

**Canadian Association of Geographers
Report of the President – Dan Shrubsole
2017-2018**

In 2017, the CAG achieved many successes and implemented changes on several fronts. Activities throughout the year continue to focus on its two primary objectives: (i) to serve the needs of the CAG membership, and (ii) to promote the relevance and importance of the discipline of geography and of geographers to the public. This report summarizes some of the key activities of the CAG in 2017 with respect to these objectives, and offers some personal reflections on our future direction.

Quebec City 2018: Hosting the iGeo and IGU Regional-CAG Annual-NCGE Annual Meetings

July 29 to Aug 10, 2018 will be remembered as an important time for the CAG, when we hosted two major international geography events that saw over 2,000 people participate in the International Geographic Olympiad (iGeo – July 29-Aug 6) and the combined meetings of the International Geographic Union (IGU), the CAG and the National Council for Geographic Education (NCGE). I have no doubt that both events will be impactful, memorable, and of such high quality that both the organizers and the CAG membership should be proud.

The success of both the iGeo and IGU-CAG-NCGE are illustrated, in part, by the 54 countries that expressed interest in attending the iGeo. This year's iGeo also marks the first time that Canada has participated. I acknowledge and thank the Royal Canadian Geographic Society (RCGS) for sponsoring our Canadian Team and hope this will be an ongoing activity. I am very grateful to Lynn Moorman and Beth Dye for their hard work, energy, and all their contributions in leading the planning and implementation of the iGeo. Planning events such as the iGeo, particularly when the venue is thousands of kilometres from your home, means much time has been devoted to this work and there is less time with family, friends and relaxing activities. I acknowledge this and other sacrifices they have made over the past few years, and very much appreciated their generosity in sharing their time and talents. Maxwell Bouchard, based at Laval University and Chantal Déry at Université du Québec en Outaouais, also played major roles in supporting the iGeo event.

Over 1,700 delegates have come to Quebec City for the IGU-CAG-NCGE meetings, demonstrating the success of the conference and the vibrancy within the geographic community. Matthew Hatvany and Marie-Pierre Guy-Dorion have done outstanding work in coordinating the groups, planning all activities related to the combined meetings, and supporting the iGeo. They also made sacrifices and gave generously of their time and talent in undertaking the work of the iGeo as well as IGU-CAG-NCGE. The faculty and staff of the Department of Geography at Laval University and the Faculty of Forestry, Geography and Geomatics are also to be thanked for their financial, in-kind, and many other forms of support.

On behalf of myself and the entire CAG, THANK YOU again to Lynn, Beth, Maxwell, Chantal, Matthew, Marie-Pierre, and the Laval Geography Department and Faculty of Forestry, Geography and Geomatics.

Some Key Partners – Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences and Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Mary-Louise Byrne continues to ably represent the CAG on the [Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences](#) (CFES) and Theresa Garvin on the [Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences](#) (CFHSS). We are indebted to them for generously giving their time in advocating for the CAG's interests on these important national committees. As noted in Mary-Louise's report, the CAG provided modest funding in support of the production and publication of the [Geoscience and Canada Brochure](#). It highlights the

importance of Geoscience for the environment, the economy, climate change monitoring and adaptation, public health, and more. It also profiles professional geoscientists across Canada.

Through a series of circumstances rather than any deliberate strategy, it has been several years since the CAG and the CFHSS shared national meetings at the Congress. During the fall of 2017, there were very fruitful discussions between the CAG and UBC Geography about the CAG joining Congress in Vancouver in 2019. However, during those conversations, it became clear that significant financial and administrative barriers would make this more difficult and less beneficial to the CAG and its members. Subsequent discussions with the CFHSS leadership indicated a mutual desire to strengthen the partnership with the CAG. Aspects of the partnership that the CAG wishes to improve include: a voice in determining the Congress theme and the selection of plenary and luminary speakers, better coordinating the scheduling of events, and a new financial arrangement that would see a more reasonable registration rate for CAG/Congress delegates and revenue sharing model.

