

2021 Steering Committee Meeting

Florence, Alabama

November 21 2021; 11am – 2pm Central

Notes compiled by current SEDAAG Secretary (2021-2023) Craig Ramseyer

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Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions

President Lynn Resler provided an overview of the executive committee members and she welcomed the new incoming and outgoing executive committee members.

Outgoing Officers (term ending at the conclusion of the Florence Meeting in November 2021)

President Lynn Resler (Virginia Tech) - Lynn will continue on the executive committee as Past President.

Treasurer Amy Potter (Georgia Southern)

Incoming Officers (term beginning at the conclusion of the Florence Meeting in November 2021 until November 2023)

Incoming President Bill Graves (UNC-Charlotte)

Incoming Treasurer Paul McDaniel (Kennesaw State)

L Resler introduced Dr. Yeh, president of the AAG who was present at the meeting.

Roll Call of Officers/Members Present

Tennessee Rep - Ingrid Luffman

South Carolina Rep - Conor Harrison

Co-editors of Southeastern Geographer - Selima Sultana (AAG Counselor) and Paul Knapp

Alabama Rep - Jordan Cissell

AAG President - Emily Yeh

Georgia Rep (stand-in) - Jordan Brasher

Paul McDonald - incoming 2021-2022 Treasurer

Brian Williams - MS State Rep

Bill Graves - incoming 2021-2022 president

Student rep - Sarah VanShoick

Jennifer Rahn - Vice President

Craig Ramseyer - Secretary

Joann Mossa - SEDAAG Past President

Amy Potter - Treasurer

Lynn Resler - President

North Carolina rep - Sarah Praskievicz

Not present

Jamison Connor - WV State Rep

Peggy Cord - KY State Rep

Cynthia Simmons - FL State Rep

Anamaria Bukvic - VA State Rep

2. Thanks to outgoing officers and representatives

3. 2021 Meeting

Lynn provided an overview of the virtual meeting in 2020. Earned >\$6000 from that conference despite low attendance. AAG provided a lot of financial support (Regional Stabilization Relief Fund) and other grant opportunities through AAG.

Virtual meeting feedback - strengths - nice to not travel during COVID and cost effective. Weaknesses - very few attendees in a lot of sessions. People are more hesitant to ask questions. People missed the socialization aspect of the meeting and lack of excitement. Difficult to network virtually. Overwhelming support for future meetings being in-person. That helped inform our decision to go forward with in-person meetings for 2021.

In 2021, AAG awarded SEDAAG from Regional Stabilization Fund (100% of the funds went to student support for the 2021 meeting). The travel budgets for students at individual schools have seen cuts, and thus, why the funds were allocated in this way. \$4400 were awarded. Students that were participating in the WGB and/or presenting research were eligible for the funds. 15 registration waivers were set aside for diversity initiatives (IDEAL subcommittee). Only 7 of the waivers were allocated. Future recruitment should work with the new JEDI committee from AAG to strategize how to bolster diversity and inclusion in SEDAAG. 52 students were supported with the funds.

2021 was the first meeting using the AAG registration portal. Mixed reviews from SEDAAG registrants. Students that didn't have an AAG profile/account, it was a confusing process getting signed up. Saved money through this process, however, increased labor required from the local arrangements team (e.g. printing programs, registration details, name tags). EventBrite has reached out about registering SEDAAG, may be an option moving forward. 2020 meeting used AAG for the entire virtual meeting and there were costs associated with using their online delivery platform.

2021 has limited virtual components, a virtual poster gallery, we used VirtualPosterSession.org, developed by some academics at UNC. 10 virtual posters in the session, allows for recording, discussion board, password protected, good for our purposes this year because of small size. We had 2 registrants who wanted to shift to online because of last minute changes. IDEAL session this year is open-access and available on Zoom. Our conference rooms for this meeting are not accommodating for virtual orals. Future meetings will need a code of conduct if we want to support online oral presentations, will also incur additional costs. Hiring technical staff is expensive. SEDAAG would have difficulty going fully hybrid in the future because of these additional costs.

