

## **CAG President's Report 2023**

This first year as President has been punctuated by many challenges and adaptations. This coincided with the arrival in office of our Executive Assistant, Philip Thibault, who quickly made his mark and obtained recognition for his quality work. He was carefully guided by Kathryn Laferrière, former Executive Director, as well as the Mini-Executive team, Neil Hanlon (Past President), Joe Leydon (Treasurer) and myself. I thank all these people for the smooth transition that has taken place. Philip has surprised us many times since, particularly with the consistency of his efforts, the quality of his bilingual work and his sense of initiative. He was able to take over for me during the professors' strike that I faced in March, in order to prevent the CAG from suffering from my work leave. Thanks also to my colleagues Neil and Joe for going the extra mile during this time!

Despite this busy year, the CAG Board of Directors can be pleased to have made great strides in several respects and consolidated the changes initiated during the past two years. I will strive to present them to you in this report.

The gains left by the pandemic in work flexibility have allowed us to meet effectively using online conferencing platforms throughout the year. The 72nd Annual Conference was held virtually by the Toronto Metropolitan University in June 2022 and made use of diversified schedules to reach members during and at the end of their working day; annual meetings held by the association and its regional divisions have also benefited from those platforms (eg. the Atlantic division convention organized by Saint-Mary's University was a virtual success and brought together several members in this geographically dispersed region). On the other hand, we are very happy with a gradual return to face-to-face mode; thus, the Regroupement des Géographes du Québec held its congress in person in November 2022 at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) — celebrating the 60th anniversary of its formation—, The CAG Western Division held its congress in person in March 2023 at the University of the Fraser Valley, and the 73rd annual congress will also take place at UQAM from May 8 to 12. It is with great enthusiasm that the entire CAG team prepares to celebrate the return of its main annual activity in person. Several hotels in the area are fully booked on the occasion, so don't delay reserving your place!

### **Communications and affiliations:**

Thanks to the work of our executive assistant, Philip, we manage to maintain regular contact with our members: our website is regularly updated, 18 issues from Geognews have been sent and the CAGlist continues to keep our members informed of the latest news concerning our geographical community. A newsletter was sent mid-year and the directory is also kept up to date. We will soon be exploring opportunities to enhance our social media presence to better serve our members.

A meeting with the national departmental chairs was organized virtually in February in order to present them with the new developments at the CAG, to hear their concerns and to invite them to share their successes with us. The presence of 24 heads of departmental units was recorded. We thank them for taking the time for this important online meeting.

A new initiative was launched with the study groups concerning their governance and the representatives of each were contacted to inquire about their achievements and answer their questions. I would like to thank Councilor Chantal Déry and Student Representative Leena Lamontagne-Dupuis for carrying out the many individual meetings that will culminate during the 2023 congress at UQAM with a collective discussion session. These efforts complement a major tour of CAG advisors to the various units that make it up so that the executive gets closer to the members and responds more adequately to their needs. This renewal, which began with the formation of 3 ad hoc committees in the summer of 2021, allowed the CAG to identify avenues where time and energy need to be invested and where collective learning would be necessary. I will come back to this very soon.

The CAG is part of the constellation of Canadian learned associations and is a member of a number of them, such as the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences (FCST) (its representative is Krys Chutko) and the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) (the CAG President being their representative). Although it has been several years since the CAG convention has been co-hosted with FHSS, our membership dues allow the association to be represented in FHSS advocacy activities and to lobby the federal government for increased funding for postsecondary research. Finally, our affiliation with the International Geographical Union (IGU) was renewed this year thanks to the continued support of the National Research Council of Canada (past president, Neil Hanlon, is our representative). In the winter of 2022, CAG signed the Joint Statement on the Crisis in Ukraine in support of Ukrainian people and geographers and Russian geographers who are openly demonstrating against attacks on democracy and human rights. I will add that 4 Canadian geographers are Chairs of IGU Commissions.

