

MINUTES OF 2013 ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING OF THE ETHNIC GEOGRAPHY SPECIALTY GROUP OF THE ASSOCIATION OF AMERICAN GEOGRAPHERS

HELD FRIDAY, 4/12/2013, 8:30 PM - 9:30 PM IN SAN FERNANDO RM, WESTIN HOTEL, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

1. Welcome note by Heather Smith, EGSG Chairperson. Heather thanks all members for attending the meeting
2. Introduction of new members of EGSG who are attending their first business meeting
  - a. Three new members introduce themselves briefly and are welcomed to the group
3. Heather asks all present for their vote of approval/disapproval or abstention for 2012 EGSG business meeting minutes, circulated prior to meeting via email list-serve
  - a. Move for Approval made, Seconded, Approved, one member abstained
4. Heather reports on AAG Specialty Group Chairs' Meeting
  - a. New Polar Geography Group up and running
  - b. AAG encourages collaborations between specialty groups at annual meetings
  - c. Importance of submission of specialty group reports (only about half submit, EGSG was among those that did ☺)
  - d. AAG encourages and provides support for inclusion of non-member scholars at meetings – especially those with interests and expertise local to meeting
  - e. Discussion of business meeting scheduling at future AAG meetings – some felt being held too late in the evening
  - f. AAG conducts public outreach - especially around issues of legislative amendments intersecting with academic research and endeavors
  - g. AAG meeting report: 7,300 attendees, 1,438 sessions, 5,411 abstracts.
  - h. News and information increasingly conveyed through on-line newsletters and knowledge communities. Encourage specialty group membership to pay attention and to contribute to on-line efforts
5. Heather provides report on EGSG activities and achievements of past year:
  - a. **REP-VI:** everyone did a fantastic job, round of thanks and applause for organizers (full report later in meeting provided by John Frazier). All looking forward to the 7<sup>th</sup> meeting in Texas, Fall 2014
  - b. **Ad-hoc students committee.** Heather asks for students' committee to report on achievements.
    - i. An EGSG Facebook page has been created by Ana Sanchez with help of other student committee members - <https://www.facebook.com/#!/EthnicSpecialtyGroup>
    - ii. Anna mentions committee want to increase student membership of EGSG. Asks for help of faculty in EGSG in this effort. To date, 49 students are members.
    - iii. Students engaged in REP VI. Represented EGSG at the dedicated display table and talked to prospective members about their interests; are trying to contact them and are in touch with them.
    - iv. Heather thanks the student committee for also organizing and running student research presentation sessions at REP and at current AAG meeting. Applause by all.

6. **LA AAG Meeting Report:** Heather reports that over 30 sessions are sponsored by EGSG, including those focused on EGSG honorees. In future, program committee can consider even more special sessions and promote even more broadly.
7. **Secretary/Treasurer's Report:** The secretary (Madhuri Sharma) reports that we are on the positive side of the ledger, with a balance of \$2,832.04 as on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013, far better than what we were at this time last year.
  - a. Madhuri discusses membership issues, and that currently student membership dues are \$3 and for others it is \$10. Attendees agree this was okay to stand.
  - b. Madhuri discusses the use of the online AAG list-serve and website
    - i. All relevant information for group should be posted on the EGSG website.
    - ii. Heather also updates about concern that all not members receiving the emails via listserve.
      1. List-serve distributes to all members with up to date registrations – keep your membership up to date!
      2. In the past there have been issues that life time members do not get emails via list-serve like other regular members
        - a. Reason seems to be that since lifetime members do not receive annual invoice and pay annually, they have not been added to the list-serve.
        - b. This was the information shared by the AAG officials and needed to be shared with life-time members for clarity. Those concerned should email AAG and ask them for placement on the list-serve. They can contact Heather should they need more information.
8. **Report on the EGSG Newsletter:** Heather acknowledges hard work of Tom Boswell and Alan Marcus on their excellent job with the annual newsletter which was distributed to membership via email the week prior to the annual meeting. John Frazier shows a copy of the newsletter, the members thank them all.
9. **Report on EGSG's Web Site ([www.unl.edu/geography/ethnic](http://www.unl.edu/geography/ethnic)):**
  - a. Heather thanks Ezra for his services and his institution UWEC for their site hosting services
  - b. Heather mentions that when we took the historical record of all reports, awards, etc., they were not updated on the website. This will be addressed.
  - c. Someone asks if there is a link to EGSG website via Facebook the page students developed?
10. **Report on EGSG's Student Paper Competition:** No student was awarded the 'Best Student Paper Award' this year.
11. **Report on EGSG's Best Dissertation Proposal Award:** It was announced that Weronika Kusek from the Department of Geography, Kent State University was the winner for 2013. David Kaplan thanked for the award (Weronika's advisor). The theme of this paper concerned Polish migration to the UK. To continue on with discussions, John Frazier suggested that the winners from previous years could serve as members of the awards committee. There was applause for Weronika's award and she goes to the award luncheon on Saturday accompanied by Heather and Ines.
12. **Report on EGSG's Distinguished Service Award:** No one was given the EGSG Distinguished Service Award for this year.
13. **Report on EGSG's Distinguished Scholar Award:** Carlos Teixeira announces that the Distinguished Scholar Award for 2013 goes to James Tyner, Department of Geography, Kent State

