

GSAG Board 2012-2013

Chair, *David Parr,*
Texas State University
– San Marcos

Vice-Chair,
Marina Islas, University
of Texas at Austin

Treasurer-Secretary,
Sharon Wilcox
Adams, University of
Texas at Austin

Board Member,
Emily Billo,
Syracuse University

Board Member,
James Baginski, The
Ohio State University

**Board Member and
Former Chair,**
Zoe Pearson, The
Ohio State University

Inside this Issue:

From the Chair	2
GSAG Elections	3
Awardee Updates	4
Award Winners	5
Sponsored Sessions	6
GSAG Pub Crawl	8



Highlights: AAG Meeting April 9-13

The annual meeting of the AAG will soon be starting in Los Angeles, and GSAG will be sponsoring several events. See pages 6-8 for a full list.

Highlights include:

- **Tuesday:** If this is your first AAG meeting, visit the **Newcomer's Welcome Panel** for tips on getting the best out of the conference.

- **Wednesday:** The "**Experience of Graduate School in Geography: Issues and Opportunities**" panel will discuss problems we face as grad students.

- **Wednesday:** Our **second annual GSAG plenary speaker will be Dr. Jason Dittmer** (University College London). His talk is titled "How graduate school set me up for

success/failure." See below for more details.

- **Thursday:** Elections for new officers will be held at the **GSAG Business Meeting**. See page 3 for more details.
- **Thursday:** Directly following the business meeting will be a **social night/pub crawl** in downtown LA. Come and join the fun!

GSAG Plenary: Dr. Jason Dittmer

GSAG is pleased to have Dr. Jason Dittmer deliver the 2nd annual GSAG plenary. His presentation "How graduate school set me up for success/failure" sets up a narrative where graduate school is the hero and villain. The plenary will take place on Wednesday, April 10 at 10am at the LA Hotel, Grand Ballroom Salon 2.

Dr. Dittmer graduated from Florida State University in 2003 with a PhD in Geography and is currently a Reader at University College London. His books include **Popular Culture, Geopolitics and Identity** (Rowman and Littlefield, 2010) and **Captain America and the Nationalist Superhero: Metaphors, Narratives and Geopolitics** (Temple

University Press, 2013).

A keen supporter of graduate students, we're pleased to welcome his talk.



"The Graduate Student Affinity Group (GSAG) is an organization charged with voicing the concerns of geography graduate students and better preparing students for their careers by providing a forum for inter-university communication and professional support. Our group is open to anyone from undergraduate students considering graduate school in geography to full professors who are interested in supporting graduate students."

From the Chair

The Graduate Student Affinity Group began in 2001 as an effort to support grad students and promote our voices to our departments, discipline, and to each other.

Dr. Rich Heyman served as the first chair. Recently, I asked him about how GSAG began. In 1999, he and Nick Velluzzi successfully unionized the graduate students as the University of Washington at Seattle. GSAG was partly created as an effort to help students at other departments gain a voice:

"The Graduate Student Affinity Group of the AAG was founded in the context of a wave of struggles to establish student employee unions across the US. A large part of that struggle was for graduate student employees (TAs and RAs) to have a recognized voice in the shape of their institutions, especially around working conditions." – Rich Heyman, 2012

Since then, GSAG has expanded its focus while maintaining a goal on supporting graduate student work. Our annual Paper Competition and Research Award Grants provide funds to support grad student publication and research.

Last year, previous GSAG Chair Zoe Pearson set a precedent of working closely with AAG staff to build programs to help new AAG members negotiate the annual meeting. Students make up almost 40% of attendees each year. Joy Adams has written a Welcome Guide to the meeting, and Zoe Pearson is leading a Welcome Newcomer's panel again, a great resource for new attendees.

At the New York meeting in 2012, GSAG held our first plenary led by Dr. Kate Swanson (SDSU). Her insight into how to finish her PhD, start her academic career, and begin a family was valuable. This year, Dr. Jason Dittmer (UCL) will talk about his graduate school experiences at our 2nd annual plenary.

There will be plenty of exciting events at the LA meeting this year. In addition to our panels, paper sessions, and plenary, we're making efforts to return to our roots as representatives of graduate students to the discipline. At the suggestion of Vice-Chair Marina Islas, I asked the AAG Council what role they saw for students in the governance of AAG. This began a lengthy and fruitful discussion within the council regarding student representation on the council.