Agreement has now been reached on one aspect of the financial arrangement between the CAG and CFHSS. Rather than paying the CFHSS a per capita levy on the entire CAG membership (which totaled \$4,741.10 in 2016) the CAG will pay only for those members who reside in Canada and might benefit from CFHSS activities (excluding physical geographers, members of the Canadian Geomorphology Research Group, and half of members of the GIS study group). We also believe the CFHSS should undertake more activities related to promoting the relevance of the humanities and social sciences to the public and less effort on lobbying politicians and civil servants. The previously mentioned CFES's Geoscience profile would be an example of the type of activity we believe the CFHSS should undertake more often. Redefining and strengthening the partnership between the CAG and CFHSS will be a major undertaking for the remainder of 2018 and likely into 2019. Since this is a very important and urgent issue for the CAG, our new President Sanjay Nepal will serve as the CAG representative on the CFHSS Committee for the coming year.

Social Media and GeogNews

After many years, Dan Smith is no longer assembling, producing, and distributing GeogNews. The many tributes and thanks that were sent via emails from within and outside of Canada demonstrate its popularity and global reach. Thank you Dan! Informed by a social media survey of the membership that was conducted in spring 2018, the executive will discuss how to best continue the tradition of GeogNews as well as other communications (such as Twitter, Facebook, email, Newsletter), which keep CAG members and others informed of the key activities of Canada's geographers and the CAG. The results of this discussion will be presented at the Annual Meeting in Quebec City.

The Canadian Geographer

I wish to acknowledge the recent and outstanding successes that *The Canadian Geographer* has achieved over the past two years. The publisher of our journal, Wiley, made an initial and very attractive financial and administrative offer to the CAG when our contract was renewed. In 2018, we have begun to see the benefits of this new arrangement. More recently and as detailed in the Editor's Report, we learned that the impact factor for the journal has increased. Both of these accomplishments, in large part, reflect the leadership of Editor Nadine Schuurman and the entire team – Ellen Randall (Editorial Assistant), the editorial team, authors and the Wiley Team.

Key Activities from our new Office in Ottawa

In 2017, the decision was made to move the CAG Office from Montreal to Ottawa. We began to implement this decision with the hiring of Ms. Kathryn Laferriere, who has been the CAG's Executive Coordinator since May 2017. She has made the office transition seamless and very effective. I have been impressed by her attention to detail, initiative, problem-solving, effective communication, and

thoughtfulness. Under her stewardship, we have adopted new administrative practices and established stronger partnerships with some key organizations in Ottawa. Some of these key activities are elaborated upon below.

- The CAG website was redesigned in order to make it fully bilingual and improve ease of navigation for its users.
- A membership software was implemented that will assist in the conference registration process (for Regional Meetings as well as the National Conference), membership management, and delivery of communications and services. The Conference Registration software was successfully used for the CAG Geographic Education Study Group's pre-IGU-CAG-NCGE Meeting. At the 1st CAG National Executive Meeting, its use will be presented to the Regional Presidents, and we are working with the University of Winnipeg to use it for the 2019 CAG National Meeting. It will increase efficiencies for the organizers of future Regional and National CAG meetings. The software also provides a members-only platform, as well as easier renewal processes with direct invoicing and reminders.
- In response to suggestions made at last year's Executive Meeting to better serve members, two Members-only accessible web pages were developed. The first provides career advice and useful tips for students and faculty alike. The second provides a keyword-searchable database pertaining to the teaching of geography across a broad range of the discipline. Both can be accessed by CAG members through the [CAG Hub](#).
- Provided support and ongoing engagement with the Organizing Committee in the planning of the 2018 IGU-CAG-NCGE Meeting in Quebec City.
- Partnered with uOttawa, Carleton and the RCGS for Geography Awareness Week (GAW) 2017 and will do so again in 2018.
- Currently re-evaluating our communications strategies in order to make them more efficient, effective, and useful for members.

