



Spring 2021 AAG Council Meeting

Minutes

April 5 – 6

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Opening

Present

Executive Committee: Amy Lobben, *President*; Emily Yeh, *Vice President*; David Kaplan, *Past President*; LaToya Eaves, *Treasurer*; Karen D. Johnson-Webb, *Secretary*; Gary Langham, *Executive Director*.

National Councilors: Jennifer Collins, *Chair*; Meghan Cope, LaToya Eaves, Wendy Jepson, Wei Li, Joseph Oppong; *Student Councilor:* John (Jack) Swab.

Regional Division Councilors: Michaela Buenemann, *Chair* (Southwestern), Karen D. Johnson-Webb (East Lakes), Shannon O’Lear (Great Plains Rocky Mountains), Tracy Edwards (Middle Atlantic), Lindsay Naylor (Middle States), Richard Kujawa (New England St. Lawrence Valley), Yolonda Youngs (Pacific Coast), Selima Sultana (Southeastern), Woonsup Choi (West Lakes).

AAG Staff: Candida Mannozi, Director of Operations; and visiting: Teri Martin, Director of Finance and Accounting; Jennifer Cassidento, Publications Director.

April 5, 10:30 AM

Lobben welcomed the Councilmembers and expressed her happiness at seeing everyone and her disappointment at not being able to be meeting in person. She expressed her hopes that the Fall Council meeting will be in person.

Kujawa moved to adopt the Council Meeting Agenda, O’Lear seconded the motion. The Agenda was adopted by a unanimous vote.

Oppong moved to approve the Consent Agenda, which Collins seconded. The Consent Agenda was approved unanimously.

Li moved to ratify the previously approved Fall 2020 Council Meeting Minutes, O’Lear seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous vote.

Regional Division Updates

Buenemann updated the Council on the work of the task force developing streamlined reports for Departments and Regional Divisions. She stated they are working to finalize the surveys and templates and hope to have these done by mid-April. Kaplan endorsed the work done so far and indicated that these surveys/reports will be helpful also to the Healthy Departments. Committee and the AAG overall, as they are being created to centralize the various sets of questions into one or two forms to go out annually, rather than splintering the data-gathering efforts, thus risking lower participation.

Vice President’s Comments

Yeh echoed Lobben’s comments that she was glad to see everyone but lamented the fact that Council was not meeting in person. She also mentioned the disturbing spike in racially

motivated attacks in the country and hoped everyone was staying safe. She mentioned her work with Jepson on the Climate Action Task Force, as well as her work with the task force charged to revise the AAG Statement of Ethics, including the proposal to add a more regular review process for it into the future. Yeh stated being excited about developments at the AAG including enabling members to advocate with the AAG on climate and other issues. As an Asian-American woman she also mentioned her desire to see the AAG continue prioritizing equity and inclusion. Yeh also pointed out the Digital Divide COVID-19 Rapid Response Relief Program and her appreciation for how it allowed the AAG to reach out beyond its current members and partners to many other underserved programs.

State of the AAG

Langham greeted everyone and echoed Lobben's hope for a fall in-person Council meeting. He mentioned that the past year has been so extraordinary, that it bears going over. He stated that last spring the AAG was looking at a substantial drop in its holdings (down \$1.1M) but that by August AAG investments had recouped to a positive \$681,000, an extraordinary upswing. He mentioned that the cancellation of the 2020 meeting was a financial loss, though somewhat mitigated by an agreement worked out with the Denver hotels. Despite the losses of \$1.3M overall, he mentioned that the AAG received two rounds of the PPP (CARES Act) totaling \$882,000 which covered 5 months of AAG staff salary. He also mentioned that the fight for the cancellation insurance policy is still ongoing, so it is conceivable that if it were resolved favorably, the AAG could actually break even for FY2021. He reminded Council that the Summer 2020 Council meeting was held to adjust the originally approved budget to an austerity budget (cutting \$800,000 in costs and reallocating another \$800,000 from reserves) due to the pandemic and to allow rollout of the COVID-19 Rapid Response Relief Programs. The 19% drop in membership was lower than expected, though he stated that it still needs to be addressed. He also mentioned a Department of State contract that netted the AAG \$180,000 in income as well. With the markets being back in an upswing too, he stated that the AAG will not need to use the reallocated \$800,000 from the austerity budget, and that the AAG can return to a more typical budget for FYE2022. This would allow a return to staff raises, new hires, etc. Langham also stated that the 2021 virtual meeting has over 5,000 registrants (vs. last year's 2,500) almost 1,000 concurrent sessions and over 3,000 presentations. He also indicated that in a few days' time Councilors and attendees will all have a chance to take a sneak peek at the new AAG website (April 7, at 3:30 PM Eastern time). He stated that staff is very excited for the new membership database and the website. It will allow them to offer far more flexible, nimble, and improved services to AAG members with the hope that this will also help to grow and expand membership.