As a result, I have been invited to join the council meeting in Los Angeles before the meeting. It's a non-voting, guest invitation, but an important step towards better representation for students on the board. My goal is to bring an important question to the council: Are the current council members directly addressing the concerns of graduate students that they represent? As students make up 30-40% of the AAG, it's important that the issues important to students are addressed. While this may yet be a few years away, I am recommending a permanent one-year voting position reserved for a graduate student on the AAG Council.

I would love to hear your thoughts. Email me at daveparr@txstate.edu, Thank you for your feedback and ideas!

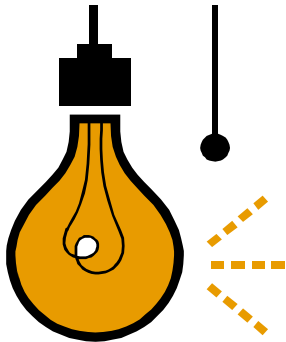
I hope to see you at AAG, at the GSAG Business Meeting, or over drinks at the GSAG Pub Crawl. It's been a pleasure serving you.

David A. Parr
Texas State University-San Marcos
daveparr@txstate.edu

GSAG Elections

Elections for GSAG Officers will take place at the GSAG Business Meeting on Thursday, April 11. You do not need to be present to run for office. Nominations will be accepted until then. To nominate someone, email their name, email, school and a brief statement to daveparr@txstate.edu. Nominees must be members of the AAG and GSAG. There are more details on our website at gsagaag.org.

GSAG is an inclusive organization, and all who run for election (regardless of outcome) are invited to serve as board members. We welcome your input and encourage your participation.



Nominees for Office

Nominees for Vice-Chair

Laura Cano-Amaya, Texas State University-San Marcos

Joel Correia, University of Colorado

Matthew Craig, St. Mary's University (MN)

Xiaofeng Kang, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Nominees for Treasurer-Secretary

Matthew Craig, St. Mary's University (MN)

Graciela Sandoval, Texas State University-San Marcos

Rae Choi, Ohio State University

Nominees for Community Builder

Teresa Anderson-Sharma, California State University-Long Beach

Renee Pieschke, Minnesota State University, Mankato

Xiaofeng Kang, University of Hawaii at Manoa

Nominees for GSAG Historian

Laura Cano-Amaya, Texas State University-San Marcos

Brian Williams, University of Georgia

GSAG Business Meeting

Followed by Graduate Student Pub Crawl

Thursday, April 11 7:30-8:30pm

The LA Hotel, Floor 2, Grand Ballroom Salon 3

Updates from Previous Award Winners

Emma Gaalaas Mullaney, PhD Candidate, Penn State University

Persistent Dismodernity: The Co-Production of Social Difference and Maize Diversity in Mexico's Central Highlands

My dissertation is a study of agricultural practice as critical refusal. It focuses on the active contestation of boundaries separating modern and traditional farmers through the everyday routines and activities of small-scale maize cultivation.

Justine Law, PhD Candidate, Ohio State University

Sustainable and Equitable Energy? A Comparative Analysis of Woody Biomass Energy Generation in Sweden and the United States

My dissertation highlights how communities struggle for control over local human-forest interactions through woody biomass energy, what the challenges and internal complexities to that struggle are, and when and why these communities succeed. I draw from literatures on energy geographies, political ecology, and alternative economies, and I employ a mixed-methods approach in two study regions: the Upper Peninsula of Michigan and central Vermont. Funds from the Graduate Student Affinity Group helped support my fieldwork in summer 2012 in Vermont, where I conducted interviews, visited sites of woody biomass extraction and energy generation, and collected secondary data. I've been presenting my findings from this fieldwork at conferences, including the AAG this year, and working on articles for publication. I plan to complete my dissertation fieldwork this summer.



Work routines in a local market (Emma Gaalaas Mullaney)



Maize varieties of Mexico's Central Highlands. (Emma Gaalaas Mullaney)

SoCal Agriculture Field Trip

Ag in the City: Farmland and Ranches in the West San Fernando Valley

Friday, April 12, 8:30am - 6:30pm

Organizer/Leader: Gina K. Thornburg, Kansas State University

Trip Capacity: 23

Cost/person: \$71

(includes transportation, lunch, snacks, handouts)

Sponsored by the Geographies of Food and Agriculture

Specialty Group and the Rural Geography Specialty Group

This field trip encompasses three sites important in the agricultural history of Los Angeles: Los Angeles Pierce College, dating to 1947 and providing 250 acres of open space that include a working farm, equine facilities, a historic landmark, a farm stand, and an agritourism attraction; the Leonis Adobe, a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Landmark dating to 1844; and the Orcutt Ranch Horticulture Center, also a Los Angeles Historic-Cultural Landmark, comprising the 24-acre remnant of a 210-acre cattle ranch dating to 1926. Lunch

will be at the iconic Follow Your Heart vegetarian restaurant in downtown Canoga Park. Talks by knowledgeable people connected to each site will be given. If time allows and participants are willing, the trip may end with a visit to one last historic ranch site, the 2,500-acre Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve, where we could enjoy an easy hike before sunset in the beautiful Simi Hills. Wear sturdy shoes and bring a canteen of water.



