

2023 Political Geography Specialty Group Business Meeting Minutes

Meeting held on Friday, March 24, 2023, in Denver, CO (began at 11:45 MT)

I. Call to Order & President's Report (Kara Dempsey)

Preconference:

- Held on Wednesday, March 22, 2023, at University of Colorado Boulder.
- 64 attendees, 36 papers, a plenary on Ukraine, and 6 panelists for the Morrill panel
- Thank you to the local host, John O'Loughlin, and Meredith DeBoom for their hard work, and to the Institute of Behavioral Science (IBS) for hosting us.
- Thank you also to all the volunteers who chaired a session and/or helped throughout the day with registration, technology, and logistics.

AAG Updates (from Chairs' Meeting):

- Main AAG conference had 6,000 attendees (80% in person) and 1,300 sessions.
- The previous AAG-owned headquarters building needed extensive remodeling to be up to code. The AAG sold that building and is now leasing a building in DC.
- The JEDI committee provided recommendations to the AAG Governing Board, which will be implemented soon.
 - Shannon O'Lear, University of Kansas, provided a brief update to PGSG business meeting attendees from her JEDI work.
- The Governing Board discussed the 2024 Hawai'i meeting, to be held April 16-20, 2024, in Honolulu. In response to concerns, the AAG's Executive Director, Gary Langham met with indigenous scholars in Honolulu. After discussions, these scholars were supportive of the AAG meeting in Hawaii provided that the AAG adopt three key policies, to which the AAG leadership agreed. The policies are: 1) hire a local indigenous coordinator, 2) elevate indigenous voices during the meeting, and 3) provide free attendance and venter space for indigenous individuals. AAG leadership has committed to implementing similar policies in all future locations, including the 2025 meeting in Detroit.
 - Reece Jones, University of Hawai'i, provided a brief update to the PGSG business meeting attendees on the Honolulu AAG

II. Elections & Officers

The election for governing board positions was held virtually prior to the business meeting.

Congratulations to the **new officers**:

- President Emeritus: Kara Dempsey, Appalachian State University
- President: Meredith DeBoom, University of South Carolina
- Vice President: Kate Coddington, University at Albany

- Board members:
 - Azmeary Ferdoush, University of Eastern Finland
 - Christopher Lizotte, Oxford Brooks University
 - Mark Ortiz, Penn State University
 - Gabriella Subia Smith, University of Colorado Boulder (student rep)
- Committee members:
 - Ilaria Giglioli (undergrad research), Kevin Grove (DEA), Lindsay Naylor (DEA), Erin Nicley (student travel grant)

Thank you to **outgoing board and committee members:**

- Board members: Kate Coddington, Andrew Grant, and Kimberley Thomas
- Student rep: Jonghee Lee-Caldararo
- Committee members: Vincent Artman, Kate Coddington, Azmeary Ferdoush, Austin Kocher

Thanks also to our continuing board member, Andrew Curley, and to our continuing committee members. If you are interested in a future committee position, please contact Meredith DeBoom.

3. **Budget Update (Meredith DeBoom)**

PGSG is decisively (but not yet aggressively) spending down its higher-than-normal balance, which resulted from reduced spending over the past three virtual years. It will be important to monitor inflow/outflow moving forward, particularly once the ‘cushion’ is spent down and if revenue from dues continues to decline due to declining membership (a broader AAG phenomenon, not specific to PGSG). The PGSG is seeking to maintain a modest cushion to accommodate future student award and preconference costs (free preconference rooms are increasingly rare). This cushion will help the PGSG avoid having to decide between student awards and a preconference in a future year should costs increase or dues decline unexpectedly.

Donations are welcome and encouraged, particularly given the increased cost of travel to the 2024 AAG meeting in Honolulu. PGSG is happy to allocate donations specifically to graduate travel grant funding or other purposes. Donations can be made through the AAG at the following link (after clicking ‘donate now,’ be sure to designate Political Geography Specialty Group in the donation designation box): <https://www.aag.org/donate/#/donate>. Please contact Meredith or Kate if you would like to allocate your PGSG donation specifically to the grad student travel grant or another purpose.

Financial Activity (Feb '22-Feb '23)

Carry-forward balance from prior year: \$6,131.08

- Inflow: \$3,358
 - Dues: \$2,458

- Donations: \$900 (funds first 3 years of Morrill—newly-funded outreach award)
- Outflow: ~\$4,100 (*preconference cost is estimated*)
 - Awards: \$3,700
 - Morrill (NEW): \$300
 - Travel: \$1800 (8 x \$225) (priority this year)
 - Papers: \$600 (1 undergrad; 2 grad)
 - Dissertation: \$1,000
 - Preconference (*estimated*): \$400 (room rental + food > faculty registration fees)
- *Estimated Balance: ~\$5,389.08*