Kaplan thanked Langham for the overview and asked who registered "fresh" in the fall of 2020, as opposed to transferring their registration over from the cancelled 2020 Annual Meeting. Langham replied that 1,200 were transfers, so approximately 3,700 were new registrants. Cope suggested emphasizing raises for the AAG staff given all the hard work they did in the past year.

Looking at the possible drop in memberships and the better-than-expected financial outcomes, she wondered whether costs for membership and meeting registrations might be lowered to broaden the net and encourage grad students to (re)join. Langham agreed that this is what is next for the Council to consider. He stated being very troubled that the drop in members is 3 out of 4 in the <75K income member category. He pointed to one of the COVID programs that supports graduate students' memberships and he stated he would like to argue for expanding that particular program as part of the response. He also hoped that the NYC 2022 meeting might be the occasion to revisit the AAG membership structure, following a business analysis which he would submit to Council.

Naylor asked whether the AAG's membership loss has been compared to other organizations. Langham stated that yes, the membership loss seems to follow a more general pattern. Li supported Cope's suggestion for staff raises. She asked Kaplan whether the AAG announcement that the 2021 Seattle meeting would go online affected registrations? She also asked Langham about the loss of grad students and suggested surveying Department Chairs as to what they are facing, in order to get more ground-up information on what is happening. Kaplan stated that the decision to go online was taken at the Fall Council meeting. For Li's second point he stated that this is part of the effort Buenemann is working on with the regional and departmental surveys, to hold these surveys annually, and to make them easy to complete. Langham stated that one of the considerations for that effort is how to reflect/represent departments online, regardless of whether they subscribe (and pay) to be listed in the *Guide to Geography Programs*, which is a line of income for the AAG.

Yeh asked about divesting from fossil fuels and how far along the AAG has gone in that. Langham replied that the AAG is invested in some socially responsible funds and that this was something that the Finance Committee discussed, as well as taking a closer look at the fees associated with some of our investments.

Kaplan cautioned from making too many projections about some of the membership number drops due to the extraordinary nature of the year we have all been through. Sultana echoed this from the SEDAAG Region's perspective. Jepson asked whether the new website and management system will help de-link meeting registration from membership renewals. Langham stated that yes, there are plans to do just that and to encourage and incentivize renewals or joins separately from the Annual Meeting. He pointed to the webinar and workshop offerings that are now scheduled throughout the year, behind the membership wall, as a first way to incentivize members not let their membership lapse.

Oppong pointed out that a good price point is more important than too low a price for registration or membership.

Finance

Langham invited Eaves to summarize the March Finance Committee (FC) meeting. Eaves indicated that the Finance Committee (FC) also discussed the health of the discipline at its meeting. She stated that the AAG's COVID-19 Rapid Response Relief Programs were beneficial for many. She also stated that the AAG's Investment Advisor at Truist underscored the strength of the AAG's holdings as an underpinning for the AAG's financial health. She thanked Langham and AAG Director of Finance and Accounting, Teri Martin, for the transparent documentation that was provided for the meeting and the auditor's positive comments such as, "The Association will come out strong on the other side of the pandemic."

She stated that the holdings the AAG does have that are environmentally/socially responsible have performed well, but it may be reaching the maximum point in their yields. She stated that the FC recommends to Council to approve returning to a normal budget for FYE2022.

She also updated the Council on a task force that will look at the fees currently associated with the AAG's investments.

Langham pointed out that Martin had joined the meeting and thanked her for all her hard work, especially for getting such high marks from the auditors in a year in which not only did the accounting rules undergo enormous changes, but the AAG staff had also to manually process over 6,000 registration cancellations.

Johnson-Webb encouraged the Council to emphasize climate change-related concerns over the benefits of maximization of profits. Yeh strongly echoed this sentiment. Eaves replied that the Finance Committee sees this as an ongoing conversation too. Kaplan also stated that the more socially and environmentally conscious investments appear generally to be performing well. Langham agreed with the statements and reminded Council that these considerations are all part of a balancing act to ensure that the AAG's financial stability is not jeopardized by too many changes on different fronts at once.

Swab asked about the fees associated with our investments and whether those could be reallocated into more socially conscious funds, for instance?

As for membership, Yeh stated that the dearth of physical geography related articles in the *Annals* may also be a factor for lower numbers.

Kaplan moved to approve the AAG's Audited 2020 Financial Statement and FYE2022 Budget, Oppong seconded the motion, which passed with 17 votes in favor and one abstention.

Event Cancellation Lawsuit

Langham updated the Council on the event cancellation lawsuit.

COVID-19 Rapid Response Relief Programs Y2

Langham summarized that the AAG spent approximately half of what the Council originally allocated (i.e., \$900,000). He pointed out that staff developed three recommendations that

could slightly adjust/alter the programs being continued in Year 2. The internship program, for instance, did not see much participation and it was discovered that it might open the AAG up to possible legal liability that ought to be avoided. He indicated that staff also recommend expanding the membership program to include a longer timeframe for eligibility and to also include all members in the under \$75,000 income category. The third recommendation was to use the yet unspent funds to expand the Methods Training program.