Pierce College Farm. (Gina K. Thornburg)

GSAG Paper and Research Award Winners

We had some very competitive entries in this year's paper and research award competitions. Because of the large number of entries, we've increased our number of awards. Congratulations to our winners! Consider submitting a paper or research proposal next year.

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"



Thanks!

We'd like to thank the graduate students who reviewed papers and research proposals for this year's awards:

- Carmen Brysch
- Matthew Connolly
- Nathaniel Dede-Bamfo
- Kumudan Grubh
- Yan Lin
- Adam Mathews
- Dr. Todd Moore
- Matt Patton
- Ben Prince
- Michael Scholz
- Ruoqing Scholz
- Dr. Melanie Stine
- Kanika Verma
- Elyse Zavar

GSAG Sponsored Sessions at the AAG Annual Meeting, Los Angeles

Welcome to the AAG annual meeting! A discussion on navigating and making the most of the conference

(Zoe Pearson – Ohio State University)

Tuesday, 4/9/2013, from 10:00 AM - 11:40 AM in San Pedro, Westin, Lobby Level

This panel session will serve as an "orientation" to the AAG annual meeting, and venue for newcomers to ask questions as well as meet other newcomers. Panel participants have diverse experience with the AAG annual meeting, and will give advice relevant to attendees on how to make the most of the meeting. Following introductions the session will proceed with Q&A and discussion between the panelists and audience members. Discussion may include, for example, how to decide what sessions to attend, useful lessons for mentoring students and/or faculty who attended the meeting for the first time, advice on making the most of networking with exhibitors, etc.

The Academic Job Market for Geographers

(Joy K. Adams - Association of American Geographers, Mark Revell - Association of American Geographers)

Tuesday, 4/9/2013, from 12:40 PM - 2:20 PM in San Pedro, Westin, Lobby Level

This panel will address key issues affecting career opportunities for academic geographers and strategies for improving their preparation for employment as educators and scholars.

Navigating an Academic Career: Opportunities and Challenges for Geographers

(Joy K. Adams - Association of American Geographers)

Tuesday, 4/9/2013, from 2:40 PM - 4:20 PM in San Pedro, Westin, Lobby Level

This panel will address key issues affecting academic geographers as they establish and maintain their careers and explore strategies for enhancing professional success and job satisfaction.

The Experience of Graduate School in Geography: Issues and Opportunities

(David A. Parr – Texas State University-San Marcos)

Wednesday, 4/10/2013, from 8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Grand Ballroom Salon 2, The LA Hotel, Level 2

This panel will discuss the issues that graduate students in geography departments and related fields encounter throughout their program. The panelists will discuss how geography graduate students relate to their department, what common problems they encounter, and how issues of diversity and difference play out in grad school. Topics may include professional development, department culture, and lessons from personal experience.

GSAG plenary session with Dr. Jason Dittmer: "How graduate school set me up for success/failure"

Wednesday, 4/10/2013, from 10:00 AM - 11:40 AM in Grand Ballroom Salon 2, The LA Hotel, Level 2

This plenary will address the many inadequacies produced in me through my graduate school experience, and how the capabilities produced in me through my graduate school experience enabled me to paradoxically overcome my graduate school experience. In this narrative, graduate school is both hero and villain, enabler and disabler. Speaking a decade on from my PhD hooding, I look back on how graduate school shaped my subsequent career for good and for ill, with advice for today's graduate students laced through the narrative.

Graduate Students in the Field: Reflections on International Fieldwork

(Zia Salim - San Diego State University / University of California, Santa Barbara)

Wednesday, 4/10/2013, from 2:40 PM - 4:20 PM in Grand Ballroom Salon 2, The LA Hotel, Level 2

Fieldwork is an important part of the construction of geographic knowledge. Conducting empirical fieldwork offers numerous opportunities and challenges, and international fieldwork presents its own inherently unique characteristics. This session brings together a number of panelists who have conducted international fieldwork as graduate students. The panelists employ a range of methodological approaches and have conducted research in a variety of regional contexts. As graduate students conduct international fieldwork, they gain first-hand experience with the intricacies of working and living in the field. The purpose of this panel is to reflect on some of the issues that are faced by graduate students conducting international fieldwork, and to share strategies, advice, and best practices.