Question from Student rep: students feel it is very important to have some virtual options, especially for students with families or care taking responsibilities. The IDEAL geographers in particular benefit from this option.

Jennifer Rahn: of the virtual posters there were only 2 students. The virtual posters were printed and will be in the poster session to remind people to go to the website.

Lynn: Some of the virtual posters are going to be available by Zoom to interact with interested participants.

a. Financial support

b. AAG Resources

c. Virtual components

4. AAG Program Excellence Award Competition, 2020 and 2021

Last year for the competition in 2020, both of the programs SEDAAG nominated won at the National level. Dept of Geography and Anthro at Kennesaw State University, and the GS Program at James Madison University. Nominations had to come from the region, we could only nominate 2. We had 3 programs interested. An evaluation metric had to be developed. SEDAAG ended up asking for a bulleted list of items, related to AAG criteria for the award. This year, the process was different, the AAG started allowing for self-nominations, ETSU went through this process. Should continue to go through the executive committee if possible, it may make a stronger case. Lynn then explained the full process for nominations.

Selima Sultana - departments that win the award get a lot of recognition from the university as well.

5. Elections

a. Need nominations from Steering Committee for Nominations Committee, Honors Committee, and IDEAL Committee for business meeting.

Lynn - Need nominations for the above committees. 3 going off the nominations committee, 2 off the honors committee. Steering committee should reach out to colleagues to get nominations. Last year at the business meeting, a lot of volunteers came forward. May be difficult this year because of stresses on faculty. Lynn will reach out to others if we don't fill committees after the annual meeting. Ideally, this would be done at the business meeting.

TN Rep: What is the commitment level? Lynn- Honors committee is 2 years for rotation purposes. This should be changed in the bylaws because it says 1. Nominations committee is low intensity, low time commitment. Using committee resources willing to serve for representatives of the steering/executive committees. They also manage the ballot, acquiring ballots. Secretary manages the elections. Honors committee is a little more work.

Sarah - a lot of work but compressed time frame. Run student award sessions as well as the faculty level awards. Read papers/posters for student award sessions and the faculty level awards.

Lynn - very low numbers of nominations for faculty level awards. Need to find ways to increase nominations. AAG awards gives money for PhD student award, and undergraduate paper award. SEDAAG has never had an undergraduate paper award session. We didn't have anyone sign up for the undergraduate paper award session this year. We inquired about giving award for a poster session instead, but we were encouraged by AAG to organize an undergraduate paper session.

Jennifer: We've only had 3 undergraduate presenters, back in 2019.

Joann: MS students get an award from SEDAAG but no money given by AAG for that award.

Lynn - Maybe it would be a good idea to shift the timing for award nominations for faculty.

Student Rep: Can MS students that did a research project as undergrad present in the undergraduate paper competition.

Lynn - Student rep is 1 year in the bylaws. Is that what we are currently doing?

Student rep - Yes

Lynn - we need to rotate the award by state. Please submit student rep nominations to me or Bill Graves, the student rep in a president appointment. I've asked the student representative to make some suggestions in her report.

Lynn - We will hold a vote at the business meeting to make the IDEAL committee a standing committee. The current chair is Heidi Lannon and would like to get two more representatives once a standing committee. They will present their case at the business meeting. Lynn introduced Jennifer Rahn and thanked her for her service.

6. Vice President and Program Chair Report (Jennifer Rahn)

Jennifer - Presented a breakdown of submissions (see attached). The most exciting part was 108 student submissions. We have really strong student support.

Lynn - Any challenges to keep in mind moving forward?

Jennifer - Some multiple submissions. There were several papers with 6 co-authors, caused some logistical issues.

Lynn - the chair of the local logistics committee and the VP need to be in close contact.