General discussion.

Swab asked whether some of the funds could be used to fund AAG interns, instead? Swab stated that the Methods Training has been getting great feedback and he suggested considering funding it beyond the pandemic, too. He also suggested perhaps looking at a tiered model of membership rates, so higher-income categories of members could be asked to support the lower-income categories. Oppong cautioned again about first discovering if the membership fee costs are a reason for the drop in membership. Oppong agreed with expanding the Methods Training program. Cope stated wishing to get involved in the Methods Training program in a future semester. She also proposed approaching some methods-related publishers to support this program, similar to Esri's support of the Digital Divide program.

Langham stated that the AAG is looking at sponsorship opportunities across all these platforms.

Li reminded everyone that the intent of these programs was also to see if they can be scalable, and the Methods Training seems to lend itself to that. She asked whether the AAG could look at the other COVID-19 Rapid Response Relief Programs from this perspective, too.

Langham summarized that he heard strong support for expanding the Methods Training program. General consensus.

Langham stated he also heard some support for expanding eligibility for the membership support program. There was some discussion and hesitation, so Langham proposed postponing votes on funding levels for Y2 of the COVID-19 Rapid Response Relief Programs until a later time in the Council meeting.

12:04 PM the Council took a 30-minute break.

Development Plan Update

Langham summarized the request from the AAG Development Director, who is seeking Council volunteers to work with her on a plan for fundraising programs.

Committees, Specialty & Affinity Groups

Johnson-Webb reported that the Committee on Committees worked very efficiently on recruiting volunteers for AAG Committee vacancies. She added that Dr. Oppong agreed to serve as incoming Secretary, Dr. Cope volunteered to serve as incoming National Councilor Chair; Dr. Edwards as incoming Regional Councilor Chair, and Dr. Sultana as Publications Chair.

Johnson-Webb introduced the roster of 2021-2022 AAG committees. Eaves moved to approve the roster. Naylor seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Li asked Council to agree to allow Susan Lucas to continue as Co-Chair of the International Research and Scholarly Exchange Committee (IRSE) and to appoint the incoming International Councilor as the Council Liaison in her place. There was general consensus.

Collins moved and Li seconded the motion to approve Oppong to serve as incoming Secretary, Cope to serve as incoming National Councilor Chair, Edwards as incoming Regional Councilor Chair, and Sultana as Publications Chair. The motion passed with 17 votes in favor and one abstention.

The question of appointing Publications Committee co-chairs came up. Naylor and Jepson advocated for this shared role. This was tabled to be discussed again when the new Council's term has begun, after July 1.

Naylor described her experience as Council Liaison on the Committee on the Status of Women in Geography (CSWG) and Collins pointed to the CSWG Chair's report, in which the Chair indicated that CSWG is a great committee to work with. **Youngs volunteered to serve as the next Council Liaison to the CSWG, which was met with general acclaim.**

Nominating Committee Guidelines Review

Langham provided a summary and invited questions. Cope requested using the singular "they" instead of the use of "she/he." She also commented on the fact that the real challenge was recruiting candidates, because the candidates for Vice President and President are typically at a stage in their career that made them very difficult to get commitments (i.e., recruit with approx. 6 extra months' lead time to allow the candidates for those roles to plan their time ahead (sabbatical, etc.).

Kaplan suggested allowing the incoming Nominating Committee to begin their work sooner after the election results. General discussion resulted in a recommendation for Langham and Mannozi to look at revisions to the Nominating Committee terms, to allow for an earlier start to their recruitment of candidates and better handover between committees.

Kaplan moved to approve the revised guidelines and Eaves seconded the motion. It passed with 18 votes in favor.

Ethics Statement Revision

Yeh provided a summary of the charge from the Fall Council meeting and the steps the task force took. She indicated the task force tried to make the revisions with a view to updating and making the statement more current and universally relevant.

She asked for comments on the revisions. Kujawa added that the task force also looked at this as a broader due diligence approach of revising the statement to bring it more generally up to date and increase its relevance.

Choi suggested editing point 5 “do not discriminate and harass” to “do not discriminate OR harass.” General consensus.

Cope complimented the task force for its work and mentioned that the D&I Committee is considering proposing a task force to develop a statement of disciplinary apology for past and present violent and colonial approaches. She also pointed out that inclusionary practices being recommended must still draw a line around hate speech or similar phenomena. A vote on these points was tabled to the following day.