Tales from the neoliberal university: stories that challenge the corporatized institutional experience of education

(Carrie Mott)

Thursday, 4/11/2013, from 8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Santa Barbara B, Westin, Lobby Level

Panelists will present 1000 word anecdotes about classroom teaching experiences, which speak to the possibilities for pedagogical subversion in the context of neoliberalized and corporatized educational institutions. These brief "tales from the neoliberal university" will ideally introduce common struggles and hint at moments of possibility within otherwise constrained contexts. This non-traditional forum will feature a reading of these stories, followed by what we hope will be a rich discussion including input from the people who have offered to read their tales, as well as audience members. Through this open discussion forum, everyone present will be able to offer thoughts about how to constructively and positively bring critical pedagogical approaches to fruition. We are interested in all stories of classroom experiences amid difficult institutional contexts,

GSAG Sessions (Con't)

particularly situations that reflect engagement with pedagogy as contestation, struggle, and/or resistance. However, we are particularly hopeful that we will receive submissions from people who have brought radical perspectives into introductory classes, recitation sections, and/or courses with very large numbers of students. These tales will serve as a starting point for the bulk of the session, which will be oriented around collective and constructive discussion involving everyone present.

The U.S. at Large: Putting Geographic Education to Work

(Larry Kleitches - Texas State University-San Marcos)

Thursday, 4/11/2013, from 10:00 AM - 11:40 AM in Malibu Parlor 3058, Westin, 30th Floor

What is the cultural, social, and intellectual life of the United States of America and how does it shape our country on a world stage that is constantly changing? How is this life reflected in everything from Internet, television, film, literature, and art, to history and politics? Many students have been found to be lax in their knowledge of geography, especially the historical and cultural geography of the U.S. This deficiency has also been a shaper of people's opinions of the U.S.'s standing in the world, impacting their grasp of global affairs. Papers being sought for this session, sponsored by the Geography Education Specialty Group and the Cultural Geography Specialty Group and co-sponsored by the Graduate Student Affinity Group, will discuss what has already been done in the classroom to improve knowledge of U.S. geography (preferably, but not limited to, historical and cultural geography), or new ideas about what could be done. From this understanding we as geographic educators will determine how to productively communicate our findings on an intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary scale about knowledge of U.S. society at large and its place on the world stage. The end game is for our students to be empowered and equipped to work on their own investigations.

Internships and Work-Based Learning as Career Preparation

(Joy K. Adams - Association of American Geographers, Mark Revell - Association of American Geographers)

Thursday, 4/11/2013, from 2:40 PM - 4:20 PM in San Pedro, Westin, Lobby Level

Practical experience drawn from or within the world of work allows multiple opportunities for developing transferable skills such as collaboration, social and communication skills, leadership, and project management. In addition, these "real-world" experiences can provide interns with insights about the types of professional tasks, projects, organizations, and career paths for which they are best suited.

Geography in the Americas: Making the Most of Student Exchanges for Research and Study Abroad

(Patricia A. Solis - Association of American Geographers, David Salisbury - University Of Richmond)

Thursday, 4/11/2013, from 4:40 PM - 6:20 PM in San Bernardino, Westin, Lobby Level

How can I take advantage of the opportunities for studying geography abroad in another country in the Americas? What do I need to know about how to design and conduct geographic research in another country in the Americas? Where do I find resources to help me get there and help me succeed? How should I prepare to get the most out of my study abroad experience? How can I successfully adjust to a different educational system and learning context? What institutions in the US and Latin America offer exchange programs for geographers? Panelists include US students (graduate and undergraduate) who have studied and/or conducted research in Latin America, Latin American students (graduate and undergraduate) studying in the US, and directors of student exchange programs for geographers across the Americas.

This panel continues a long running set of sessions organized at AAG Annual Meetings that focuses on a theme of importance for facilitating collaboration among geographers and geographic institutions across the Western Hemisphere under the title of Geography in the Americas.

Graduate Student Affinity Group Business Meeting

Thursday, 4/11/2013, from 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM in Grand Ballroom Salon 3, The LA Hotel, Level 2

Followed by Graduate Student Pub Crawl.

