

**Geography in the United States of America
Report to International Geographical Union, August 2016**

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The Geographical Sciences Committee of the U.S. National Academies of Science is the IGU national committee in the United States. Geographers in the United States are members of the **American Association of Geographers** (AAG, <http://www.aag.org/>) and/or the **American Geographical Society** (AGS, <http://americangeo.org/>). They may also join other scientific organizations to engage with colleagues with similar areas of specialization (e.g., geographic information science, regional studies, ecology). Those who teach geography at any educational level may be members of the **National Council for Geographic Education**. This report highlights recent activities of the AAG, the largest organization of geographers in the United States, and summarizes recent developments in several other geographical organizations.

American Association of Geographers (AAG)

The AAG changed its name on January 1, 2016, from Association of American Geographers to American Association of Geographers, to reflect the increasing proportion of international members. Recent achievements of the AAG include:

Growth in membership: At the end of 2015, the total number of AAG members had risen to 11,735, an increase of over 931 from 2014. Of these, 39% are students and 9% are Developing Regions members (http://www.aag.org/cs/about_aag/regional_divisions/developing_regions_xlink).

Annual meeting: The AAG hosted approximately 9,000 geographers at its 2016 annual meeting in San Francisco, California. The 2017 meeting will be April 5–9, 2017 in Boston, Massachusetts. During its 2016 meeting, the AAG held a 3-day Mapathon to assist humanitarian efforts and community projects.

International Encyclopedia of Geography: The AAG is in the final stages of producing the *International Encyclopedia of Geography* (Wiley), with publication scheduled for February 2017. The 15-volume set contains 1032 entries, lists 112 geographical associations, and includes contributions by authors representing 45 countries. Doug Richardson, AAG Executive Director, is editor-in-chief.

Geography in U.S. Education Act: The AAG has worked for years to ensure that the U.S. Congress would include Geography in the reauthorization of the Education Act. The Act, passed in 2015, includes geography as a core academic subject and as part of a “well-rounded education” as defined in the law.

GeoMentors Program: The AAG’s GeoMentors Program is a part of U.S. President Barack Obama's ConnectED Initiative to promote Internet connectivity and use of educational technology. AAG is collaborating with ESRI to create a network of knowledgeable GIS users and educators, and to support the national initiative to provide every school in the U.S. with high-speed wireless connections and new technologies, including GIS, to enhance learning. In the first year (2015), over 700 volunteers registered as GeoMentors and 150 engagements with educators were recorded throughout the U.S.

New GeoHumanities journal: The AAG launched a new, biannual journal, *GeoHumanities*, in April 2015 (Routledge, <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rgeo20#read>) to connect the traditional humanities to science and the creative arts. The three issues now published contain 52 papers, including 33 “articles,” 18 “practices and curations,” and one editorial. In the 2015 issues, 42% of submissions were by geographers and 58% from people in different academic fields. The AAG also publishes, with Routledge/Taylor & Francis, *Annals of the AAG* and the *Professional Geographer*.

Helping U.S. geographers attend the IGU Congress: The AAG, with support from the National Science Foundation, awarded travel grants to help 34 U.S. scholars participate in the 2016 IGU Congress in Beijing.

The American Geographical Society (AGS)

Established in 1851 and based in New York City, the American Geographical Society currently has approximately 1000 members and over 11,000 followers of its Facebook page. In 2016, it welcomed a new president, Dr. Marie Price; a new chairman, Dr. Christopher Tucker; and a new executive director, Dr. John Konarski. Dr. Jerome Dobson, outgoing president, had served in that role for 15 years.

The American Geographical Society's goal is to enhance geographic literacy in the U.S. to engender sound public policy, national security, and human well-being worldwide. AGS publishes *The Geographical Review* (Wiley) and has made its popular publication, *Focus*, digital and open access (<http://focusongeography.org>). AGS hosts a symposium series in collaboration with Columbia University's Earth Institute. The 2016 symposium, "Geography 2050 – Envisioning a Sustainable Planet," will be November 17–18, 2016, in New York City.

A new AGS initiative, "GeoBadges," will help teachers across the United States partner with professional organizations to develop project-based mapping activities for students.

National Geographic Society

The National Geographic Society (NGS) reorganized in 2015 to publish its magazines and books and produce its cable network programming through a corporate partnership with 21st Century Fox. The re-organized, non-profit Society focuses on geographical research and education, provides content, and exercises editorial control over products and publications that carry its name and logo. The National Geographic Society supports research and exploration, in geography and in other fields of science, to "inspire, illuminate and teach."

National Council for Geographic Education

The National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE, <http://www.ncge.org/>) is a non-profit organization founded in 1915 to promote excellence in geographic education, at all levels. NCGE provides resource materials for teachers and facilitates the professional development of high school teachers who prepare students for the Advanced Placement examination in human geography. It holds an annual conference on geography education. The 2016 conference is July 28–31 in Tampa, Florida; the 2017 conference will be July 27–30, 2017 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.