Yeh also pointed to the various other recommendations from the committee such as bringing this before members when they join/renew, more regular revisions of the Ethics Statement, devote a section of the AAG website to provide more resources, publications, and links to ethics materials, and provide a feedback section, as well. Yeh mentioned also the suggestion for forming an advisory board on ethics that AAG members could contact. Oppong wondered how the AAG could enforce this statement. Yeh stated that this is not intended to be an enforceable code. Lobben suggested adding a disclaimer to indicate that this statement might not align with similar statements adopted by a member’s home institution. Kujawa pointed to a statement in the preamble of the Ethics Statement.

Kujawa suggested adding the need for legal review as part of a possible adoption of an advisory board and/or implementation steps. This met with general consensus. Langham/staff were asked to work with task force on an implementation plan to come to Council for vote before the Fall meeting or at the Fall meeting.

Kujawa also praised Yeh for her leadership of this process.

Summary of Committee Reports

Collins summarized the committee reports to Council.

Youngs moved to add an Honorable Mention category to existing AAG book awards, as proposed by the Meridian Book Award Committee. O’Lear seconded the motion which passed with 15 votes in favor and one abstention.

Council generally agreed to ask the Meridian Award Committee to further elaborate and develop their proposal for an entirely new book award and to submit it for review at the Fall Council meeting.

Council reviewed the various recommendations from the Program Excellence Award Committee to improve this award’s overall procedures. ***Li moved to approve the proposed revisions, Yeh seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with 18 votes in favor.***

(2:09 PM: Edwards joined the meeting)

Revisions to Specialty Group/Affinity Group (SG/AG) Chair's Guidelines

Collins thanked the task force that developed these revised guidelines and summarized the background to this and their charge from Council. Cope thanked the group for the work and asked whether struggling SG/AGs can also be allowed to self-select to be disbanded, if there is consensus from their current membership? She mentioned this could be especially useful for the inaugural period of review of all SG/AGs. Youngs thanked the committee for all the work and thought that went into the proposed revisions.

Oppong moved to approve: 1) the new criteria for determining SG/AG health; 2) the criteria for petitions for the formation of new SG/AGs; and 3) the new review process of SG/AGs.

Kujawa seconded the motion, which passed unanimously with 18 votes in favor.

Meridian Place Operations

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

Langham invited the Councilors serving on the Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Committee to comment on the process the Committee went through. O'Lear mentioned the assistance of consultant Michael Tey and pointed out that the Committee is approaching this charge from both a high-level perspective all the way down to focusing on high school and college recruitment. Cope echoed O'Lear's summary and stated that the Co-Chairs of the Committee have been providing great leadership and that the process overall has been very rewarding. Li added that the Committee is also considering recommending a new staff hire to continue supporting these recommendations into the future. Swab indicated the 3-year strategic diversity plan will be a useful tool for turning the AAG around.

Governance Audit

Langham stated that after canvassing several firms, the AAG has hired two experts for the governance audit: Michael Anderson and Donna Dunn of Tecker International. He provided a brief summary of their expertise and background, including positions as CEO, Board President, Head of Associations and other relevant experience. He indicated that the two consultants will begin with individual interviews of all Councilors and top AAG employees, they will then review all AAG governance documents with an eye to identifying overlap or even contradictions, they will assist in bringing our governance documents and policies to current standards, help us redesign the Council meeting packets, and more.

Accessibility Task Force

Lobben provided an overview of the Accessibility Task Force's work, her reasons for launching this task force, and how they approached their charge. She also mentioned that the Disability Specialty Group had, over the years, signaled and alerted the AAG to accessibility issues which received little or no response. This was frustrating, especially because this was not the main or key area of research for members of the Disability SG. Lobben therefore decided to launch this

task force to address significant physical barriers that AAG members face in three key areas: the website, Meridian Place, and AAG meetings.

Lobben stated that the task force not only identified problem areas, but also proposed solutions as a means to get to implementation more quickly and successfully. The task force shared their findings with the Diversity & Inclusion Committee, to ensure the continuation of these efforts even after the task force's mandate is concluded. She also mentioned that the task force had three separate conversations with Langham and relevant AAG staff regarding website, Meridian Place and AAG meetings. She indicated that those discussions were very successful and that the task force was pleased with the conversations. Langham echoed that he was pleased to see these concerns and needs being worked into the new platforms, and to incorporate annual audits of the AAG systems from an accessibility perspective, in order to continue improving them on a cyclical basis.

Cope and Li thanked Lobben for the task force's work.

Publications

Langham passed the baton to Naylor and Jepson, who thanked AAG Publications Director Jennifer Cassidento for joining the meeting.

Editorial Boards

Naylor brought the Council's attention to Butler's refreshed *Annals* editorial board which he was proposing for his second term on the journal. Yeh asked about his comment regarding a dearth of physical geography submissions to the *Annals*. Jepson indicated this is a long-time question that has come up before, and which will be discussed at the editors' meetings this week. Eaves appreciated seeing more non-PhD granting institutions on the proposed slate.

Eaves moved to approve David Butler's editorial board; Li seconded the motion which received 19 votes in favor.