Critical Participatory Action Research and Feminist Geography

(Marina Islas - University of Texas at Austin, Caitlin Cahill - City University of New York)

Friday, 4/12/2013, from 8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in La Brea, Westin, Lobby Level

Feminist research has long been interested in power dynamics and relationships in a variety of social settings. Similarly, feminist researchers have challenged conventional epistemologies and methodologies by calling into question the positionality of researchers. They/we have engaged with theories of intersectionality to understand how different subjectivities - race, gender, ability, and sexuality, among others - are lived. In the process, they/we have blurred the line between researcher and "researched", scholar and participant through critical self-reflection. Many have integrated critical participatory methodologies in an attempt to balance/address/grapple with power and privilege within their research.

But how have feminist (and/or womanist) geographers critically engaged these theories to ensure that multiple voices and knowledges emerge? What does feminist critical participatory action research look like? What do PAR and feminist geography have to say to each other? This panel engages with the challenges, ethics, realities, and goals of conducting feminist participatory action research within the discipline of geography.

GSAG Pub Crawl

Thursday, directly after the Business Meeting
Meet at the LA Hotel, Grand Ballroom Salon 3



Come and join us for fun, socializing, networking, and a walking tour of downtown LA bars. Meet at the business meeting.



Visit us online at
www.gsagaag.org

GSAG Sponsored Sessions (con't)

Teaching about Africa: Alternative resources in the classroom

(Ryan Good - University of Florida)

Friday, 4/12/2013, from 10:00 AM - 11:40 AM in La Brea, Westin, Lobby Level

Movies, literature, and other supplemental media are important resources for managing perceptions, misunderstandings, and lack of basic geographic knowledge when teaching about Africa. Student perceptions of the continent are already shaped by their experiences with popular media, and textbooks often do not provide an adequate counter-balance. However, there is a wealth of other visual and text-based materials that teachers and professors use in their classrooms. Panelists will share their experiences with a range of alternative resources in the classroom, offering reviews of literature, movies, YouTube videos, and other media. Discussion will open on the benefits and challenges to using alternative teaching resources, both in practice and related to the topic of Africa. This panel serves as a follow-up to last year's sessions on courses and teaching about Africa.

Doing Geography Fieldwork in Africa

(Ryan Good - University of Florida)

Friday, 4/12/2013, from 4:40 PM - 6:20 PM in Santa Barbara C, Westin, Lobby Level

This panel explores the experience of conducting field-based geographic research in an African setting with an aim towards directing and assisting graduate students and early career faculty in conducting successful field work. As work on the continent has continued, the idea of 'Africa' in a scholarly setting has evolved, impacting and being impacted by the various sub-fields of geography. Panelists of varying topical, methodological, and regional expertise will discuss their struggles and successes in African research, the particular challenges of obtaining and disbursing funding for this work, and the ways in which this work is both similar to and different than work in other parts of the world. This panel will serve as a follow-up session to the series originally held at the 2010 AAG annual meeting.

Navigating the Process of Journal Publishing in Biogeography

(Melanie Stine - Texas State University-San Marcos)

Saturday, 4/13/2013, from 8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Santa Anita A, Westin, Lobby Level

This panel session will address the process of publishing in peer-reviewed scientific journals with an aim of introducing the process to students who have limited experience in publishing. Panelists will offer information and guidance on how to progress from a research project to a published article. Topics to be addressed may include selecting a journal, communicating with the editor, responding to reviewer comments, actions to take after rejection, preparing your material for submission, and tips on how to optimize the potential of your manuscript's acceptance. The focus of the session will be on publishing within the field of biogeography, but will be applicable to other areas of geography as well.

Imagining Intersectional Feminist Geographies: Beyond Privileging Gender

(Jill Williams - Clark University, Marina Islas - University of Texas at Austin)

Saturday, 4/13/2013, from 2:00 PM - 3:40 PM in Laguna Parlor 3048, Westin, 30th Floor

Feminist geographers have long called for intersectional analyses that attend to the ways in which various systems of oppression (e.g., gender, race, class, sexuality, ability) intersect (e.g., Valentine 2007; McDowell 2008; McKittrick 2006; Brown 2011). However, much feminist scholarship continues to privilege gender as the primary category of analysis. This session aims to bring together those working at the intersections of feminist, critical race, marxist, and queer theories to explore what an intersectional feminist geography might look like. We aim to start a productive dialogue that draws attention to how systems of oppression function in tandem to produce hierarchical power relations and unjust social structures.