Awards and Conferences

At our Annual Conference at York University (2017), the following CAG Awards were presented:

- CAG Award for Scholarly Distinction in Geography: Jing Chen, University of Toronto
- CAG Award for Geography in the Service of Government or Business: David Phillips, Environment and Climate Change Canada
- CAG Award for Service to the Profession of Geography: Marilyne Jollineau, Brock University
- CAG Award for Excellence in Teaching: Jeff Hopkins, University of Western Ontario
- Julian M. Szeicz Award for Early Career Achievement: Jennifer Silver, University of Guelph
- Starkey-Robinson Award for Graduate Research on Canada: H. Brendan O'Neill, Carleton University
- Robin P. Armstrong Memorial Prize for Excellence in Native Studies: Paul Chaput, Queen's University
- President's Award for Outstanding Service to the CAG: Wayne Forsythe

In addition to the presentation of these awards, 604 delegates from across Canada, the U.S., the UK, and Australia attended the conference.

We are currently in discussion with the CAG 2019 conference organizers from the University of Winnipeg concerning how the CAG can play a more concrete role in supporting the organizing of future National Conferences (e.g., use of our new membership software for registration, webpage support) and provide some financial support in the event of any deficit arising from any future conference. These discussions respond to the suggestions made in 2016 by the organizers of the CAG Halifax Conference.

Regional meetings were held by the WDCAG, PCAG, CAGONT and ACAG over the past year, and details of these events are authored by the Regional Presidents in the Division Reports.

Membership

As the table below indicates, an ongoing challenge is to maintain and ideally increase our regular membership levels. I believe that our 2018 conference and our new financial arrangement with Wiley provide an opportunity to invest more monies in currently underfunded aspects of our activities while maintaining and possibly increasing student travel funds.

Feedback on the following two ideas and other suggestions are also welcome. Both of the ideas are related to providing more encouragement for geographers within Canada and beyond to attend our National Conferences, and are dependent on sufficient operating funds being available to support our current activities. The first is to set aside monies that would be used by Study Groups to hold events (e.g., support costs for workshops, panelists, special session speakers) immediately prior to or during the National Conference. These funds would not be eligible to support additional student awards or student travel. If feasible and depending on the level of support from the membership and CAG Executive, the mini-executive would develop an application and adjudication process and the level of funding by January 2019 with a view that Study Groups could sponsor activities at the 2019 Annual Meeting. The second idea pertains to providing additional funding to support the Wiley Speaker at the National Conference. At present, \$1,500 has been the long-standing budget allocation. An increase would allow for outstanding candidates, both near and far from the Conference location, to be considered for the honour of being our Plenary Speaker. These two ideas provide opportunities for greater levels of activity from our Study Groups and can benefit all CAG members.

The desirability of a new Study Group on US-Canada Relations & Interactions is being explored. Based on the results of a survey, the CAG Executive will make appropriate recommendations at the AGM about next steps.

Table 1: CAG Membership – 2010 to 2017

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Regular Member	429	377	437	426	381	346	285	253
Student Member	362	339	378	332	329	390	274	341
Other	230	260	280	265	284	293	313	280
Total	1021	976	1095	1023	994	1029	872	874

Concluding Comments

I have been honoured to serve as your President over the last two years. It has gone by very quickly, which indicates that I have enjoyed it as well. Many things have been accomplished and reflect the dedication and contributions of the people previously mentioned. In addition, I wish to acknowledge those people who have provided advice and support to the CAG and been on the mini-Executive with me during my tenure – Treasurers Neil Hanlon and Joe Leydon, Past President Theresa Garvin, and Vice President Sanjay Nepal. I look forward to serving as Past President and working under Sanjay's leadership. While there have been many recent achievements, our work in serving the CAG membership and promoting the value of geography to the public remains an important and urgent priority.