Oppong moved to reappoint Ling Bian and Steven Hanna for a second term as *Annals* and *Cartography* Editors, respectively. Choi seconded the motion which passed with 19 votes in favor.

Cope moved to authorize the Publications Committee Co-Chairs to ask Tim Cresswell or Deborah Dixon to serve one more year in order to stagger their term ends. Yeh seconded the motion, which passed with 19 votes in favor.

New Guidelines for AAG Newsletter and Website

Langham indicated the new guidelines before Council would apply to the AAG website, and also address articles, columns, comments being submitted to the AAG Newsletter. Choi pointed out that article length is not consistently defined in the language going onto the AAG website.

Naylor and Jepson indicated that this would be rectified. Yeh wondered who the editor would be. Langham explained that an AAG staffer would serve in that role, as appointed by him, and

that otherwise the structure would be similar to other AAG journal boards, i.e., the editor would bring a proposed editorial board to Council for approval. Langham also indicated that this board would be launched with the new website in May/June. Yeh asked about the composition of the board and its mandate. Langham explained that the board would need to be able to advise the editor on web content, the rotation of the spotlight profiles on the main page (i.e., are they representative, diverse, equitable, etc.) and related matters.

Kaplan moved to approve the new guidelines for the AAG Newsletter and website. Li seconded the motion, which passed with 19 votes in favor.

Co-Editors for *Annals* Special Issues

Naylor provided some background and Cassidento pointed out that there is some precedent for providing *Annals* editors the option to propose a Co-Editor for an *Annals* Special Issue.

Cope moved to approve allowing *Annals* editors the option to propose a Co-Editor for an *Annals* Special Issue. Eaves seconded the motion which passed with 19 votes in favor.

Lobben adjourned the meeting at 3:16 PM, to general acclaim.

April 6, Langham restarted the Council meeting at 10:33 AM.

(Regrets: Cope, Edwards, Kujawa)

Communications and Membership

Communications Update

Langham pointed Councilors to the Communications update from staff and asked if there were any questions. Youngs appreciated seeing all the hard work that has gone into this, especially tracking geographers in the news. She praised and thanked Fekete, Schames and Pendergast for their efforts. Langham indicated that the new website and database will also allow for expanded advocacy and communication into the future.

Johnson-Webb asked about the communications consultants and whether an RFP had been issued. She pointed out that not doing so could exclude minority businesses. Langham indicated that smaller contracts are often awarded to trusted consultants without an RFP, but that all large ones are competitive. Langham said he thought she would be satisfied with the result, in this case.

Yeh asked about the Geographers in the News report and why there were not more physical geography related stories included in this section.

Membership Outreach and Services

Langham asked Councilors if there were questions about the Membership section. O’Lear suggested that virtual options for Fall Regional meetings could help stabilize or even increase grad student participation. Naylor echoed this experience. Kaplan cautioned about drawing too

many conclusions due to the pandemic and its effects, which could potentially play out for the next year or even two.

Demographic Survey Questions

Langham asked the Council to review the survey questions worked up by the AAG staff, with input from the D&I Committee and asked for feedback or questions.

After receiving feedback from the Councilors, the survey language is being reworked and presented to Council again.

Because a great number of suggestions and corrections were made by the Councilors, Langham indicated that more work is clearly needed and that he and staff will go through more edits to these survey questions and re-present this to the D&I Committee and the Council before testing it with a pilot group. Naylor asked what this data will be used for and Langham replied that it is intended to help the AAG better know who its members are, to better serve them.

Annual Meetings

Langham asked if there were any questions about the 2021 virtual meeting. Yeh requested that future decisions about meeting locations be made with the Climate Action Task Force's input. She also pointed out that the 2025 Hawaii meeting is extremely carbon intensive and it might be worth exploring turning it into a node. Jepson echoed this and suggested that the AAG may need to enroll a company to help the AAG hit its carbon reduction targets when deciding about future meeting locations.

Langham indicated that all these factors would influence the business analysis going forward.

Sultana also reminded Councilors that the meetings were not exclusively about scholarship and presentations, but also had a celebratory component.

Johnson-Webb and O'Lear also reminded everyone that the AAG meeting has outgrown many cities whose hotel facilities are not large enough to accommodate the AAG meeting. Kaplan mentioned that if the AAG refocused on mid-size cities for smaller in person meetings, this could open up more choices.

Fall Climate Forward Meetings

Langham introduced this topic and reminded Council he had been asked to explore the experiment of providing synchronous in-person and virtual meetings for Oct. 14-16. The participating AAG Regions are: East / West Lakes + Toledo, OH; Southwestern + Oklahoma City, OK; Pacific Coast + San Diego, CA; and Great Plains Rocky Mountains + Lincoln, NE. He indicated that the AAG is looking to support the meetings and will allow the AAG to carry any possible cancellation costs or losses, in order to make this experiment successful for the Regions. He indicated that the worst-case scenario would be for all the meetings to drop, which would "cost" the AAG \$150,000, the amount he was asking the Council to approve for this experiment.