Jennifer - we had some communication issues with when conference rooms were going to be available for doing sessions

7. Treasurer's Report (Amy Potter)

Amy - assets are healthy, \$205,000, up \$28K from last year. Caution should be heeded, there was a boost in money from a reserve account for Southeastern Geographer funds (accrued since 2013). Mostly revenue from ProjectMuse. The account was closed out and was dumped in our general account. Reserve account was \$44K last Spring when it was closed. See further details in the Treasurer's report below. Expenditures are up, since last October, \$25K, up \$1K from a year prior. Meeting expenses and deposits are up as inflation is up. SEDAAG membership has rebounded above 2019 levels. WE took a big hit last year with the virtual meeting. 12 years of membership trends included in the report. While membership is up, we are still below 2016-2018 levels. See breakdown in Treasurer report. Student membership is above 2019 numbers. Be careful in the future as costs for conferences are climbing. Travel budgets at universities may be an issue.

Lynn - in 2013 we owed money to UNC Press and they held onto the royalties for years to make up for a deficit but never stopped. Each year we are getting royalties that are helpful for the operating budget. Thank you to the co-editors. I wanted to do more to reach out to smaller institutions in the region. We administered a survey to try to gauge why people were leaving SEDAAG, how could we better serve those institutions? We should reach out to those institutions in the post-Covid era.

Jennifer - how much do we spend on conferences?

Amy - most of our expenditures go to assisting students (GEO bowl, and award winners). She further cautions against future declining membership and losses on conferences.

SC State Rep: suggestion that we do conferences in states where we have a majority of members.

Amy - we can see what happens in the Atlanta meeting.

Jennifer - we didnt get a lot of participation initially on the undergraduate research sessions. Its important for undergraduates to attend for networking.

TN State Rep - at the Athens meeting, the research universities had a session where students could meet with faculty for graduate school.

Some members were worried about costs and logistics of adding another session.

Lynn - interested to see how the southeastern geographer session goes this time to see if that session provides an informal setting for students to meet and greet each other.

8. Secretary/Webmaster's Report (Craig Ramseyer) and Communications (Lynn Resler and Craig Ramseyer)

Lynn - one of our major communications methods is the AAG Knowledge Community through the AAG, is currently non-functioning. This would allow us to communicate with AAG members within the region even if they arent currently SEDAAG members. I have called and emailed and don't have any feedback.

Dr. Yeh - nothing is currently working on the AAG website, but we are working on getting those fixed. We are transitioning to a new website that should get rid of these issues. IN the leadup to the submission in New York, the website broke, and had to rebuild the website. I'll try to get an answer for you.

a. AAG Southeastern Community

Craig Ramseyer provided an overview of the new website and discussed the need for disseminating information via email in a weekly digest format moving forward. Data from SEDAAG newsletter suggests that only 20% of recipients opened the newsletter, that number steadily declined through the fall as emails/newsletters increased in frequency, settling at 10% most recently. Emphasized the need to get information to the Secretary quickly for dissemination and not wait until the last minute now moving to a weekly digest (particularly in the fall leading up to the annual meeting).

b. Updated Webpage

c. Social Media

d. Need for a consolidated method for communication

Lynn - we can use Facebook as well. We have a lot of traffic on that. We have 400 twitter followers. Secretary is not always the Webmaster, it is whoever wants to volunteer for that. Craig and Shrinidhi has both stepped up and done this.

Jordan - can we get student representatives involved with social media?

Lynn - Good point, maybe we pursue that in the future.

9. Southeastern Geographer Report (Sultana and Knapp)

See Powerpoint attached for the report.

Project Muse/JSTOR led to a jump in revenue since 2018.

Jennifer - We should be telling students to download directly from ProjectMuse/JSTOR because it leads to revenue.

Jennifer - Can we opt out of the print copy?

Paul - We did a study that showed the majority of members still want print. The cover art is a highlight of the print copy.

