

**Spring 2023 AAG Council Meeting
Denver, CO
March 21-23**

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**March 2023 AAG Council Meeting
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Present: Marilyn Raphael, President; Rebecca Lave, Vice President; Emily Yeh, Past President; Marcia England, Treasurer; Joseph Oppong, Secretary; Gary Langham, Executive Director; Pablo Bose, National; Meghan Cope, National, Chair; Debarchana Ghosh, National; Patricia Solis, National; Edna Wangui, National; Dydia DeLyser, Pacific Coast; Tracy Edwards, MidAtlantic, Chair; Selima Sultana, Southeastern; Colleen Myles, Southwestern; Steven Schnell, Middle States; Steven Silvern, New England St. Lawrence Valley; Amariah Fischer, Student; Diana Ojeda, International.

Via Zoom: Heike Alberts, West Lakes.

Staff: Jill Treby, Chief of Staff; Amanda McKnight, Chief of Programs; Candida Mannozi, Chief Operating Officer; Ashley Wallace, Senior Executive Assistant; Jennifer Cassidento, Publications Director present during March 22 AAG Publications discussion; Risha Berry, Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion presenting JEDI Strategic Plan implementation update on March 22.

1.0 Opening

1.1 Welcome

Langham welcomed all to the in-person Council Meeting and extended his welcome also to West Lakes Councilor Heike Alberts who joined the meeting via Zoom.

1.2 Adopt Agenda

Raphael asked for a motion to approve the March 2023 Council Meeting Agenda.

O’Lear moved to approve the March 2023 Council Meeting Agenda. Sultana seconded the motion, which passed with all votes in favor.

1.3 Adopt Consent Agenda

Ghosh moved to adopt the Consent Agenda and Wangui seconded the motion. It received a unanimous vote in favor.

1.4 Council Meeting Minutes from Nov. 2022 meeting

Raphael introduced the Minutes from the Nov. 2022 Council meeting which had been approved via an email vote in December 2022, and asked Council for ratification. **Solis moved to ratify the Minutes from the November 2022 Council Meeting. Sultana seconded the motion. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.**

1.5 President’s Comments

Raphael expressed her pleasure at seeing everyone at this in-person meeting in Denver. She stated still fondly remembering the September 2022 in-person Council Meeting in Los Angeles. Raphael indicated that her year as AAG President has been flying by. She expressed her pleasure with the regular check-in meetings she holds with Executive Director Langham, Vice President Lave and Past President Yeh. Turning to her area of focus, she indicated that her chosen theme of Just Geographies (also featured at the Denver Annual Meeting) is in her view a continuation of the focus

areas of Past President Amy Lobben on universal access and accessibility, and Past President Yeh on Climate Action. Raphael indicated she is looking forward to the many sessions planned around this theme for the rest of the Denver meeting week.

1.6 Vice President's Comments

Vice President Lave updated the Council on her work with Executive Director Langham in response to concerns raised about the AAG's planned 2024 Annual Meeting in Honolulu. She reported having met with 6 indigenous Kanaka geographers to hear and address their concerns. Among some of the solutions they discussed and that the AAG will implement, is hiring a local meeting coordinator to invite Kanaka vendors and businesses to participate in the AAG Meeting, encouraging all Specialty Groups to invite Kanaka geographers as speakers to address issues of colonialism, the history of oppression, and related themes in Specialty Group high-profile sessions and in meeting-wide keynotes. She invited anyone to share with her their thoughts on other ways for the AAG to include the local community in the AAG 2024 Meeting.

Lave reported that her Public & Engaged Scholarship Task Force has met twice and will be holding listening sessions at the Denver meeting. She indicated that she would keep Council apprised of progress.

Langham added that the JEDI Committee suggested preparing an update on what the AAG is doing in preparation for the 2024 meeting, including preparing talking points for all Councilors to use. He also indicated looking at this experience as something that might evolve into a new way for the AAG to prepare for its meetings going forward.