He estimated needing only about \$20,000 - \$30,000 for these events unless all locations were canceled.

Langham explained that this funding would also allow for registrants (including Councilors) to plan attending an in-person Regional meeting, and also still login to follow sessions or keynotes at other Regional meetings virtually. He indicated that the fall meetings will act as a testing ground for what works and what can be reproduced on a larger scale for the 2022 NYC meeting, for instance.

Yeh asked whether the nodes could still provide a broadcast of keynotes to the in-person attendees. Youngs wondered if the AAG will be deploying tech support to the various node locations for the virtual and in-person meetings? Langham explained that all the virtual signups will go through the AAG platform and the AAG will backstop all those costs and the support needed.

Langham asked the Council for authorization to spend up to \$150,000 for the 2021 Climate Forward Meetings. Naylor moved to approve this request. Eaves seconded the motion which passed with 17 votes in favor.

Cope, Kujawa and Edwards joined the meeting.

Climate Action Task Force Update

Langham invited Jepson and Yeh to lead the discussion.

Jepson summarized the task force's conclusion that moving forward will require heavy involvement with the AAG membership, incl. publishing new articles in the *Professional Geographer* about this effort and inviting wider perspectives. She summarized the three types of meeting models being considered: nodes, a biannual meeting, nodes + in person meeting.

Because meetings are significant for the AAG's bottom line, the task force is asking Council to authorize a business analysis needed to ensure that any changes the Council eventually authorizes will not negatively affect the AAG's finances.

She indicated the task force is requesting permission to survey the entire membership on options for the annual meeting, as well as questions of access and inclusion related with each option. With both those outcomes (i.e., business analysis and member survey) in hand, the task force will report back to Council in Spring of 2022.

Jepson also indicated that the task force is asking the Council to be allowed to continue its work for another 3 years to continue exploring this entire issue.

Kaplan asked to expand the membership of the task force, to include different perspectives and to include him. He listed several different people who could be negatively affected by a biannual in-person meeting and the disadvantages this could pose to them. He expressed his

strong feeling that taking away an opportunity like the AAG Annual Meeting must show an overwhelming majority of respondents in favor.

Yeh responded that the petitioners who came to the AAG Council some years ago specifically asked about reducing the carbon footprint of the Annual Meeting. She agreed with Kaplan that his points about equity are important and that it will be a difficult balance to juggle.

Eaves thanked the task force for grappling with this and suggested that the impacts of an AAG meeting on local economies can go both ways and that the AAG has a responsibility to look into this and try to make the most considered decisions going forward.

Johnson-Webb asked when groups and organizations would begin to model the behaviors that our children and grandchildren will be forced to undertake. Sultana, speaking as a transportation planner, thanked the task force for its efforts. She stated that it is crucial for us to reduce our carbon footprint and airplanes are among the most carbon-heavy modes of transport. At the same time, if people will feel that restrictions are being imposed, studies show that there will be resistance to them. Can we guarantee that if we reduce in-person opportunities, AAG attendees or members will not travel to other meetings, instead? Can the AAG not look at other societies to see what they are doing and decide a way forward based on comparisons?

Jepson remind the Council about the three requests before Council and that no course of action is being decided, but that the task force is at the stage of beginning and leading discussions in a variety of fora, to help gather data from the membership.

Kaplan suggested expanding the scope of the task force and its membership as a friendly amendment. Jepson disagreed with the suggestion and indicated that adding more items to the task force's purview would overburden an already highly complex process and could kill the initiative. She agreed with expanding the task force membership.

Li thanked the task force and indicated her support for the three requests before Council, and the idea of expanding the membership of the task force to include different perspectives.

Naylor moved and Eaves seconded authorizing the Climate Action Task Force and Executive Director Langham to: 1) carry out a formal business analysis of the 3 proposed meeting modules (i.e., annual nodes; biannual meeting; annual nodes + focus place); 2) allow Langham to hire an expert consultant to develop (in collaboration with the Climate Action Task Force) a membership survey in 2021, to assess member preferences for the proposed meeting modules; and 3) to extend the Climate Action task force for another three years of service through June 30, 2024. The motion passed with 18 votes in favor.

Oppong suggested allowing additional members to the task force. Jepson agreed and invited any interested parties to contact her or Yeh. Kujawa asked about a budget limit on the survey consultant and Langham indicated he can work the cost into the existing approved FYE2022 AAG Budget.

Langham suggested a 30-minute break for lunch at 12:15 PM

At 12:47 PM Langham reconvened the Council meeting.

AAG Climate Emergency Statement

Langham asked whether there were any questions about the new AAG Climate Emergency Statement, to be posted on the AAG website.

Choi asked whether the audience is intended to be the AAG membership. He pointed to a period after the Celsius degree symbol. He also suggested expanding the NDC acronym in the document, too.

