

## Meeting Minutes

Animal Geography Specialty Group of the AAG (AnGSG) Business Meeting  
April 1, 2016  
Hotel Nikko, San Francisco

*Minutes: Anita Hagy Ferguson & Monica Ogra*

### Attendees:

Mona Seymour (chair)  
Julie Urbanik  
Stephanie Rutherford  
Sheri Wilcox  
Jeff Martin  
Jonathan Hall  
Kalli Doubleday  
Monica Ogra  
Anita Hagy Ferguson

### **1. Welcome and introductions (Mona)**

- Announcements: successful publication of 7<sup>th</sup> annual SG newsletter, 9 SG sponsored and co-sponsored sessions at this meeting, first plenary session organized (film screening and panel discussion of member Julie Urbanik's documentary), AnGSG-hosted social event details.
- Updates from the AAG SG Chairs Meeting: AAG will lower dues for some of the tiers including for undergrads and beginning faculty; and they may treat postdocs like undergrads in terms of dues amount. Possibly a grad student paper contest and winners from regional conferences get some \$ to come to main conference.

### **2. Budget and membership report (Mona, on behalf of secretary-treasurer)**

- Balance at end of Feb 2016: \$1,185 (163 members); balance at time of 2015 meeting: \$1,286 (150 members). Sources recognized from member donations and membership dues in the amount of \$244 over the prior 12 months. Expenses: \$200 on 2015 graduate student paper award prize, \$146 for website. Upcoming expenses: same as above, plus \$300 for the 2016 social event. (This expense was approved by the Executive Board prior to the business meeting.)
- Membership drop – Mona will be sending a reminder out to people to remember to pay dues to the group.
- Mona reminded the group that donations can be made at end of meeting.

### **3. Elections. Term completion, online voting, and nominations from the floor resulting in the following changes to the board:**

- Outgoing: Monica Ogra and Harvey Neo (general board members), Jody Emel (secretary-treasurer)
- Incoming: Kalli Doubleday (graduate student officer, 1-year term), Anita Hagy Ferguson (general board member, 2-year term), Jeff Martin (general board member, 2-year term), Jonathan Hall (secretary-treasurer, 3-year term)
- Continuing for renewed term: Suzi Wiseman (general board member, 2-year term, 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive term), Angie Parker (graduate student officer, 1-year term, 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive term); Shari Wilcox (Communications Officer)

### **4. Questions about nomination and election procedures:**

- General board members term out after two consecutive terms.
- According to bylaws, secretary-treasurer must be someone who holds a PhD already (i.e., not a graduate student). The basic tasks were outlined by Monica with a reminder that this service position and set-up helps to keep the board intact and helps to support the group's institutional skeleton. Treasurer duties related to website are shared with chair, who coordinates with Shari to make payment and processes reimbursement request from AAG for maintenance of our website. There is a document with chair and secretary responsibilities and guidelines that Mona will share with incoming officer.
- The possibility was raised for revisiting the PhD requirement for the position, in the event that the position would otherwise remain vacant. (No decision was made.)
- A general discussion about the advisory role of the general board members and duties of graduate student officers included a reminder that all board members operate as advocates and ambassadors for the group and that returning/outgoing board members are available to answer questions and support incoming members as needed.

### **5. Paper competitions.**

- Kalli Doubleday (UT-Austin) was recognized and congratulated as the winner of the 2016 AnGSG Graduate Student Paper Award for "Feeding the Wild: preserving India's most famous tigress."
- No UG paper entries last two years.
  - o Discussion: UGs are not usually members of specialty groups and they may not be getting our publicity. Also, many UG papers submitted in the past have not actually been "animal geography". There seems to be a gap in exposure to animal

geography at the UG level.

- A general discussion addressed ideas for ways to better publicize the competitions and increase submission rates, which have been lower than the reviewers would like. Suggestions included:
  - o active coordination with organizers of AnGSG-sponsored sessions (keep track of the people who co-sponsor sessions and ask them to circulate the call)
  - o send announcements to ASU, Human Interactions groups
  - o possibility of awarding the prize to a student presentation at AAG (not a paper prize)
  - o creation of a poster presentation prize for UGs
  - o partnership with other SGs for a combined prize- Biogeography and landscape specialty groups also have paper competition and/or presentation contests. Publicity and numbers might benefit from a presentation contest to replace or add to what we do. This is a problem across specialty groups.
  - o board members spread the word to other lists besides AAG and AnGSG listservs
- A related discussion ensued about whether the AAG should respond to concerns about how to promote student work and provide a publication venue, since this is an AAG wide problem not just our group.
- It was recognized that the quality varies across submissions and that students need more support. We discussed the idea that award winners could be provided an opportunity to sit down with an editor or someone from our mentor network for one-on-one feedback.
- **DECISIONS:** The group agreed to temporarily halt the UG award competition while we explore some of the options brainstormed in the meeting.

**6. Paper competition selection criteria.** A detailed discussion about the evaluation criteria and the need for reviewer guidelines addressed the following points:

- *What are we recognizing -- a paper that is publishable right now? Or is it a paper that shows promise?* The group was in agreement that the prize helps students to signify a sub-disciplinary identity and legitimacy, which is particularly needed in programs or departments that are less familiar with animal geography. There was some sense that the paper ought to be in an advanced stage, but no decision was taken on this.
- *Should we be requesting revisions from the authors?* This discussion resulted in a general consensus that we do not want or need to do this – especially since we are not going to put them on the website. However, we recognized that some written feedback is helpful. (Note: In this year's competition, member-referees shared a few suggestions for improvement for authors, which the chair synthesized into feedback for the award winner.)

- *How do we evaluate the papers?* We talked briefly about the idea of using a rubric, but did not go into details on this. It was acknowledged that since the level of paper development has not been made explicit in the call, it might be hard to create a single set of standards. A suggestion was made that the submitter could tell the evaluators what stage the paper is in.
- *What are other ways to improve the process?* The group discussed the idea of soliciting reviewer suggestions from student authors. They could be invited to identify preferred reviewers/reviewer suggestions. Alternatively, they could be given our list of SG faculty mentors and asked to list a few people to review their paper.
- The group discussed whether we should ask award winners to include AnGSG in the acknowledgements for a published version of the paper. (No decision was taken.)

### **DECISIONS:**

1) The group decided against posting papers or abstracts of student award winners on the website, out of desire to protect authors' intellectual property. However, there was support for the idea of publishing a link to the paper whenever it gets published.

### **7. AnGSG Mentoring Program.**

- Member report that the AAG women's mentoring event was standing room only. Our mentorship program has real potential.
- We have 8-10 mentors on the list right now.
- Acknowledgment that mentorship relationship is hard to initiate by students over email. Suggestion to create mentor-mentee space, possible "meet the mentors" – dovetail it with the animal geography social. (Mentorship/meet and greet/relaxed social time)

### **8. Suggestion to create a SG travel award for animal geographic research.**

- Discussion: How to keep money in the budget to support this? Would need a benefactor. (No decision taken.)

### **9. Items tabled for email discussion with executive board and/or for 2017 meeting:**

- Group content management (zotero, refworks, Wikipedia page, facebook page; AAG Knowledge Community; animalgeography.org site; repository for course resources on the animalgeography.org site) – Who can/should/does update this content?
- Planning for AAG2017 – Boston, MA. Ideas for field trips, events, gatherings?
- Open floor/any other business?

The meeting adjourned at 1:10 pm.