

President's Report

by Susan J. Elliott

May 2026

This is my final President's report. This work with the CAG has been an absolute honour; I have learned so very much and met so many interesting people. My personal goal is that this learning continues as I extend and enhance my integration with the Canadian geography community, first in my up-coming role as Past President and then as a committed member of our national community.

I am absolutely thrilled to be handing this baton over to Evan Cleave – the organization could not be in better hands. He is a champion for geography, for students and for this organization and I look forward to doing all that I can to support him in his new role.

Of course, I have had the tremendous pleasure of working with him over the past year in his role as Vice President where he has led the Nominations Committee, the Awards Committee, and has served on the Local Organizing Committee of the upcoming annual meeting in Victoria. He has also taken on the role of working with our *ad hoc* task force addressing the motion from the floor received at the 2024 AGM in St. John's. As a result of that motion, we quickly moved to divest financially as per the wishes of our membership under the leadership of Derrek Eberts, our Treasurer, and we now have – with Evan's Board leadership – a statement to share publicly and with national and regional leadership in Canada. And all of this work is being done by volunteers, all working on your behalf.

We have also worked to enhance the public face of our organization through an outstanding website refresh that you will soon see, led by Board member Chris Hewitt. Can I just say? It's going to be awesome! And we will have a strong public face! And of course, the membership will be consulted – as it has been already in some areas – with requests for input.

On that note, at last year's AGM at Carleton, I really heard a strong message from some of our members as well as other folks who happened to be present at that meeting, that there is a real need for transparency as well as opportunities for the membership to engage with the Board and/or the Executive on a more regular basis, not just once a year at the AGM. I took that message to heart and implemented two major initiatives. The first is a monthly virtual drop in with the Executive which is held on the third Friday of every month (4th when there are 5 Fridays! Too much detail...). And I have been thrilled! So many new faces have come to join; students have come to be mentored; chats about who we are as a discipline and our future – I am so pleased with how this has created communication and transparency, as folks brought questions that were answered in real time by the CAG leadership! Thank you so much to all who supported this initiative! The second is a bit less exciting to some, but makes the heart race for anyone excited about governance, like me! We have really kicked our now standing Governance Committee into high gear. We now have a terms of reference, have proposed and approved changes to the Constitution to update language, address relevant language and EDI, and address inconsistencies of even how we refer to ourselves. Thank you to the membership who supported these needed changes through their vote. We have done lots of other stuff as well, but just a heads up – we are really focusing on a review of our by-laws, long overdue (last updated and signed off in 2014). Stay tuned!

Other major changes: hiring a half time staff person to support our very hard working EA. There was just too much work for one person so welcome again Hannah Rockbourn! Hannah has tremendous administrative and organizational skills, but also has extensive experience with governance and finances and she has been out outstanding addition to our team!

We also implemented this year an opportunity for Study Groups to apply for financial support for special initiatives – a long time coming, but we also now have the governance document (approved by the membership) that allows us to define, operationalize, and govern the Study Groups who are an extension of the organization and member driven and supported. The process worked well and will continue in the next fiscal year.

Other very important notes:

- We are truly grateful to Derrek Eberts for extending his term as Secretary-Treasurer for an additional year as we work to find a ‘replacement’ (any takers out there?)
- So much gratitude to Chris Hewitt for chairing our website redesign committee – a big task and it’s going so well!
- Thank you thank you thank you to our out-going board members: Carissa Brown (ACAG President), Chantal Déry (RGQ President), Christopher Malcolm (PCAG President), and Deondre Smiles (Board Member)
- Warm welcome to new Regional Division leadership: Peter Bush (ACAG), Jesse Sutton (CAGONT), Jennifer Mateer (PCAG), Étienne Gariépy-Girouard (RGQ), and Shannon Fargey (WDCAG)
- So pleased to welcome our newly elected Board members:
 - Members-at-large: Francesca Cardwell, Rémy Tremblay, Robin Westland, and Rodrigo Curty Pereira
 - Francophone Student Councillor: Marianne Couture-Cossette
- THRILLED to express my gratitude to Ben Woodward, MSc student, U Waterloo, for working so hard to establish our new national student geography council – how amazing is that???
- And thanks also to our outstanding (and still new!) Editor in Chief of Canadian Geographies, Dr. Agnieszka Leszczynski from Western University.

As I write this, I marvel at what we do as individuals and as an organization. Please, come join us – you won’t be sorry!

Stay connected, build networks, built the capacity of others, and give back

See you in Victoria!

Canadian Geographies:

Our team continues to meet regularly with our publisher Wiley and all is well! Again, so much thanks to our Editor-in-Chief - Agnieszka Leszczynski – and if you want to hear all the details, come to the AGM at Victoria!

Awards:

The 2026 CAG Awards will be presented at the Wiley Reception of the 76th Annual Conference of the CAG. This year Awards will be issued for the following categories:

- ï **The Award for Scholarly Distinction in Geography**
- ï **The Award for Excellence in Teaching Geography**
- ï **The Award for Geography in the Service of Government or Business**
- ï **The Award for Service to the Profession of Geography**
- ï **The President's Award for Outstanding Service to the CAG**
- ï **The Julian M. Szeicz Award for Early Career Achievement**
- ï **The Eric Crighton Mentorship Award**
- ï **The Starkey-Robinson Award for Graduate Research on Canada**
- ï **The Robin P. Armstrong Memorial Prize for Excellence in Indigenous Studies**

Upcoming Conferences:

CAG

CAG 2026 – University of Victoria June 1 – 4, 2026

CAG 2027 – York University (dates TBD)

CAG 2028 - TBD

Regional Divisions

Ontario Division (CAGONT) – 2026 Annual Meeting announcement coming soon!

Regroupement des géographes du Québec (RGQ) – October 22 – 23, 2026

Membership data:

The most recent membership numbers are presented in Table 1, with corresponding figures dating back to 2015 for comparative purposes.

Table 1: CAG Membership – 2015 to 2025

	2015	2016	2017	2018*	2019*	2020*	2021*	2022*	2023*	2024*	2025*
Regular Members	346	285	253	201	297	227	289	266	254	247	208
Student Members	390	274	341	239	322	237	293	238	237	243	286
Other	293	313	280	137	85	69	102	90	103	89	89
Total	1029	872	874	577	704	533	684	594	594	579	583

*Excludes complementary members, but includes affiliate members (AAG & RGS-IBG)

At first glance, the more recent figures look unsettling, and they are certainly a cause for concern. We should bear in mind, however, that the recent downturn in membership is largely a reflection of exceptional circumstances. In 2018, we held our meeting in conjunction with the IGU, and the CAG was unable to offer a registration discount to our members. We expected this would result in a dip in the 2018 membership (which it did) and anticipated that it may take two or three years to recover. The figures in 2019 suggested that a recovery was on track, but then COVID-19 struck and we had to

cancel our annual conference. In spite of this, we remain optimistic as we continue to reinvigorate our conference, and re-invest in our organization. The Board will be looking also to reinvigorate a membership committee to clarify and raise awareness of the benefits of membership.

Concluding comments:

Current geopolitics being what they are, we are – as an organization – acutely aware of what it means to be in the academy as faculty, staff and/or student. We cherish our academic freedom and the contributions we make with our work. Let's come together, work together, share together, and revitalize together for the greater good.