).

Along with Dr. Mossa, I tried to get additional information on the state of geography at community colleges and other 2-year institutions across the region. This is difficult because geography is rarely offered as a degree program at such institutions. Responses generally indicated our presence in one of two ways: 1) more commonly, through offerings that satisfy general education requirements in human and/or physical geography, and 2) less commonly, as courses or even degrees focused on geospatial technology (e.g., GIS: Central Georgia Technical College and Roane State Community College; Geospatial Science & Technology: Mountwest Community and Technical College). Most programs had only 1 or 2 geography faculty. The issue of geography’s “place” at schools that don’t explicitly offer geography degrees (including both 2- and 4- year institutions) is one that several representatives have identified as being important for the health and growth of the discipline, a position with which I strongly agree. At least within SEDAAG, a number of schools without explicit Geography degrees reported growth in geography offerings, especially in states such as South Carolina and Virginia.

One issue that was raised in the state reports was a potential disinterest or disconnect between members and member departments with SEDAAG. This was evidenced by a lack of participation in the regional meeting (in favor of AAG or discipline specific meetings) and the poor response rates to annual requests from SEDAAG for information from certain member departments. This issue, of course, is not new and is something that our incoming president has stated he will explore. However, the fact that such concerns exist even in SEDAAG, which hosts one of the largest annual regional meetings and is widely perceived as being one of the most active of all AAG regions, underscores the urgency of the problem.

Respectfully submitted by-  
John Kupfer, SEDAAG Councilor

## **Regional Councilor Report from the Southwest Division of the American Association of Geographers (SWAAG), 25 March 2019**

**Last Annual Meeting.** SWAAG's last annual meeting was held 4-6 October 2018 in Baton Rouge and hosted by Louisiana State University. The meeting had about 160 attendees, 22 paper and poster sessions, and a field trip. SWAAG also ran successful student paper and poster competitions at the undergraduate and graduate levels as well as a GeoBowl competition. AAG President Sheryl Luzzadder-Beach gave a keynote address during one luncheon; student awards were given during another luncheon. SWAAG had a healthy budget of > \$15,000 at the time of the annual meeting.

**Upcoming Annual Meetings.** SWAAG's 2019 annual meeting will be held 10-12 October 2019 at the Sheraton Hotel in downtown Fort Worth, TX and hosted by Texas Christian University. The planning for the meeting is well underway and going smoothly. SWAAG is currently discussing a joint meeting between SWAAG and the Southwestern Social Science Association (SSSA) in 2020 in Austin, TX. No major logistical issues have been identified and SWAAG is expecting to start co-organizing the meeting in January 2020.

**Student Awards.** In addition to the best undergraduate and graduate paper and poster awards at the annual meeting, SWAAG awarded three summer research scholarships and three travel scholarships in 2018. These scholarships were established in 2017 and awarded for the first time in 2018. SWAAG received 11 applications for the 2019 SWAAG Summer Field Research Scholarships and is planning to announce the winners in early April.

**GeoBowl.** SWAAG Chair Matt Fry organized the SWAAG Geobowl team for the 2019 AAG meeting in Washington, DC. SWAAG has six students from four universities who will represent the division. SWAAG, with support from the AAG, will reimburse each student \$300 after the meeting.

**GeoBowl Buzzers.** In April, SWAAG will purchase its own buzzers for its annual regional GeoBowl competition.

**Journal.** SWAAG continues to publish its peer-reviewed journal, *The Southwestern Geographer*, which is now available online at <https://bit.ly/2HSRikT>. The journal's editorial team consists of John Tiefenbacher (Texas State University, Senior Editor) and Erik Prout (Texas A&M University; Co-Editor). There is one volume per year; the latest volume, Volume 21, was completed in 2018.

**Newsletter.** SWAAG also continues to publish its annual newsletter prior to each annual meeting. The last newsletter was published in 2018. All newsletters are available online at <http://www.sw-aag.org/news.html>. Newsletter editing is the duty of SWAAG's Secretary.