### **News at the CAG:**

The continuation of the work of the 3 ad hoc committees—two of which have become institutionalized and the third having completed its tasks—has been carried out to the great satisfaction of their members. Here they are in summary:

- 1) Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee: awareness of the importance of recognizing and valuing diversity has been made possible thanks to several groups of CAG members, including FIGS (Feminist Intersectional Solidarity Group), student members and the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, the latter offering support for follow-up and a model of good practices developed by the various

Canadian associations it represents. Under the responsibility of Councilor Sinead Early, the committee recently sent out a survey to CAG members to gather their ideas and the analysis of the results will be known during the next year. The first gain shown is the revision of linguistic practices in relation to gender for all communications and material distributed to members (including surveys and membership forms);

- 2) Decolonization and Indigeneity (DI) Committee: Great strides have been made under the good leadership of Councilor Heather Castleden and the committee has been formalized with regular bylaws and officers. It should be noted that the youth of the CAG responded with great interest and invested themselves in several respects, in particular in the formation of its standing committee;
- 3) Membership committee: the survey conducted in 2022 among members was the result of a collaboration between councilors David Lieske, Craig Coburn and the vice-president at the time, Nathalie Gravel. The analyzed results were shared and allowed the association to direct its future actions. The identification of the specific needs of the members gave way to a reflection on the strategies for recruiting new members and retaining old ones. These conclusions guide our actions to this day.

I would like to thank all those who took part in these innovative actions which allow the CAG to present itself as a community of geographers practicing continuous improvement.

### **CAG Board of Directors:**

The Board of Directors is made up of 12 members, including the President, the Vice-President (or past President), the Secretary-Treasurer, 4 councilors and 5 representatives of regional divisions, in addition to 2 student representatives, French- and English-speaking respectively. The first year of Francophone representative, Leena Lamontagne-Dupuis, is coming to an end and will culminate with her participation in the organization of the 73rd Congress in Montreal. Leena has been very generous with her time over the past year and has contributed to several collective reflections on the governance of the CAG. Being bilingual, she is well placed to act as liaison for all CAG student members. The CAG Board of Directors expressed the wish last year to recruit an Indigenous representative; its research continues in this direction.

The Board of Directors has met twice since the 2022 annual meeting, in October 2022 and in April 2023. The virtual mode was retained since last year for the holding of the meetings of the Board of Directors, facilitating their holding outside the week scheduled for the annual meeting; the clear advantage being the possibility of bringing together the greatest number and limiting the pressures on the members of the board during the annual meeting. Only the Annual General Meeting remains face-to-face, but Board members will have the opportunity to participate virtually (this privilege is granted only to them, by the way).

### The CAG journal:

The past year was one of transition for The Canadian Geographer as well, which officially changed its name in the winter of 2023 to become *Canadian Geographies* following a reflection with the editorial team and the mini-executive of the CAG. Realizing that in its French version the title communicated a masculine vision of the profession of geographer, the CAG team, together with the publisher Wiley, adopted a non-gendered formula in order to recognize the vast female presence in the practice of Canadian geography. Thus, the English translation of the new title is *Canadian Geographies*. It took more than a year for Wiley and the editorial team—consisting of Martin Simard (French-language editor) and Ellen Randall, editorial assistant, under the leadership of Nadine Schuurman—to make the complete change.

The year 2023 also marked the renewal of the journal's publishing contract and after negotiations extending over a period of one year, the CAG renewed its contract with the publisher Wiley under favorable terms. The journal will face another upcoming challenge, that of finding a replacement for Editor-in-Chief Nadine Schuurman who will complete her 12-year term in December 2023. Over these twelve years, she has built a successful editorial team and made major changes in operations and editorial approach that have allowed the journal to remain dynamic, up to date with changes in publishing practices and technologies, and competitive across various measures of impact and influence. We are very grateful for the vision and leadership that Nadine has brought to our journal over all these years.