1.7 State of AAG

Langham updated the Council that the Denver meeting reached a total of 5,800 registrants (at March 21), 1,330 sessions with 16% of them in hybrid modality, and 65% of the presentations to be recorded and available for later viewing. He anticipated that during the Budget conversation later in the meeting, there will be a need to balance these new, climate-aware changes to the AAG meetings with their impact on the bottom line.

Langham stated that the AAG has completed many first-in-a-generation upgrades to the AAG's physical and technical infrastructure and that now the time has come to rein in spending, especially from reserves. He also reported that the AAG has moved to a new, leased office and that the sale of the former headquarters at 1710 16th Street, NW is underway, with a first deposit having been received in Escrow.

With the market down 22% he indicated the need for the AAG to balance the need for innovation with the need to balance its budget, using the financial outcomes of the Denver meeting to predict results for future meetings (Honolulu, Detroit, etc.). He indicated wanting to continue to offer great services to AAG members and attendees, but the time has come to no longer use reserves to do so. Langham indicated that the first call for the new Elevate the Discipline initiative will be issued during Marilyn Raphael's Presidential Plenary at the Denver Meeting.

2.0 Finance Overview

England stated that the Finance Committee met on February 23 and heard reviews from the Truist Investment Representative and from the auditors at Thompson Greenspon. She indicated the

budget before the Council includes some staffing and other cuts to achieve a balanced budget. She reported that the Finance Committee also discussed some unknowns (e.g., hybrid meeting costs, costs for A/V as a factor in hybrid meetings, hotel expenses with hybrid meetings, multi-city/multi-year meeting contracts with the same hotels, etc.).

Bose inquired whether others have also experienced virtual participants in a hybrid session dropping out of the session at a higher rate than in-person participants. He wondered if AAG could collect some feedback on this phenomenon. McKnight reported that the AAG is collecting this information, but it depends on session organizers updating their presenters' attendance to make the data as accurate as possible.

2.1 FYE 2024 Budget

Langham asked whether there were any questions about the FYE2024 AAG budget. Yeh asked for more detail on possible staffing cuts mentioned earlier. Langham explained that the AAG recently grew from a low of 17 employees to a current 25 with one more position to be filled. He indicated needing to cut some positions in order to align staff more closely with the activities needed to implement the current 2023 – 2025 JEDI and Strategic Plans.

He reminded Council that Membership dues haven't increased in many years. He further stated that royalties from Taylor & Francis make up a significant portion of AAG's revenue and are covered in a contract that runs until 2028. Meeting registrations, the other pillar of AAG revenue, are dependent on participation in AAG meetings and the new reality of hybrid meetings will greatly influence this revenue stream.

Langham indicated that after some years of hiatus the AAG is pursuing externally funded opportunities again. Solis endorsed that change and explained that during her time on the AAG staff she and former AAG employee, Solem, intentionally never pursued opportunities that would be in competition with other members and their projects. She also indicated that the AAG had, in some cases, served as a natural convener for a number of different institutions on a particular project. Solis also suggested recruiting AAG Fellows to pursue sabbatical residences at AAG HQ during which time they could collaborate with AAG staff on proposal development.

There being no further discussion, Solis moved to approve the FYE2024 Budget. Oppong seconded the motion which passed by unanimous vote.

2.2 Update on AAG Cash & Investments

Langham reminded the Council that AAG is now 100% fully divested from fossil fuels and these new funds seem to be performing quite well. He indicated that the AAG's investments outperformed our benchmarks.

2.3 Audited Financial Statement

The audited financial statement was provided to Council for review.

2.4 February 2023 Finance Committee recommendations to Council

England reported that the Finance committee met on February 23 and after careful review the Finance Committee recommends the Council adopt the proposed FYE2024 Budget, with an

amendment to move the salary of Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, Risha Berry, from the allocated JEDI funds to the AAG operational budget.

