

## Minutes of the 2012 Political Geography Specialty Group Business Meeting

Conference Room H, Sheraton Hotel, New York, New York  
Monday, February 27, 2012

PGSG President Mat Coleman called the meeting to order at 8:00 PM

Darren Purcell moved to approve the minutes of last year's business meeting. Approved by acclamation.

Coleman reported on the specialty group presidents' meeting. This is the largest AAG meeting ever. On Saturday morning, just before the SG chairs meeting, there were 8700 registered attendees, 6100 presenters, and 1150 SG-sponsored sessions. There are currently 65 SGs, and the number is growing. The PGSG is among the biggest. We currently have 900 members, although that is a pre-conference number and it usually grows a little during the conference as people register. Eric Sheppard (University of Minnesota) will be our next President. Julie Winkler (Michigan State) will be our VP. Marilyn Raphael (UCLA) will be the Treasurer. The 2013 mtg will be in LA, and the 2014 mtg will be in Tampa.

Coleman noted that there is a lot of emphasis on Knowledge Communities as a means to reach out to SG membership. The AAG acknowledged that this was mostly to support smaller SGs. Coleman said that he explained to the AAG that the PGSG had a large and well-functioning listserv, a blog, and a website – and that we were generally loath to multiply our electronic commitments. Coleman also pointed out a limitation of the KC because it only reaches paid members. The membership agreed by acclamation that the PGSG should continue to use its own email list, website, and blog for PGSG communications.

**Preconference:** Coleman discussed the PGSG preconference in Poughkeepsie, hosted by Joseph Nevins at Vassar College. Coleman thanked Joe for all his work getting the pre-conference off the ground. We were treated to an excellent plenary by Christian Parenti, the Nation columnist and author of the new *Tropic of Chaos: Climate Change and the New Geography of Violence*. Coleman counted 63 in the audience for Christian's keynote and 20 papers given the following day. It was a small preconference but the quality of the presentations was very good.

Coleman initiated a discussion of what the PGSG wants to get out of the preconference. First, he noted that faculty attendance was low for this year's conference. Several attendees suggested that the timing of the main conference (Friday – Tuesday) made attendance difficult. Others noted declining institutional support.

Coleman suggested the possibility of de-linking the preconference from the main AAG. Coleman suggested one possible option is to hold a standalone PGSG conference, not a pre-conference per se, sometime in the year, say autumn, at a select location. This might help in terms of giving the conference an identity beyond simply being a "pre" event. Coleman reported that at the AAG SG chairs meeting, Karen Till, the councilor rep for the SGs and chair of the National Council, announced a new initiative for the SGs to host national SG meetings in conjunction with any of the nine regional AAG associations, i.e. East Lakes Division of the Association of American Geographers (AAG). The idea is to generate a series of regional—specialty group conferences throughout the year. Karen is looking for the bigger SGs to pilot this experimentally, and noted the

PGSG as a potential pilot group. The AAG hopes to have this policy effective for Fall 2013, at the earliest.

The membership debated the proposal. Darren Purcell noted that the benefit could be a reduction in costs for the PGSG because the regional associations would already have the meeting rooms reserved and the AAG appears to be offering to help fund these meetings. Jason Dittmer noted that many non-US scholars would be unlikely to attend the preconference if it is not linked to the AAG because it would mean an additional trip. Coleman noted this is a significant issue because more than 25% of this year's participants were from non-US institutions. Coleman proposed an ad-hoc committee to discuss the preconference further including Darren Purcell, Reece Jones, Jason Dittmer, Josh Kurz, Rebecca Theobald, and Vincent Artman. The membership indicated that a regular preconference in LA for 2013 is desirable and any changes should occur after that.

**Elections.** Coleman began by recognizing Amy Mills and Katrinka Somdahl-Sands, faculty members of the governing board, who are both rotating off this year. Coleman also thanked the student rep, Nancy Hiemstra, who is also rotating off this year. Matt Mitchelson and Matt Derrick are now our senior governing board faculty reps, and will pick up where Katrinka and Amy have left off. Thanks in advance.

Coleman also thanked the large number of faculty who are doing work on our committees. Thanks to Bob Watrel, Shannon O'Lear, Gabriel Popescu, Darren Purcell, Helga Leitner, Katherine Hankins, Andy Wood, Gerard Toal, George White, Alec Murphy, Fiona Davidson and again Katrinka for all your labors.