University. Tyner provided EGSG Distinguished Lecture at LA Conference.

- a. Carlos names Awards Committee members and summarizes process about who gets the award and how the decision is made.
- b. Carlos commends work of the committee.
- c. Carlos announces the award winner for 2014 as Audrey Kobayashi, Department of Geography, Queen's University

14. **Report on EGSG's Distinguished Ethnic Geographer Career Award:** Heather mentioned that this award is not given every year, and is awarded to the scholars who have made exceptional contribution to the Ethnic Geography Specialty Group. Heather announces that the past several awardees were not all properly recognized and she wanted to clarify the names and the years these scholars were recognized. At the business meeting, the following four awardees were requested to come forward to accept the award/plaque. This was organized especially to honor the four outstanding scholars from past several years and these names are listed below:

2008: Jim Allen

2009: Lawrence Estaville

2011: John Frazier

2012: Wei Li

Heather thanks all the four senior scholars and mentioned that they are among the founders of this EGSG group, and that we are grateful for their guidance and support throughout.

15. **Report on REP VI and REP VII:** John Frazier provides report on REP VI and the REP VII
- a. REP-VI with leadership from colleagues from Puerto Rico was very successful.
  - b. John is grateful to all, and reported that REP VII (Fort Worth Texas, 2014) is on its way. John also briefly mentioned various activities and field trips, etc. that will be organized at REP VII.
16. **Vote for EGSG to provide financial support for REP VII:** Heather raises questions with all members present and seeks their willingness to provide support for REP VII meeting.
- a. A vote was conducted - unanimous vote to keep continuing to support the REP-VII.
  - b. Group also agrees that students should be supported with free meals. One abstention, all others vote yes.
  - c. Group also agrees to increase the level of financial support to REP VII. One abstention, all others vote yes.
17. **Elections** [Paper ballot distributed at meeting]: Elections for selecting new committee members held.
- a. Paper ballots distributed to all, and the members asked to circle the name of their choice for the various committees listed in the ballots.
  - b. Micheline collects all the ballots and thereafter the ballots were counted.
  - c. Results of the voting were to be announced later via email from Heather (See 2013-2104 EGSG Board and Committee Roster following minutes).
18. **Other Business: Introduction of EGSG Board Recommendations**
- a. Expansion and establishment of official EGSG Student Committee (currently ad hoc)
  - b. Exploration of moving EGSG Board and Committee voting online
  - c. Revision to Board and Committee Structure
  - d. Revisions of Bylaws (last reviewed in 2009)
    - i. Adjustments reflecting above

- ii. Greater clarity and detail with respect to awards (criteria, nominations processes, notification and recognition)
- iii. Vote on allowing Board to proceed to develop ideas noted and others that arise and bring to vote later in year by email.

For last several months, ongoing discussions among Heather, Heike and Madhuri about the structure of our committees. At business meeting goal was to introduce issues and solicit feedback from group assembled at the business meeting. In simple cases, also move to vote if group agreed to do so. See below for notes from discussion and record of decisions where relevant:

**a) Student Group**

The most important recommendation was that the student group (ad-hoc) be approved as official and permanent and its committee membership expanded to five (to address voting). This motion was passed, and then seconded. Before the voting, though, a question was asked if this committee would consist of ‘elected positions’? Heather answers “yes”, and that each member would serve for a ‘2 years’ term. Next few questions discussed were (i) What if the student moves out of being a student - how would that position be defined? (ii) What if anticipated completion time is sooner than two years, and what would happen in that case? Heather responded by suggesting that we should talk/discuss about these issues. Discussion ensues. Lawrence Estaville noted that we have a student board member and that decision about transition would affect him/her as well. Wei Li added her experience about continuing as a student committee member even when she had completed her PhD. One member commented that it is important to be involved and connected with the graduate students’ specialty group. Heather asked for any other comments. Further consideration will be given to question of student status after graduation if still serving on committee or board. Thereafter Heather asked for a motion to make the students’ ad-hoc committee permanent and voting was taken. This was voted and approved by all, and that the student committee should consist of five members, 2 year terms. All members present approved this decision, and one member abstained.