3.0 Publications

3.1 *Annals* Editorial Interviews

Discussion in preparation for the interviews revealed a desire to review editorial guidelines for AAG journals editors, in order to address the potential issues arising from individual editors' styles and to more closely bring them in line with AAG's JEDI principles.

Discussion also surfaced the suggestion that Editors should be required to comply with the AAG's Professional Conduct Policy. DeLyser further suggested reviewing an onboarding process for AAG editors, to assist them in becoming familiar with this role, esp. if it is a relatively new one to them, including referring them to the [Committee on Publication Ethics](#) for additional guidance. She was reassured that Editors are onboarded quite thoroughly by Publications Director, Cassidento, but the process will be reviewed and improved.

Bose suggested that AAG facilitate a more intentional onboarding process between incoming and outgoing editors. Lave offered additional suggestions for the overall recruitment, selection and onboarding process such as more guidelines for editors on publication ethics, and more active recruitment by the Council once calls go out.

3.1.1 Human Geography Interviews

O'Lear moved to appoint Paul Adams as Human Geography Editor of the *Annals*, which was seconded by Marcia England. The motion passed with 16 votes in favor, one opposed and two abstentions.

3.1.2 Nature & Society Interviews

Opong moved to appoint Brian King as Nature and Society Editor of the *Annals*. DeLyser seconded the motion. The motion passed with 16 votes in favor and two abstentions.

3.2 AAG Journals Report

Treby provided highlights from the AAG Journals report to Council.

Annals of the American Association of Geographers

- *Annals* has increased the number of print issues from 8 to 10 per year, beginning with 2023 issues.
- Search for a new General Geography/Cross-discipline editor has been postponed until 2024.
- Council will interview and select new Human Geography and Nature & Society editors.

The Professional Geographer

- *The PG* has increased the number of print issues from 4 to 6 per year, beginning with 2023 issues.
- Editor Heejun Chang has proposed adding a second editor for *The PG* and Council will be asked to decide about this request later in the meeting.

The AAG Review of Books

- In 2022, Taylor & Francis completed the ScholarOne site build for the AAGR. B.

- Editor Debbie Hopkins has some concerns about the changing landscape for the *AAGRB* in the coming years.

GeoHumanities

- Council to vote on Joshua Inwood's proposed Editorial Board at this meeting.

3.2.1 *Annals*: David Butler will recruit a Co-Editor for his Special Issue

Treby mentioned this proposal as a point of information not requiring a Council decision or vote.

3.3 *Professional Geographer*: proposal for a second Editor

Sultana introduced this topic to Council and asked for comments or questions.

Supporting reasons to add a co-editor beginning in 2024:

1. Manuscript submissions to *The Professional Geographer* have more than doubled since 2015, from 173 manuscripts submitted in 2015 to 396 manuscripts submitted in 2021. Issues of the journal have increased from 4 to 6 per year, and there is a large backlog of articles. (*See additional supporting data on pg. 174 of meeting package*).
2. Given the diverse topics covered in the journal, it would be ideal to have two subject editors (one focusing on physical geography and geographic methods and the other focusing on human geography and nature and society) to handle manuscripts that belong to each editor's specialty.
3. Adding an editor could help promote the gender diversity of journal editors, contributing to the AAG diversity initiatives.

DeLyser moved to approve the recruitment of a second editor for the Human Geography topical area for the *Professional Geographer* and Bose seconded the motion, which received a unanimous vote in favor.

3.4 *GeoHumanities*: review proposed editorial board

After reviewing the editorial board proposed by *GeoHumanities* Editor Inwood, Cope pointed out the preponderance of R1 editorial board candidates and suggested approving the current board, but requesting the addition of 2 more candidates representing different institutions.

Solis moved to accept the proposed *GeoHumanities* Board with the caveat that Inwood propose an additional 2 candidates from non-R1 institutions. Ojeda seconded the motion, which passed with a unanimous vote.

Cope asked about adjustments to the board for the Methods section of the *Annals* which had not yet been presented to Council. Treby stated that Editor Ling Bian is planning to present this revised board to Council at its next meeting.