Selima highlighted the challenges SEG faces because of the pandemic. Submissions temporarily decreased but currently back to pre-pandemic levels. Issues with reviewers declining, that problem persists. Struggles with acquiring an impact factor, rejected in 2013 from Clarivate. Causes for rejection were the SEG's editorial board and contributors are almost exclusively from the US. Citations nearly all from the US. Articles in SEG had less grant funding and lower citation activity. To combat some of these issues, we were aggressive in recruiting outside of the SE for board members (currently 6/30, including one international). Increase citations by the authors outside of the US. Publish more articles supported by grant funding. The trade offs: increased rejection rate, loss of regional identity, loss of developmental component of the journal (i.e. emerging scholars may have more difficulty).

TN Rep: There is no way to submit a grant without a grant number, is there a way to proceed with submitting grant info without a number?

Selima - Yes, just put it in acknowledgments and we will put it in for you.

10. State Report Highlights (State Representatives)

Brian Williams (MS) - only a couple of programs with concentration in Geography. USM Dept of Geography has been consolidated. MS State has experience declining TT lines. Pandemic has brought challenges to Mississippi, enrollment down, USM/MS State has rebounded a bit. The new Dean of Libraries at MS State is a Geographer.

Sarah (NC Rep) - similar issues in Mississippi. All of the institutions reported enrollment is stable or growing, but

majors are declining. Geography is a discovery major and Covid has made it hard for students to discover GEOG. GIS accessibility issues in online learning. Another major highlight, promoting GEOG as independent discipline versus interdisciplinary. UNCCH is changing their name from GEOG to GEOG and ENV. A lot of discussion about promoting diversity, positive signs of hiring underrepresented faculty.

(GA Rep) - No report

Jordan (AL Rep) - across the board declines in GEOG majors, but increases graduate enrollment. Pressures of the pandemic. Competition from professional degree programs. GIS courses have been developed in non-GEOG departments and having an impact on enrollment in GEOG courses.

TN Rep (Ingrid Luffman) - Heard back from 7 institutions. Generally, trend is stable in # of courses/majors (e.g. stubbornly stable). 4 new hires with more planned next year. Some impacts from COVID, mostly in Spring 2021, influencing student success. Strengths of SEDAAG: conference and the journal. Weakness: timing of the conference is an issue, limiting accessibility. Participation based on conference location. Interest in strengthening ties with SEDAAG with departments that may not be in geography departments, but geographers in other departments. Maybe have a session with non-geog departments to strengthen ties with other kinds of departments.

WV (Lynn Resler) - colleges reporting large travel cuts.

Connor (SC State Rep) - Much of the same in SC. Enrollments are stable. One program experiencing growth in faculty and students is Coastal Carolina. Encroachment of other departments on Geography territory, reported by several universities (e.g. turf wars). Combining SEDAAG with other conferences. Geography standards incorporated into the elementary and K-12 education. Geographic alliance in SC has been instrumental in getting that done.

Other states not present.

11. Student Representative Update (VanSchoick)

Suggestions for role: be a liaison for first time student SEDAAGers, being a resource for them. Helping increase student turnout through greater communication from student-to-student. Feeling more welcomed to the students, particularly for social events and business meetings.

In my first SEDAAG meeting, I had a point of contact and it made me better leverage the experience.

12. SEDAAG 2022 Atlanta Meeting Update (Brasher)

Hosting at Georgia Tech Conference Center, recently updated and renovated. Cool lounge space for students. A lot of good dining options for vegetarians and other dietary restrictions. Accessible by car and public transportation. I have a question, given the meeting is Atlanta and emergence/synergy with place/race, how can we incorporate these themes into messaging, field trips, sessions around Black Geographies. We are partnering with other institutions at that meeting, won't just be Columbus State.

13. SEDAAG 2023 (M. Allen, ODU)

See notes attached.

Mike A. - our preference is currently Sheraton as it's likely the most affordable (see attached quote) and it is located right on the waterfront.

