Statement on Collegial Conduct and Respectful Exchange

Canadian Association of Geographers

The Canadian Association of Geographers (CAG) and its members affirm that the conduct of geographic activity and the communication of geographic knowledge involve a wide variety of ethical considerations, including the pursuit of diversity and non-discrimination. The broadest purpose of this statement is to encourage CAG leadership and members to consider and critically engage with these matters in their professional practices.

As members of the CAG and the wider community of geographers, it is our responsibility to uphold the dignity of all persons, to strive for diversity and equity (including a diversity of intellectual commitments and projects, under the banner of academic freedom), and to respectfully address colleagues, peers, and the wider public in written, spoken, and electronic communication. CAG leadership and members should exemplify these values in our interactions with others who we encounter in various contexts through our professional activities. Collegiality is integral to written and in-person exchange, and this expression reflects our commitment to our discipline, to the research and informed views of other practicing geographers, including students, and to the experiences and perspectives of the wider public.

The CAG is also committed to ensuring safe, respectful, and informed interaction among all members and participants at CAG-sponsored spaces, including at the Annual Meeting and in online venues. Harassment of others in any form is condemned, and substantive efforts should be made at every juncture to foster accessibility, diversity, and inclusivity at our annual meetings and other events. As we work toward environments free of discrimination, we must also support victims of harassment.

Respect or civility do not imply homogeneity or the absence of disagreement. But we must also be aware of and speak to implicit bias, institutional discrimination and other less overt practices. Particular attention should be paid in this regard to supporting and recognizing undergraduate and graduate students, precariously-employed participants, and members of underrepresented groups.

The predominance of electronic forms of communication raises particular challenges for professional conduct, as these can undermine community by facilitating the wide and sometimes anonymous dissemination of statements that are hurtful, embarrassing, or of unreliable veracity. Therefore, CAG leaders and members should not use electronic communication systems with the intent to embarrass, intimidate, or misrepresent (i.e., ‘cyberbullying’), and moderators of electronic exchange among CAG members and participants in CAG events should strive to ensure the maintenance of these standards.

The CAG does not intend for this statement to cover all of the ethical considerations confronted by geographers in their diverse professional practices. The activities of geographers are wide-ranging, as are the contexts in which they learn, research, teach, exchange, and engage with the world. As such, this statement should be viewed as a guiding document and interpreted relative to similar standards and guidelines within specific professional communities (e.g., public servants, university

faculty, engineers) and/or that oversee the research enterprise in Canada and beyond (e.g., University and Tri-Council standards for research with human and animal subjects, The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami National Inuit Strategy on Research, The World Health Organization Ethical Standards and Procedures for research with human beings).

(Adapted from a number of sources, including: The American Association of Geographers, The Canadian Philosophical Association/L'Association Canadienne de Philosophie, and the University of California, Berkeley.)

We welcome feedback on this statement, which was adopted unanimously by the CAG Executive in May 2019. We consider it a 'living document'. Please send comments to info@cag-acg.ca.