**The Graduate Student Affinity Group
of the Association of American Geographers
2013-2014 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. 2013 Dues:

The dues are currently $3.00.

III. Board of Directors:

- Chair: **Marina Islas**, University of Texas-Austin
- Vice-chair: **Laura Cano**, Texas State
- Secretary/Treasurer: **Graciela Sandoval**, Texas State
- Community Builder: **Xiaofeng Kang**, University of Hawaii at Manoa
- GSAG Historian: **Brian Williams**, University of Georgia
- Past chair: **David Parr**, Texas State
- Board Member: **Joel Correia**, University of Colorado
- Board Member: **Matthew Craig**, St. Mary's University (MN)
- Board Member: **Rae Choi**, Ohio State
- Board Member: **Teresa Anderson-Sharma**, Cal State-Long Beach
- Board Member: **Renee Pieschke**, Minnesota State-Mankato

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. Although, rather than using our funds for a student paper of research competition, we will award support for travel for members.

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.

2013 GSAG Paper Competition Awards

1st Place: Meredith DeBoom, University of Colorado-Boulder
"Politics and Geopolitics of Chinese Involvement in Namibia: A Mixed Methods Approach"

2nd Place: Yin Yang, University of Oxford
"The institutional economic geography of urban water infrastructure governance: a comparison of Beijing and London"

2013 GSAG Research Award Competition
1st Place: Gary Lavanchy, University of Denver
"Water Resources and Tourism Development along the Western Coast of Nicaragua: A Political Ecology Perspective"

Honorable Mention: Kelly Kay, Clark University
"Conservation through Easements: Investigating Shifting Property Ownership Regimes in American Conservation"

Honorable Mention: Kimi Nygaard, University of Montana
"Examining Local Water Vulnerabilities and Enhancing Adaptive Capacities to Climate Change Impacts in Mountain Environments: A Case Study of Northern Ladakh, India"

Honorable Mention: Alan Black, University of Georgia
"Vulnerability of Motorists to Winter Precipitation in the United States

At the AAG meeting in Los Angeles, the GSAG was very active supporting graduate student activities in cooperation with AAG and EDGE.
- Jason Dittmer, University College London, gave our second plenary talk on "How graduate school set me up for success/failure";
- Our reception was held at nearby bar;
- 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;
- 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.

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

AAG Annual Meeting 2014 activities planned:

In Tampa, we plan to continue with the format we've developed over the last two years:

- We have invited co-founder of GSAG, Rich Heyman, to speak at our plenary in Tampa, 2014.
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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.

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

We have compiled a spreadsheet containing …

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 1073 members we have now.

VI. Financial Report
BALANCE 10-11-2013: $3,545

VII. Special Requests or Questions for Council

Submitted by
Marina Islas, Chair