**Website.** SWAAG's website at <http://www.sw-aag.org> provides information on the annual meeting, journal, bylaws, minutes, newsletters, scholarships, past and current officers, regional departments, and more.

**Social Media.** SWAAG is on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/southwestaag/>.

Respectfully submitted by Michaela Buenemann, SWAAG Regional Councilor, with contributions from Matt Fry, SWAAG Chair



## West Lakes Division Report for the Spring 2019 AAG Council Meeting

### Division news

- John Kelly (2017-18 Chair) has submitted the revised version of WLDAAG bylaw to AAG Council for approval. It is included in the Spring 2019 Council meeting agenda
- Bingqing Liang (University of Northern Iowa) is the current Chair to help host the 2019 WLDAAG at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls, IA on Oct 24-26. The conference website will be live soon
- Stacey Borwn-Amilian (Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville) is the current Vice-chair
- The 2020 division meeting will be hosted by Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville. The dates are TBD.

### Program changes

- DePaul University Department of Geography rolled out the graduate GIS certificate, building upon its existing geotechnology major concentration for undergrads and an undergraduate certificate (self-reported)
- Indiana State University has a new undergraduate program in Geography and Sustainability, a new Accelerated 4+1 Masters program in Geography and Sustainability, and a revised traditional two-year Masters in Geography and Sustainability (self-reported)
- Western Illinois University's Geography and GIS undergraduate program has been included in the list of programs for elimination recommended by the Provost to the Board of Trustees. Multiple layoff notices have been sent to the faculty in the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and GIS (WIUM Tristates Public Radio)
- In November 2018, Chancellor of the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point proposed a restructuring plan named 'Point Forward' to the University's Common Council that included the elimination of all emphases within the Geography (BS) major. The Consultative Committee of the Common Council convened to respond to the proposal released a report in March 2019 countering the findings and recommendation to Point Forward. (relevant documents)

### Individual accomplishments

- DePaul University's Alex Papadopoulos has been awarded the 2019 AAG Harm de Blij Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching and an undergraduate student Chris Silber will be participating in the World geography Bowl at the AAG in DC this year. Associate Professor Winifred Curran became the first female chair in the department's 70-year history (self-reported)
- The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee's Mark Schwartz has been included in the 2019 class of AAG Fellows (AAG Newsletter)

Respectfully submitted by Woonsup Choi, Regional Councilor for West Lakes Division

## Spring 2019 Great Plains Rocky Mountains Division report – Deborah Thomas, Regional Councilor

- Fall 2018 meeting will be hosted by Kansas State University in Manhattan, KS on Oct 5-6.
- Fall 2017 meeting in Grand Forks was a relatively small meeting, though with high quality papers
  - Normally Canadian geographers would join this meeting because of the proximity, but declined to travel due to current U.S. immigration policies
  - Student attendance as a proportion was strong, particularly from smaller regional schools who might not attend a meeting further away
  - The physical expanse of the region with this location being on the fringe also likely reduced attendance.
- Regionally, geospatial courses/programs, as well as environmental courses, are enrolling well and are sustaining, and sometimes expanding, programs.
- State budget cuts to higher education impact programs in several states. Higher education is experiencing significant cuts in Kansas; in Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Lincoln's geography program was identified for potential closure (this has a PhD program, and they are currently seeking a new director).
- Several programs have had a number of retirements, affecting demographics in positive and challenging ways. For example, many programs are uncertain if they will be able to retain faculty lines in light of state budget cuts and/or enrollment challenges. Other programs will experience a substantial demographic shift, with few remaining senior faculty available for mentoring.
- There is needed attention to creating strategic initiatives for increasing faculty and student (undergraduate and graduate) diversity across most geography programs.
- The creation of interdisciplinary programs related to geography can bolster or diminish enrollments, depending how geography is positioned. In particular, several programs noted that when an interdisciplinary major related to geography and emphasizing human-environment interaction is established, the numbers of geography majors decreases.