4.0 Meridian Place

4.1 Update on new office move-in

Langham updated the Council that the AAG has moved in to its new, leased office suite and commended Mannozi for managing the transition.

4.2 Update on 1710 16th Street sale

Langham reported that the AAG is under contract to sell 1710 16th Street, NW for \$1.85M and a close is expected very soon.

5.0 Governance

5.1 Update on progress developing new AAG Policies for future Council approval

McKnight provided an update on the Bylaws and AAG Policies documents, indicating that the new AAG Policies will be ready for Council review/approval at the June Council meeting. She thanked Lave and Edwards for their input and help with the initial drafts.

5.2 Recently approved new AAG Bylaws will be presented at AAG Business Meeting

Langham indicated that at the AAG Business Meeting the AAG will formally give members 60 days' notice of the change in AAG Constitution & Bylaws, then launch a member referendum for adoption.

Ghosh suggested the AAG explain to members that the new Bylaws are not yet posted on the AAG website. There was also general consensus on holding a webinar to introduce this topic to AAG members prior to launching the vote.

6.0 Membership and Communities

6.1 AAG 2023 – 2024 Committee rosters

A vote to ratify the Committees roster was postponed, allowing the Committee on Committees to fill a few remaining vacancies on the JEDI Committee.

Lave asked whether there is a periodic review process of AAG Committees. She also wondered whether AAG Committees should be audited for alignment with AAG strategic goals, their governance practices, their current charges, etc. Oppong suggested that such a review should occur every 3-5 years to keep committees “fresh.”

Ghosh moved to request AAG staff to review AAG Committees' structures, charges, and recruitment processes and upon conclusion of the review, propose a timeline and procedure for evaluating AAG committees on their effectiveness, relevance, and health. This proposal should be presented to Council at a Fall 2023 meeting (Sept. or Nov.). Bose seconded the motion which passed with a unanimous vote.

Treby briefly summarized some of the results and trends presented to Council in the 2022 Membership report compiled by staff.

6.2 Membership Committee report on Specialty/Affinity Groups

Oppong and Treby detailed the method by which the Membership Committee evaluated the Specialty and Affinity Groups' strengths or weaknesses, following a new procedure the Council had previously approved.

In its report, the Membership Committee presented their ranking of Specialty and Affinity Groups according to their strengths, informing staff and leadership on which groups appear to need more support and which are doing well. They pointed out that this review process is not intended to be

punitive, but rather to help AAG find ways to support Groups in need and recognize those that are functioning well.

Treby noted that the criteria for assessing Groups' health do not include a requirement for having members in active leadership roles, an amendment that the staff plan to submit to Council for a future vote. Yeh echoed that developing criteria for Group chairs to be effective will be very important going forward. Fisher indicated that in some cases members may be participating in a Group solely to benefit from their announcements or communications and may not be interested in more engagement.

Yeh suggested the AAG provide incentives/recognition for those groups that are performing well.

6.2.1 Regional reports: format, timeline

Treby reminded Council that these reports had been suspended for the past few cycles. She indicated that AAG staff felt the new Specialty Group reporting format was a success and that staff would like to suggest creating a similar reporting format for use by Regional Division Councilors. O'Leary commended these efforts and expressed her thanks. Myles suggested the reporting format be made available ahead of the Fall Regional Division meetings, so Regional Councilors can prepare and use them during that time.

6.3 Committees' annual reports: suggestions or requests for Council

Mannozi summarized the requests from AAG Committees for Council and indicated they are being implemented by staff.

6.4 2023 AAG Election results

Langham reported on the 2023 election results, which had already been publicized.

7.0 JEDI & Strategic Plans

7.1 Update on progress implementing current JEDI and Strategic Plans

Dr. Risha Berry, AAG Director of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, joined the Council meeting and provided an update on implementation of the JEDI and Strategic Plan.

