

Political Geography Specialty Group

Minutes of Business Meeting, March 18, 2026

Union Square 25, 4th Floor, Hilton, Tower 3

11:40-12:40 PM

Kate Coddington, President, presiding

Lindsay Naylor, Vice President

I. Call to Order & President's Report

Welcome, presentation of agenda, and introductions.

Approval of the 2024 Business Meeting minutes (available online).

AAG News

- The AAG provided registration counts for 2026: 5,013 registrants (vs. 5,580 in Detroit). Because of the lower attendance post-COVID, the AAG has developed a committee to explore mid-sized cities as venue options. We noted that the AAG conference in 2027 will be early: February 8-12, 2027. This means that we will have an early preconference, early awards, early abstract deadlines. There were issues mentioned with specialty group membership renewals: this especially affected those with multiyear memberships. Some of the issues were due to the new interface for the website.

PGSG News

- The PGSG has roughly 350 members as of March 15, 2026, a drop of ~50 members compared to last year, or a drop of ~180 since 2019. Some of the decline is probably due to the issues with specialty group renewals discussed above.
- The PGSG is sponsoring 64+ sessions (vs. ~40 two years ago and ~70 last year) at the San Francisco AAG.
- Sponsored sessions included the Stanley Brunn Early Career plenary with Emily Mitchell-Eaton in the session just before this, with about 50 in attendance. The PGSG also had the opportunity to co-sponsor a second plenary with the Tourism Geographies specialty group featuring Vernadette Vicuna Gonzalez on 3/19/2026 as well as the Political Geography Plenary: Desiree Fields, titled "California Forever? Speculating on new cities in the wild frontier" on 3/20/2026.

Early Career Article workshop:

The PGSG organized a 2025-26 Early Career Article Workshop. Lindsay Naylor, Vice President, was the lead organizer. The numbers: 24 participants, 7 mentors, including Galen Murton, Kara Dempsey, Jim Tyner, Kevin Grove, Jared Margulies, Asher Ghertner, and Chris Lizotte. One attendee from 2026 wrote that, “[the mentor] was very generous in engaging with both of our works and facilitating the discussion, and I received a lot of insightful comments on my manuscript from them. This workshop was also particularly helpful in helping me feeling more confident in navigating the publication process as a single author for the first time.”

Preconference

The pre-conference this year included three events: the pre-conference, a reception, and walking tours. Local host Ilaria Giglioli, University of San Francisco, hosted PGSG at the University of San Francisco’s McClaren Conference Center. There were 51 attendees and 31 papers presented, and the 17 tenure-track faculty paid \$25 per person. All others enjoyed free attendance. About 40 attendees attended the reception, which was held at the Laughing Monk on Fulton Street at a cost of \$10 per person. The walking tours, organized through Shaping San Francisco, involved about 15 participants and were offset by donations from Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space and Political Geography. Participants paid \$20 per person.

Costs: totaled \$2,770 including refreshments, walking tours, and contributions towards the reception. Expected revenue with donations from Environment and Planning C: Politics & Space (\$1,000, thanks to Eugene McCann) and Political Geography (\$1,500, thanks to Filippo Menga) resulted in a break-even conference. Political Geography’s donation provided \$750 for next year as well.

Thank you to attendees, as well as program organizer Lindsay Naylor, local host Ilaria Giglioli, student volunteers Evi Van Pottelberghe and Sofia Zazueta, as well as volunteer chairs Afton Clarke-Sather, Corey Johnson, Tom Narins, Ellen Kohl, Lindsay Naylor, Mark Purcell, Ruth Trumble, Karen Culcasi, Alec Murphy, Shannon O’Lear. Thank you to the McClaren Center at USF, Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space, Political Geography, the PGSG board. Next year’s pre-conference will be held in New York City in February, 2027.

II. Budget Update

Expenses for awards totaled \$3,050 this year with 8 student travel awards (\$225), 1 Murphy award (\$1,000), and 1 graduate student award (\$250). Domain hosting totaled \$160. Income included dues (9-12/2025) of \$375, projected total dues of an additional

\$1475 (projected based on previous years) and \$225 donated from DeGruyter Books. The preconference resulted in a positive balance of \$761, for a total projected income of \$2,786. The carry forward balance from current accounts (\$7,867) amounts to \$4,439.