I will also highlight the efforts put forward by the French-language editor, Martin Simard, to make the experience of French-speaking authors publishing in the journal more inclusive and attractive. The guides to authors have been translated, an essential element showing the true inclusion of French-speaking authors.

### CAG Awards:

At the CAG Annual General Meeting in 2022, the following awards were presented:

- **The Prize for Scholarly Distinction in Geography:** Jason Gilliland, Western University
- **The Prize for Excellence in Teaching Geography:** Lynn Moorman, Mount Royal University
- **The Julian M. Szeicz Early Career Achievement Award:** Sarah Rotz, York University
- **The Starkey-Robinson Award for Graduate Research on Canada:** Miranda Monosky, Memorial University
- **The Robin P. Armstrong Memorial Scholarship for Native Studies:** Eleanor Stephenson, McGill University

## Upcoming conferences:

### CAG

CAG 2023 – face-to-face, University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM) set for May 8-12, 2023.

The CAG is looking for partners for the organization of its next congresses (2024...).

### Regional Divisions

Atlantic Division (ACAG) – dates to be determined

Regroupement des géographes du Québec (RGQ) – dates to be determined

Ontario Division (CAGONT) – host and dates TBD

Prairie Division (PCAG) – dates to be determined

West Division (WDCAG) – March 10-11, 2023, University of the Fraser Valley

## Membership data:

The most recent membership data is shown in Table 1, with corresponding numbers since the year 2012 for comparison.

**Table 1: CAG Membership – 2012 to 2022**

	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*	2019*	2020*	2021*	2022*
Regular Members	437	426	381	346	285	253	201	297	227	289	266
Student Members	378	332	329	390	274	341	239	322	237	293	238
Other	280	265	284	293	313	280	137	85	69	102	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>1023</b>	<b>994</b>	<b>1029</b>	<b>872</b>	<b>874</b>	<b>577</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>533</b>	<b>684</b>	<b>594</b>

\*Excludes complimentary members (e.g., honorary past presidents, undergraduate award winners), but includes affiliate members (AAG & RGS-IBG).

Unfortunately, in 2022 we experienced a slight decrease in each category of membership, likely reflecting the fact that the annual conference was once again held in a virtual setting. Although at first glance these numbers may seem discouraging, we anticipated a possible dip or status-quo of these figures as a result of hosting a second consecutive virtual meeting. However, we have received member feedback expressing a desire to return to an in-person conference and we remain optimistic that the return to an in-person setting this year in Montreal will continue a trend toward pre-pandemic figures.

**Concluding remarks:**

As my first year as President draws to a close, I look forward to building on the gains made at the start of my term to continue serving CAG members in the best possible way. The wind of renewal that began to blow under the presidency of Neil Hanlon continues to motivate us as an association and encourages us to surpass ourselves. The basics of the CAG have been revisited, clarified and reaffirmed, making it a more inclusive association and grateful for the contribution of all its members in their beautiful diversity that composes it. Among other things, bilingualism has asserted itself more vigorously since my arrival as vice-president. While an agreement previously existed to provide services in both official languages, in recent years the association's day-to-day practices have become more bilingual. I hope that the changes made will remain so that these practices continue to reflect the constitution of the CAG. Bilingual interventions at meetings, the attraction of French-speaking geographers as members and speakers in French at conferences, bilingualism in the CAG office, translation of documents (including of the journal), are all priority elements that seal this inclusion.

At the next Annual General Meeting, part of the Board of Directors will be renewed. I take this opportunity to thank our two Councillors, Matt Dyce and Craig Coburn for their dedicated work with the CAG. Craig will stay on the Board for another term as WDCAG President. A special thank you goes to Past President, Neil Hanlon, and Secretary-Treasurer, Joe Leydon, for their years of involvement with the CAG. Your personal investment has allowed the CAG to develop, to pursue the excellence of its work and to recruit a young and dynamic succession. Finally, a big thank you to all members and I look forward to seeing many of you at CAG 2023!