Berry explained that the AAG is grouping the JEDI and Strategic Plan goals into 5 key focus areas for 2023, to better manage progress and measure outcomes:

1. Metrics & Reporting

AAG will develop a JEDI dashboard to

- a. Collect data points for annual reporting
- b. Identify AAG data and isolate variables
- c. Establish baseline JEDI metrics
- d. Monitor progress on JEDI aims annually

2. Communications & Advocacy

AAG will establish Virtual JEDI Communities and Networks through

- a. Interactive Web
- b. Social Media
- c. AAG Newsletter

- d. Training
- e. Governance

These efforts will engage AAG members using several platforms or venues, such as during routing membership communications, at the Annual Meeting and the JEDI Booth, and in listening sessions.

3. Member Engagement

In 2023, AAG will engage with members via the JEDI Booth at the Denver Annual Meeting where attendees will be encouraged to volunteer to serve on a variety of Working Groups focused on

- a. Governance
- b. Membership
- c. Reports
- d. Communications
- e. Advocacy
- f. Training
- g. Focused Listening

4. Fundraising

AAG submitted an NSF proposal focused on critical incident training for Department Chairs and strategies to support scholars.

5. JEDI Scholars

AAG will establish a JEDI Scholars Program focused on

- a. Communications
- b. Curriculum
- c. Advocacy
- d. Healing
- e. Policy

Lave suggested including the controversial or problematic history of certain geography departments in the JEDI Strategic Plan efforts. Ojeda commended the restorative aspect of the goals and implementation strategy Berry had presented. She asked for more detail on prevention efforts. Berry indicated she was working with staff and the Healthy Departments Committee on ways to disseminate and implement practices that the AAG recommends for an Ethos of Care, a concept that is included in a recent NSF proposal she submitted.

Solis asked how Berry and team would be choosing and gathering metrics to identify and address issues of underrepresentation in the discipline. Berry cited UC Berkeley's [Targeted Universalism](#) and added that she intends to use AAG member profile data to compare it to national and disciplinary data in order to fine-tune AAG's resulting interventions.

Bose asked Berry how she might guide the AAG as a national organization facing the many attacks occurring on academic freedoms, as well as support for individual members or geographers contending with adversarial realities on their campus(es). Berry indicated that AAG public statements and taking public stands are one tool; another is providing safe spaces for individual geographers (within AAG Specialty and Affinity Groups, for instance), as well as providing space for year-round listening sessions.

Ojeda shared that in Colombia, academics created funds for scholars at risk, and also enabled scholars at risk to present their reports anonymously.

8.0 Council

8.1 2023 Council Meeting schedule

Langham reminded Councilors about the proposed dates for the remaining 2023 Council meetings and indicated that Wallace will circulate Doodle polls to identify precise dates and times for everyone to mark their calendars.

8.2 Appoint next Secretary, Publications Committee Chair, National Councilor and Regional Councilor Chairs, Council Liaisons to Membership and Status of Women in Geography Committees

Langham introduced the roster of Council volunteers to be appointed to upcoming vacancies: Secretary, Dydia DeLyser; Publications Committee Chair, Steven Silvern; National Councilor Chair, Debs Ghosh; Regional Councilor Chair, Colleen Myles; Liaison to the Committee on the Status of Women in Geography, Patricia Solis; Liaison to the Membership Committee, Steven Schnell.

Cope moved to approve the slate of Council volunteers to Executive Committee and Standing Committees. Yeh seconded the motion which passed with a majority of votes in favor and one abstention.

9.0 Annual Meetings

9.1 2023 Denver meeting by the numbers

McKnight shared the latest statistics on the Denver Annual Meeting:

- Roughly 6,000 registrants
- 1,300 sessions
- 16% of sessions were hybrid, and AAG was able to accommodate all requests for hybrid sessions that were submitted by the request deadline.

The final numbers:

- Registrants: 6,051
- Attendees: 5,934
- Sessions: 1,334

9.1.1 Covid Protocol in Denver

This item did not require discussion.

