The Graduate Student Affinity Group
of the Association of American Geographers
2012-2013 Report

I. Mission Statement:

Supporting the mission of the AAG by increasing participation of graduate students, voicing concerns/needs of graduate students, better preparing graduate students for careers in Geography and providing a forum for inter-university communication (both socially and professionally) among graduate student members of the AAG.

II. 2012 Dues:

The dues are currently $3.00.

III. Board of Directors:

Chair: **David Parr**, Texas State University—San Marcos

Vice Chair: **Marina Islas**, University of Texas--Austin

Secretary/Treasurer: **Sharon Wilcox Adams**, University of Texas—Austin

Director: **Zoe Pearson**, The Ohio State University

Director: **James Baginski**, The Ohio State University

Director: **Emily Billo**, Syracuse University

IV. Accomplishments, Activities Scheduled, Future Plans and Directions

The GSAG has accomplished a great deal over the last year:

a) Activities scheduled and b) Future Plans and Directions

Awards and competitions – GSAG Student Paper Competition and GSAG Student Research Award:

We plan to offer more than one award again in the coming year. Call for submissions were distributed in mid-October 2011.

Last year $1,000 was distributed in total to the three winners of the research award and $300 was distributed to two winners of the paper competition before the 2012 annual meeting.

Paper Award Winners were Vincent Artman (University of Kansas) and Monica Barra (CUNY).

Research Award Winners were Xingjian Liu (University of Cambridge), William Payne (York University) and Justine Law (Ohio State University).

At the AAG meeting in New York, the GSAG was very active supporting graduate student activities in cooperation with AAG and EDGE.

- We hosted our first-ever plenary talk given by Dr. Kate Swanson, CSU San Diego entitled "How I survived graduate school and landed a tenure-track position (and had a baby)";
- we organized panel sessions; one on graduate student challenges in doing human geography fieldwork and a panel on preparing for the job search.
- We held an orientation session and panel for newcomers to the conference;
- in conjunction with AAG staff we drafted a Newcomers Guide for the annual meeting program and available on the AAG website;
- following our plenary, we held our first reception for our membership;
- following the conference, we solicited a survey to get feedback from our membership. We had over 60 responses which we are using to help guide our sessions for LA 2013.

All in all, a very active and successful meeting for us!

AAG Annual Meeting 2013 activities planned:

In Los Angeles, we plan to continue with the format we created in 2012.

- Jason Dittmer, University College London, will give our second plenary talk on "How graduate school set me up for success/failure";
- Following the plenary, we will have a reception;
- Our past chair Zoe Pearson will lead another panel for orientation and newcomers;
- In conjunction with the AAG, we will host a Newcomers' Corner, designed to help student unfamiliar with the conference get advice and assistance on the first days of the conference;
- We are hosting panels on research, graduate student issues with geography departments, and drafting a CV;
- We are looking to sponsor low-cost field trips designed for graduate students (but open to all);
- Finally, we are looking to partner with other specialty groups that are interested in working with GSAG to develop common themes and conference plans for the future.
- We will again hold our paper award and research grant competitions.

c) Business Meeting at the 2012 AAG Conference in Seattle

Our business meeting was held in conjunction with the 2012 Annual Meeting of the

Association of American Geographers in New York.

It was reported that our membership had grown to 1050 members.

It was decided to raise fees from $2.00 to $3.00. This seemed in line with other groups and will enable us to provide more conference events and awards.

We discussed graduate student representation in the AAG-at-large. As a sizable community at each of the conferences, there may be ways that graduate students can contribute and participate in the leadership of AAG.

d) Student paper awards

See a) and b)

e) Newsletter information

Our newsletter came out in early February with announcements about award winners, reports on past winners, and GSAG sessions and sponsored sessions. Our next newsletter will come out in March.

f) Annual meeting plans for Los Angeles

See a) and b)

g) Other

Communication with members:

a) Website

The GSAG website (http://www.gsagaag.org) has been updated with the support of our Webmaster Phil Birnie.

b) Newsletter

The GSAG Newsletter is made available, one to two times per year, through the GSAG website and through the GSAG Google group.

c) Google group

During 2008-09, we established a Google group as part of an effort to streamline communication within the GSAG. The Google group continues to

provide our primary means of communication, and is our groups' listserv.

d) AAG Knowledge Communities

In increasing numbers, we've seen activity grow on the knowledge communities. It hasn't reached the level of communication that the Google Group has received yet, but the traffic has risen steadily.

GSAG History

Now that the group is 12 years old, we are preparing a brief history of the group with statements from each of the past chairs and if possible, directors. As a group whose membership is constantly changing (and growing), we hope to provide future graduate students and GSAG members a view of how it came to be.

V. Membership and Participation
The GSAG has grown significantly over the last six years from twelve participants at the first meeting in Los Angeles to the 1059 members we have now.

VI. Financial Report
BALANCE 10-01-2012: $2324.

VII. Special Requests or Questions for Council

Question (from several of the members): What role does the AAG Council see for students in the governance of AAG?

Submitted by
David Parr, Chair