4. Awards

Congratulations to the winners of the PGSG's **student awards!**

- Travel Awards
 - Jessica Collins, Macquarie University (Australia)
 - Mehrnush Golriz, UCLA
 - Kai-Yang Huang, National Taiwan University
 - Stefan Norgaard, Columbia
 - Elisa Sperandio, Arizona
 - Billy Southern, Penn State
 - Àlex Muñoz Viso, Kentucky
 - Benjamin Weinger, UCLA
- Undergraduate Paper Award: David Lee, James Madison University: “Problems with Infrastructure: The Big Dig.”
- Graduate Paper Award (Master’s): Amani Ponnaganti, UW-Madison: “The Racialization of Citizenship in Postcolonial India”
- Graduate Paper Award (PhD): Meagan Harden, University of Hawai’i: “Micronesia at the Conference on the Law of the Sea: Bringing Ocean Ontologies into International Law”
- Alexander B. Murphy Dissertation Enhancement Award: Andrea Cabrera Roa, Clark: “Governing Present Absences: In the Making of Sovereign Territoriality Through Indigenous Peoples in Isolation and in Initial Contact in the Peruvian Amazon.”

Congratulations to the winners of the PGSG's **non-student awards!**

- Stanley Brunn Young Scholar Award: Azmeary Ferdoush, University of Eastern Finland
 - Nomination excerpt: “Azmeary has already made important contributions to the literature on key political geography themes of sovereignty, the state, borders, territory, as well as nationalism, citizenship, and belonging. He has actively been publishing from this rich doctoral research in leading geography journals like

Political Geography, Area, Antipode, and Geoforum, and he has just signed a contract for a book covering the full scope of this research with Cambridge University Press, *Sovereign Atonement: Citizenship, Territory and the State along the Borders of Bangladesh and India.*”

- Richard Morrill Public Engagement Travel Award: Srinivas Chokkakula (Center for Policy Research, India): Leveraging Political Geographic Theory for Federal River Water Governance
- Virginie Mamadouh Outstanding Research Award: Kara Dempsey, Appalachian State University, “Spaces of Violence: A Typology of the Political Geography of Violence Against Migrants Seeking Asylum in the EU” in *Political Geography*.
- Julian Minghi Distinguished Book Award: Andrew Grant, Boston College, *The Concrete Plateau: Urban Tibetans and the Chinese Civilizing Machine* with Cornell University Press.

5. General Discussion

Proposals

- **Undergraduate Paper Award → Undergraduate Research Award**: Sarah Salazar Hughes, a member of the Undergraduate Student Paper Award Committee, revisited her prior year’s suggestion to expand the eligibility for the undergraduate award from only papers to a broader range of submissions (e.g., podcasts, StoryMaps). This proposal was adopted with broad consent from members in attendance. The Undergraduate Award Committee will implement this change for the next award cycle (Honolulu, 2024)
- **Graduate Paper Award Length Change**: Chris Lizotte, Chair of the Graduate Student Paper, proposed increasing the acceptable length for graduate student paper award submissions from 15 pages to a length that better reflects subfield journals. This proposal was adopted with broad consent from members in attendance. The Graduate Paper Award Committee will implement this change for the next award cycle (Honolulu, 2024)
- **Political Geography Teaching Materials**: Kara Dempsey, outgoing President, suggested that PGSG develop a shared folder of political geography teaching materials (e.g., syllabi, assignments). Such materials would be particularly valuable to graduate students and those in new teaching positions. Members in attendance expressed support for this proposal while noting the importance of ensuring that its establishment and maintenance does not overburden those tasked with managing PGSG’s website (particularly if that individual is a graduate student). Kara offered to pursue this idea in her new role as President Emeritus. If you have suggestions, please contact Kara.
- **Promoting/Supporting Award Winners**: Meredith, incoming President, is working with Kate, incoming VP, to identify opportunities to promote PGSG award winners through PGSG-sponsored events at the AAG annual meeting and/or facilitated opportunities (e.g., an annual lecture featuring the Young Scholar Award recipient,

opportunities for graduate student paper award winners to connect with subfield editors). The goal is to provide additional recognition of awardees' work beyond the business meeting. Participation by award winners would be optional. If you have suggestions, please contact Meredith.

- **Professional Development Opportunities (Beyond the Preconference):** Meredith and Kate are investigating options to provide professional development opportunities for those who may be unable to attend the 2024 Honolulu preconference and AAG meeting for any reason. Suggestions are welcome! If you have participated in a successful or unsuccessful event of this sort, such as a virtual paper workshop, please share your experience and suggestions with Meredith and Kate.

Other Announcements

- **Thank you to Kara Dempsey, outgoing President, and Afton Clarke-Sather, outgoing President Emeritus!** They have led PGSG through a challenging stretch, including an in-person preconference that was cancelled (Denver 2020), PGSG's first virtual preconference (Seattle 2021), an in-person preconference that was subsequently moved online (New York 2022), and PGSG's first in-person preconference in three years (Denver 2023). Kara also initiated and led efforts to fund the Morrill Award so that recipients can share their outreach work at the annual preconference and to support a more diverse pool of applicants through the PGSG student travel award. Thank you for all you have done for the PGSG!

The meeting adjourned at 12:01pm MT.