9.1.2 VIP schedule – review/refresher

This item did not require discussion.

9.3 Future AAG Annual Meetings

Discussion around future AAG Meetings centered on suggestions to go to smaller cities, hybrid format, smaller hotel footprint, how to focus more specifically with local geographers on the nature

and detail of the meeting place to increase the excitement and encourage more attendees to opt for in-person participation in an AAG Annual Meeting.

Ghosh indicated that the 2024 Honolulu meeting is going to be an outlier and might complicate year-to-year comparisons for the very nature of its location, expense of traveling there, etc.

Solis wondered whether offering a meeting Proceedings might be an incentive for hybrid participants not to drop out of the meeting.

Cope volunteered to inform Specialty and Affinity Group Chairs of the preparations already underway for the 2024 Honolulu meeting under the advisement of indigenous Kanaka organizers.

10.0 2023 Awards and Honors

10.1 AAG 2023 Awards & Honors Listing

This item did not require discussion.

10.2 Marcus Award – proposed improvements

There was a suggestion to allocate funds from unrestricted donations to shore up the Marcus Fund to allow it to begin issuing awards again. Langham countered that he would like to carry out a more systematic review of all donor funds in order to address this issue in a uniform manner.

Mannozi summarized the proposal before Council to improve the Marcus Award process to be more inclusive of the students included in a winning proposal.

Solis moved to approve the proposed improvements to the Marcus Fund for Physical Geography. Ghosh seconded the motion which passed unanimously.

11.0 Pending Items

There were no pending agenda items requiring further discussion.

12.0 New Business

12.1 Proposal to change Nominating Committee terms from 1-year to rotating 3-year terms

Lave introduced a proposal she and Solis had developed to expand the Nominating Committee's terms from the current 1-year to rotating 2 or 3-year terms and to gradually also expand the size of the Committee from 3 to 5 members. Solis added a further suggestion that the Nominating Committee members be given access to the AAG member database in order to query it for the kinds of diversity criteria each cycle of vacancies might require. Accessing the AAG database would allow the committee members to recruit beyond their own networks.

Langham replied that he would task staff to explore the implementation of these suggestions (incl. legal feedback) and develop potential timelines for the transition from the existing 1-year to extended terms and to a larger committee size. Ghosh suggested tapping into AAG Fellows for possible service on the Nominating Committee.

Lave moved to have AAG staff explore how to make the Nominating Committee's annual recruitment process more functional, including granting them access to AAG's membership database to facilitate their searches and to bring a proposal back to Council for review. Solis seconded the motion which received a unanimous vote in favor.

13.0 Resolutions for Outgoing Councilors

13.1 Resolutions and certificates for outgoing Councilors

Raphael read the resolutions thanking outgoing Councilors and, with Langham, issued certificates of recognition for their service.

Whereas, Emily Yeh, 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 AAG and the discipline of geography, particularly by championing the development of climate-friendly options for AAG meetings, supporting ongoing efforts towards inclusion and diversity in the discipline, and continued support for AAG Regional Divisions; and whereas she 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 at the 119th Annual Meeting, heartily thanks Emily for her leadership of the Association during the past three years, especially for championing the development of climate-friendly options for AAG meetings, supporting ongoing efforts towards inclusion and diversity in the discipline, and continued support for 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 at its 119th Annual Meeting, extends warm appreciation to Past President Emily Yeh, National Councilor and Secretary Joseph Oppong, National Councilor and Chair Meghan Cope, Great Plains Rocky Mountains Division Councilor Shannon O'Lear, Southeastern Division Councilor Selima Sultana, Middle Atlantic Division Councilor and Chair Tracy Edwards, and International Councilor Diana Ojeda for the energy, time, and talent they have contributed to the Association during their terms on the AAG Council.

• • • •

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 at its 119th 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.

There being no further business, Raphael adjourned the AAG Council Meeting at 11:13 AM.