Format vote to hold SEDAAG 2023 in Norfolk, VA: 14-0 vote

14. Considering the future landscape of SEDAAG meetings; soliciting future hosts/collaboration with AAG?/hybrid components and associated costs/inflation/partnering with other conferences

15. AAG Southeastern Div. Regional Councilor update (Sultana)

16. Honors Update (D. Allen)

We have about 4 papers in each session. 4-5 submission for the poster sessions. We should think about whether engaging in the sessions are for just in-person or whether we should let virtual students be eligible. There are ways we could judge virtual sessions. We need to clarify rules. We should disconnect the honors submissions from the regular portal. Earlier calls for papers/posters. I didn't know I could use the student representative, they could be involved with submissions for these competitions. Document for new honors chairs to outline role. We are working on a HBCU scholarship fund to help with student travel, mentor compensation to go to SEDAAG and also enter the student paper/poster competition. Want to further cultivate HBCU relationships. We need to appreciate our colleagues by nominating them for awards. Need to get the call out earlier.

Lynn - We've engaged with some HBCUs with no returned communication. We need to find better ways to communicate.

Jennifer - We need to fix the logistical issues with the submissions for honors sessions.

General discussion on logistics around award announcements at the banquet.

17. Education Committee Report (Rahn)

We are sponsoring a session tomorrow afternoon, a panel session on how to teach intro to GIS, with a target audience of early career, graduate students.

18. Geography Bowl Report (Drake)

6 teams for the WGB. Virginia and NC didn't field teams. 2 GA Teams, 2 FL teams, 1 AL team, and one with a combination of state participants. Google Form will be available next year so that we can limit same day registration for the bowl. Please get students registered well in advance to limit logistical issues. See report for some financial details. SEDAAG needs to figure out how to fund travel to AAG. AAG gives \$500 per team.

19. Other topics?

Selima - AAG website is volatile right now, not properly functioning. AAG is willing to cooperate with SEDAAG. AAG council is talking about how to reduce the carbon footprint of the annual meeting while at the same time being financially viable. The hybrid meeting in 2022 is 16x more expensive than in-person meeting.

Lynn - what do we want our meetings to look like in the future? The landscape of meetings seems to be changing. Gary Langham approached us about being involved in the combined meeting (6 regions in 1 meeting). We decided, due to the contract with Atlanta and the desire to be in-person, to not participate this time. He wanted us to discuss what we want to see starting in 2024. Any thoughts?

TN Rep: I didn't get near as much out of a virtual meeting. Students in particular need the in-person experiences. In-person meetings allow us to disconnect from the rest of our lives.

Paul Knapp: I second that. Mentions enjoying the travel component. Sitting in sessions allows for more engagement. Change encounters are key for career development. Low commitment level in virtual. Professional socialization is key.

Brian Williams (MS Rep): I took out student loans to come to SEDAAG. I got my current job from chance encounter at SEDAAG. I think there should be a separate virtual conference. Maybe due it before the in-person conference.

Doug Allen - Most of my networking happened at SEDAAG. Most of my students are working or can't afford to attend. The virtual conference allows for students that can't afford it to attend for career development. They should be separated so that we can have full attendance at both. The timing of the conference is still an issue/barrier for students, Thanksgiving week is tough.

Dr. Emily Yeh - The AAG platform allows for the virtual sessions can be visible for several months after presented.

Joann - I'll echo everything. It's cheaper the week of Thanksgiving.

Student Representative - Some schools have great support, others not so much. Virtual would provide better equity for students.

Bill Graves - Better home contracts if we team up with multiple conferences. A great breadth of papers and better networking opportunities if we team up with multiple regional groups (applied, etc).

Lynn - Virtual isn't free and logistics are rough. Splitting into two would be great if it could work.

Emily - This year we experimented with combining meetings (hubs). Would AAG in the future have networked hubs? Increases scale of the hubs. Another potential option is the hubs in addition to the other existing meetings. Access to events happening at other conferences.

Lynn Resler called an end to the meeting at 2:08 CST.