The increased carry forward balance of ~\$3,000-\$4,000 vs. \$2,800 last year can be attributed to the Political Geography donation (\$750) and reduced awards. A continuing issue is that dues income is significantly greater than awards. Donations kept costs in check – Political Geography, Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space, DeGruyter Social Science Books, AAG Geoforum Travel Award were all useful contributors to the budget. Membership trends are continuing to decline since COVID-19, with a greater percentage of student dues, which can be connected to wider declines in AAG membership overall. The drop of ~50 members in one year can be somewhat attributed to issues with specialty group membership dues, but we continue to be reliant on the cushion built up during the COVID-19 pandemic for sustainability.

III. Looking ahead to New York

We will be holding our 2027 pre-conference in New York City, which raises questions of venue, affordability, and issues related to the early AAG for 2027 in terms of award and other deadlines.

IV. Elections

- Elections were held virtually, March 7-14, using Qualtrics. 51 votes registered.
- We thank the following outgoing board members:
 - Faculty: Ted Holland
 - Student Board: John Nightingale
- We welcome the following incoming/continuing board members:
 - President: Kate Coddington
 - Vice President: Lindsay Naylor
 - Faculty: Benjamin Forest, Devran Koray Ocal, Leslie Gross-Wyrtzen, and newly elected Jamey Essex
 - Student rep: newly elected Ben Weinger
 - Emeritus: Meredith DeBoom
- The following committee members are rotating off–thank you!
 - Grad Paper: Chris Lizotte
- The following are new committee members:
 - Grad Paper: Angela Smith, University of New South Wales Sydney

V. Awards

Student Awards

Travel: 8 awards this year (one sponsored by DeGrynter Social Science Books)

- Bryan Castro-Velez
- Benjamin Weigner
- Aila Bandagi Kandiajunta
- Jublee Handique
- Keegan Kessler
- Fernando Lopez Oggler
- Faisal Bin Islam
- Shize Zhang

We were also able to award one person a new \$1,000 Geoforum Community Support Travel Award which involved a meet-and-greet with Sam Mahfoudh, Senior Publisher at Elsevier, and the other 5 fellow Geoforum Community Support Fund awardees.

- Irma Losada Olmos

Undergraduate: no award this year

Graduate Ph.D.-Level Paper (Chris Lizotte):

- Troy Brundidge (University of Oregon)

Alexander B. Murphy Dissertation Enhancement Award (Fiona Davidson):

- Kai-Yang Huang, Ph.D. Candidate, Department of Geography, National Taiwan University, "The Relational Structuring of Border Consciousness: Lin Yi-He between Event and Memory"

Non-Student Awards

Stanley D. Brunn Early Career Scholar Award: Meredith DeBoom

Excerpt from two nominations for the award noted that:

"Meredith has done an impressive amount of fieldwork in Namibia over the years, and her grant and publication record attests to her intellectual excellence. Her years in the pre-tenure trajectory have been busy, and she continues to advance important conversations in political geography on environmental geopolitics through her new research on climate politics and the energy transition in southern Africa."

And:

"Her work advances political geography by a rigorous application of geographic concepts in conjunction with salient social science debates and completed with compassion for those living in the poorest parts of the world... Meredith is an outstanding researcher who leads discussions of development and necropolitics, a committed and award-winning teacher, and a stalwart citizen who has advanced political geography scholarship."

Virginie Mamadouh Outstanding Research Award: Freeman, S. (2025). Making the 'beneficiary': Humanitarian biometrics and the politics of place. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 02637758251346267.

Julian Minghi Distinguished Book Award: Billé, F. (2025). *Somatic states: On cartography, geobodies, bodily integrity*. Duke University Press.

Richard Morrill Public Engagement Award: No award this year

VI. New Business

Discussion of website workflow and difficulties paying specialty group membership dues. Discussion of IGU affinity group and IGU budget cuts. Discussion of early deadlines for awards given 2027 AAG timing.

VII. Announcements