**b) Email Voting**

Heather indicates that the bylaws currently allow email voting on all issues except for the board and committee elections. Heather asks the members present to consider whether we want to move to electronic/mailed voting in future. To this suggestion, Lawrence comments that he was not sure if electronic voting will have the same outcomes as the paper ballot voting system. Concern that does not capture engaged membership. Heather responds by saying that many EGSG active members are not present at meetings and hence they were not voting which may also affect the outcome, and hence by introducing the electronic voting we will have elections that capture greater proportion of our membership in the voting. Lawrence expresses the need to develop more understanding about virtual voting. General discussion follows, decision to investigate options (i.e. can we do both -- voting in person and also online?) and consider further, bring back to group with options at later date. Lawrence encourages group to email Heather with any suggestions. Voting will operate as per bylaws for 2013-2014

**c) Revision to Board and Committee Structure**

Heather shares that EGSG has experienced some difficulty in filling open positions on several committees and board. Related issue is real involvement of each member with respect to tasks needed – not everyone stepping in to do work needed even if serving on the committee. Suggestions following from Heather, Madhuri and Heike’s discussions are:

- We consider ways to decrease the number of spots to fill and ensure those in positions are really engaged in the work and mission of the group
- We consider moving duties of AAG program committee to members of the board with support from executive
- We consider moving duties of AAG Awards committee to members of the board with support from executive
- Consider alternative structure of Student Awards committee

Discussion of these suggestions ensues:

- Lawrence comments about the awards committee. Feels awards committee should remain separate from the Board.
- Dave Kaplan agrees with comments of Lawrence, and he too emphasizes that the award committee should be different from the board members.
- Suggestions made that we could have board representation on the Awards committee but they should not be one and the same.
- For example, could rotate people from the board onto the awards committee (this was another strategy suggested by Lawrence and echoed by John Frazier).
- Lawrence clarifies for the group that originally in the bylaws service was for 5 years, and now it is only for 2 years
- Lawrence also mentions that there needs to be consistency in the awards being given every year. He mentioned that there must be clarity of rules concerning the who, how, what etc. about the nominations, the timeline, and how the award winners will be notified.
- This point raised by Lawrence was ‘moved’ and ‘seconded’ and members present voted for it. Heather will review bylaws and identify where greater clarity how these issues can be addressed.
- Brief discussion about shifting Program Committee duties to Board and to considering alternative structure of student awards committees. Given that no-one stepped in to fill last year’s two open spots for Program Committee group at meeting agree to allow Heather, Heike and Carlos for 2013 meeting to request assistance from Board members. Agreement to continue discussion about student awards committee in person and via email and postpone voting to later date.
- Awards, Program and Student award committees will operate as per bylaws for 2013-2014.

Heather asks for permission for Executive and Board to continue working on these issues and others that might arise and develop suggestions for future voting and eventually inclusion in the bylaws.

Permission granted by show of hands.

19. **List-serve**

Heather talked/clarified about the email via listserv and why it does not reach some lifetime members. Heather encourages all members to confirm that they are fully up to date with their dues and on the list-serve – this is primary way information, notification and news about EGSG will be disseminated  
Joy Adams clarifies about unsubscribing from listserv emails.

20. **AAG 2014 Tampa** Suggestions for paper sessions and field trips for the 2014 AAG meetings in Tampa, Florida, 2014? Heather asks for suggestions concerning sessions to be organized at AAG, Tampa in 2014, and indicates that those interested can email her. To this topic, Wei Li suggested that there could be several sessions on migration-related topics, and that EGSG can request specific dates that may help create a special symposium, and to collaborate will other specialty groups as well.

21. **Adjournment** Finally, Heather thanks group for their ideas, John thanks Heather for her hard work, and Heather thanks all present in the meeting. The meeting is adjourned.