Choi moved to adopt the AAG Climate Emergency Statement, Collins seconded the motion which passed with 17 votes in favor.

Honors & Awards

Lobben invited Johnson-Webb to summarize the 2021 AAG Awards. Johnson-Webb did so and also pointed out that East Lakes didn't issue a Council Award for Best Student Paper at a Regional Division Meeting, because they did not feel there were deserving submissions in this cycle.

Fellows Guidelines revisions

Opong shared the questions the task force was charged to address. He reported that the task force had a vigorous discussion and came up with a process for a more inclusive, diverse class of Fellows into the future. He explained that in order to diversify away from exclusively senior, late-career candidates as Fellows, the committee created a Junior Fellow category, in contrast to a Senior Fellow category. He also pointed to the very broad diversity-related guidelines newly added to the award criteria.

Kaplan asked whether the eligibility is significantly different enough from the current guidelines to ensure a more diverse set of submissions? Yeh asked how "junior" those candidates are?

Opong explained that this is a means to enable and involve promising early career geographers in the AAG activities. Some questions about perhaps rephrasing this to Mid-Career fellows to ensure it includes Associate or newly tenured faculty. Li added that BIPOC geographers tend to be more junior, so adding this category opens the recognition to them and gives students role models more like them to be inspired by.

Jepson suggested instructing the Selection Committee to select a group of 10 or so mid-career fellows, providing them career time/trajectory to help identify them. The question arose as to what to do with Junior Fellows and when they can be re-considered as a Senior Fellow? Naylor argued for maintaining the single title of "Fellow" without that hierarchical differentiation. Youngs echoed the sentiment and suggested advertising the Fellow opportunity as being open for candidates at the early, mid, and later stages in their careers. Li suggested using NSF career

categories to help with this differentiation. She suggested having the committee rewrite this differentiation and bring this to the Council for an electronic vote.

Jepson underscored adding an expectation of service for the Fellows, and accounting and reporting responsibility of the Committee on their selection of a certain class of Fellows. Li also recommended the AAG begin to tap into the existing classes of Fellows more proactively for service.

Oppong and Langham suggested having the committee rework the guidelines to reflect these suggestions and present them to Council for an electronic vote. There was general agreement to this.

Honors Guidelines Revisions

Oppong summarized the proposed revisions and the major improvements to the AAG Honors guidelines and asked for comments or questions.

Naylor moved to approve the AAG Honors guideline revisions. Eaves seconded the motion, which received 19 votes in favor.

AAG Awards Gala

Mannozi provided a brief overview of the two cycles of AAG awardees who have not (due to canceled in-person Annual meetings) had a celebratory event at which they could be appropriately recognized. She indicated that in discussion with former AAG President Luzzadder-Beach and with input from current AAG Presidents Kaplan, Lobben and Yeh, she and other AAG staff developed the idea to pilot at the 2022 New York meeting an AAG Awards Gala, a celebratory late afternoon or evening reception to which all three classes of 2020-2022 AAG Awardees will be invited. The event will be preceded by a photo opportunity with the respective AAG President, and the photos as well as complete listings of all AAG Awardees and their award will be screened in the reception ballroom, as well as shown during the meeting week at the AAG sales/communications area. The Awards Gala would include a welcome from the AAG Executive Director and remarks from the AAG Presidents. If the feedback to this pilot event is positive, this could become the model for the AAG Awards ceremony going forward.

There was general approval for this proposed course of action.

Policy & Outreach

Langham pointed the Council to the materials in the packet and previewed that he expects to ramp up the advocacy work of the AAG into the future, including specific campaigns, clicktivism, assisting members to come to Washington, DC to speak to their Congressional representatives, etc. He indicated wanting to see the AAG do a lot more than it has to date in this arena.

AAG Projects & Programs

Langham did not go into many details here, but he mentioned that the building renovations at Meridian Place will incorporate more accessibility considerations and reflect the reality of office work in a post-pandemic reality.

Council & Resolutions

Lobben pointed Councilors to the current and incoming Council listings as an informational item.

Fall 2021 Council meeting

Lobben asked Langham to introduce an idea for the Fall 2021 Council meeting. Langham suggested he reach out to the New York City hotels for the AAG 2022 meeting to see if they can make an interesting offer to the Council for their Fall Council meeting, as a way to test-drive the venues and facilities for the following Spring. The idea met with large favor.

Conclusion of Pending Items

COVID Y2 Funding

Langham re-introduced this topic and summarized what he believed to have been the consensus during the previous day's discussion to expand the COVID Rapid Response Relief Programs Y2 funding by \$115,000 for the Methods Training workshops (general agreement). He walked the Council through the various expansion options for COVID Rapid Response Relief Program support in Y2 for membership: (1) expanding the window of eligibility to two years and (2) increasing the membership income category for eligibility from <\$25,000 to <\$75,000 year.