Coleman stated that two faculty board members and one student board member need to be elected. There were six nominations for the faculty position: Steve Radil, Kara Dempsey, Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary, Luis Sanchez-Ayala, Darren Purcell and Colleen McTague. Dittmer counted the ballots and Jones reported that Anne-Laure Amilhat-Szary and Darren Purcell received the most votes and were appointed to the board. There were two nominations for the student position: Jennifer Sedell and Jeremy Slack. Dittmer counted the ballots and Jones reported that Jeremy Slack received the most votes and was appointed to the board.

Coleman stated that Darren Purcell and Katrinka Somdahl-Sands were stepping down from the Graduate Student Paper Award Committee and Katherine Hankins and Andy Wood were stepping down from the Undergraduate Student Paper committee. Coleman asked for nominations and Steve Radil and Corey Johnson were nominated for the graduate paper committee. They were approved by acclamation. Ben Forest, Vincent Artman, and Weronika Kusek were nominated for the undergraduate paper committee. Dittmer counted the ballots and Jones reported that Vincent Artman and Weronika Kusek received the most votes and were appointed to the committee.

**Award winners for various PGSG competitions.** Coleman announced the winners of the Political Geography Student Travel Award. Amada Murphy, Carleton University, "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas:" White, Male, Heterosexual, Christian, Benevolent Santa Claus as a Banal Symbol of Canadian Nationalism" Michael Husebo, University of Georgia, "Beyond the labor union: Positionalities in global production networks"; Nick Crane, The Ohio State University, "Students, Activism, and the Archive after Tlatelolco"; Jill Williams, Clark University, "Emotional Geopolitics and the Politics of Fear in the US-Mexico Borderlands" and Mia DeNardi, Ohio University, "Symbols and Identity in Siena, Italy".

Purcell announced the winners of Political Geography Graduate Student Paper Competition. Master's Category, the winner is Kyle Loewen, of Rutgers University, for his paper "Overcoming Inclusion/Exclusion: Citizenship, Participation and the Production of Space." Doctoral Student Award: A tie between Kean Fan Lim, of the University of British Columbia for the paper "Variegated Neoliberalization, Uneven Geographical Development and the Production of 'Nationally-Strategic New Areas' in China" and Natalie Koch of the University of Colorado-Boulder, for the paper "Capitalizing the Territory": State-making and Geopolitical Imaginations in Independent Kazakhstan." Honorable Mention goes to Vincent Artman, of the University of Kansas, for his paper "Geopolitics, Islam, and Terror: Representation and Uzbek-American Relations."

Gabriel Popescu announced the winner of the PGSG Dissertation Enhancement Award: Nick Crane, The Ohio State University, "Students, Activism, and the Archive after Tlatelolco."

Coleman announced the non-student awards. The Julian Minghi Outstanding Research Award went to Gerard Toal (Virginia Tech) and Carl Dahlman (Miami University of Ohio) for *Bosnia Remade* on Oxford University Press. The Stanley D. Brunn Young Scholar Award went to Alex Jeffrey (Newcastle University) for his excellent scholarship on the localization of international law with specific emphasis on the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Richard Morrill Public Outreach Award went to Frank Jacobs, columnist at the *New York Times*, for his "Borderlines" political geography blog on the NYT's opinionator pages.

**Treasurers Report:** Jones reported that the PGSG spent \$1106 on the preconference. Jones reported that all other expenditures were similar to previous years with the exception of the new Student Travel Awards. Despite these additional expenditures the PGSG balance continues to increase due to the growing membership of the group.

Coleman began a discussion of how to further spend down the balance by considering proposals to increase the number or amount of the travel awards or by increasing the number or amount of the Dissertation Enhancement Award. The membership discussed various proposals and decided to increase the number of student travel awards by giving the committee the discretion to award up to ten awards of \$200. The membership also decided to increase the DEA amount to \$1000 and to give the committee the ability to award up to two awards if there are sufficient high quality proposals. Both policies were passed by acclamation.

Coleman noted the limited utility of the PGSG newsletter and the increased traffic at our blog (stats, approx 15 hits per day over 2011). The membership felt that the newsletter was still useful but agreed that its frequency should be reduced from twice a year to once prior to the AAG. This policy was passed by acclamation.

Coleman thanked the members and adjourned the meeting at 9:03 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Reece Jones, PGSG Secretary-Treasurer