Langham asked whether Council agreed to expand eligibility for membership support in Y2 to income categories up to \$75K and to members who joined up to two years ago. The majority of Councilors were in favor.

Cope commended this willingness by the Council to support AAG members. Swab echoed that sentiment and suggested also posting some language to encourage folks who have professional development funds to use those, and for those who do not have such support to then apply for these funds.

Kaplan had to leave the meeting and expressed his enjoyment at serving on the AAG Council. He also thanked everyone for their service and expressed his hope to see all in person in a not-too-distant future.

Langham suggested that Council support the AAG staff recommendation to discontinue the COVID-19 Rapid Response Relief Program Internship program. He summarized the intent of the program and the difficulties encountered in its implementation. He underscored that the AAG should draw conclusions from the interim results of the Y1 rollout, discontinue what is not working, while providing continued or even expanded support for the programs that are

working well, such as the Methods Training and the Membership support programs. **There was general agreement with these recommendations.**

Swab suggested revisiting the AAG internships, including numbers, stipend levels, etc.

Langham indicated that the AAG would also continue all other COVID-19 Rapid Response Relief programs at last year's levels, which would require Council to vote to approve a total \$304,500 to cover all the approved programs for Y2.

Langham indicated that the projected new staff hires and the promotion of existing staff into new roles will allow the AAG to break away from its traditional journals/meeting business model, allowing the AAG to offer professional development, career development and similar services year-round, thus making AAG membership relevant into the future.

Collins moved to fund the COVID Y2 Rapid Response Relief Programs for a total of \$304,500. Oppong seconded the motion. It passed with 18 votes in favor.

Naylor praised Dony, Nilupaer and other AAG staff for all their hard work. Eaves suggested a recognition for staff. Collins suggested inviting the AAG staff to the 2022 Awards Gala to offer them a formal recognition there. There was general consensus.

Statement of Ethics Revisions

Oppong moved to approve the revised Statement of Ethics prepared by Vice President Emily Yeh and the task force. Jepson and Naylor seconded the motion, which passed with 18 votes in favor.

Heejun Chang Editorial Board Addition

Li moved to approve the addition of one member to Heejun Chang's editorial board. Eaves and Yeh seconded the motion, which passed with 16 votes in favor and one abstention.

New Business

No new business was introduced.

Langham thanked the Councilors for all their time, dedication, and service on the AAG Council. Lobben especially thanked Kaplan for mentoring her into the role of AAG President, making her transition into the role very smoothly.

Resolutions

Lobben read the Resolutions to the Council.

Whereas, David Kaplan, as Vice President, President, and Past President of the American Association of Geographers has ably guided and served the Association to address the challenges facing the Association and the discipline of geography, particularly during the leadership transition period between the outgoing and the incoming Executive Directors, by supporting AAG efforts to address the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on its most

vulnerable members, and by championing more AAG support for its Regional Divisions; and whereas he has thus contributed considerable efforts to advance the AAG's mission, goals, and activities;

Therefore Be It Resolved that the American Association of Geographers, assembled in an online meeting in lieu of the canceled 117th in-person Annual Meeting, heartily thanks David for his leadership of the Association during the past three years, especially for his efforts to promote a smooth transition in AAG leadership, supporting AAG's most vulnerable members during a time of more acute need, and working to sustain and revive AAG Regional Divisions.

Whereas, Councilors of The American Association of Geographers expend substantial time and effort advancing the causes of the Association and the discipline; and

Whereas, the Council of The American Association of Geographers has confronted numerous challenges and responded to many opportunities during the last three years;

Therefore Be It Resolved that The American Association of Geographers, assembled in an online meeting in lieu of the canceled 117th in-person Annual Meeting, extends warm appreciation to Past President David Kaplan, East Lakes Division Regional Councilor and Secretary Karen Johnson-Webb, National Councilor Chair, Jennifer Collins, National Councilor and Publications Committee Co-Chair Wendy Jepson, Middle States Division Councilor and Publications Committee Co-Chair Lindsay Naylor, Southwestern Division Councilor and Regional Councilor Chair Michaela Buenemann, and West Lakes Regional Councilor Woonsup Choi, for the energy, time, and talent they have contributed to the Association during their terms on the AAG Council.

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Whereas, Members of The American Association of Geographers offer their talents, time, and ideas to support the activities of the Association as Chairs and Members of various association committees appointed by the AAG Council;

Therefore Be It Resolved that The American Association of Geographers, assembled in an online meeting in lieu of the canceled 117th in-person Annual Meeting, thanks the outgoing Chairs and Members of the AAG Committees for their service to the Association, the discipline and the profession during their committee terms.

Lobben thanked everyone for participating in the Spring 2021 AAG Council meeting. Li thanked Johnson-Webb for the comprehensive and detailed Minutes of each Council Meeting.

The meeting was adjourned by general consensus at 2:33 PM.

Respectfully submitted:

Karen D. Johnson-Webb, Secretary

Candida Mannozi, Director of Operations