

Canadian Association of Geographers' Standing Committee on Decolonizing and Indigenizing the Professional Association

Annual Report (2023)

Report prepared by Co-Chairs: **Jaimy Fischer and Heather Castleden**

Upon ratification of the new Standing Committee on Decolonizing and Indigenizing the Professional Association at last year's AGM, a call for interest to serve on the Committee was extended to the CAG membership. Nine members expressed interest in joining the Committee and a first meeting was called in February, 2023.

Heather Castleden, who had served as the Ad-hoc Chair during the formation of the Committee's terms of reference, chaired the first meeting. After a Land Acknowledgement, there began a Circle of Introductions, followed by a request for a volunteer secretary for the meeting. The adopted Terms of Reference were reviewed and several logistical items were discussed: compensation for Elders/Knowledge-Keepers, length of service, expectations, Committee composition.

Arising from the discussion, we decided, by consensus, that we would increase the number of students/postdocs on the Committee from 2 to up to 4 individuals. Thus, we were able to agree that all those in attendance at the first meeting would form the inaugural Committee. It was further agreed that this inaugural Committee would continue until the 2024 AGM at which time a call for new members would be circulated via the CAGlist. The Committee is as follows:

Emmanuel Kofi Ackom, University of British Columbia

Jillian Ames, University of Alberta

Heather Castleden, University of Victoria

Léa Denieul Pinsky, Concordia University

Jaimy Fischer, Simon Fraser University

Hosea Patrick, University of Toronto

Ryan Planche, Wilfred Laurier University

Carolyn Prouse, Queen's University

Sarah Rotz, York University

Deondre Smiles, University of Victoria

A call for Co-Chairs was next on the agenda and **Jaimy Fischer** agreed to serve as a Co-Chair with **Heather Castleden** agreeing to serve as temporary Co-Chair until after the 2023 AGM.

The Committee also put some additional text around our understanding of what we mean by Knowledge-Keepers. These changes are noted below.

The Committee will be comprised of at least 7 members:

- *Two Knowledge-Keepers¹*
- *Four Regular Members*
- *At least two (and up to four) Students/Postdocs*
- *CAG President (ex officio)*

¹ *The CAG Standing Committee recognizes that Knowledge Keepers are generally understood to be those who have been taught by Indigenous Elders within their community. They hold specific Indigenous Knowledge and traditional teachings, and they know how to care for those teachings, when to share them, and when to withhold from sharing. They are typically given such a title from their respective communities in recognition of their lived experience, and wisdom derived from living in accordance with their community's traditional teachings.*

The Knowledge-Keepers are to be invited by the Co-Chairs as honorary CAG members and they are to be compensated for their time. There are times when “Regular” Members, “Students/Postdocs” and/or the CAG President may self-identify and be recognized by their community(s) as a Knowledge-Keeper. In these instances, The two students are to receive a one-year complimentary CAG membership in recognition of their time and contributions to the Committee.

We discussed the possibility of our Committee having a visible presence on the CAG website; we have since worked with the CAG EA to create the material, which can now be found here: <https://www.cag-acg.ca/decolonizing-indigenizing>. This section of the website includes our History, Terms of Reference, and Standing Committee composition. We set a date for our next meeting, and created virtual space to begin populating ideas for a work plan.

Our second Committee meeting was held on April 24, 2023. After Jaimy and Heather offered Land Acknowledgements, we did a Circle of Greetings, followed by a request for a volunteer secretary. Our agenda and minutes from the previous meeting were approved and we focused on the business of the day, which included a discussion to apply for the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences EDID Fund in the Fall Cycle for up to \$3000 to support our initiatives that advance Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, **and Decolonization**; the aim is to submit a co-application with new CAG EDI Committee.

We moved into a fulsome discussion of how to invite, who to invite, and what is hoped for in having two Knowledge Keepers involved in our Committee’s work. It is anticipated that by the Fall we will be able to populate our Committee accordingly. The Co-Chairs are responsible for drafting a generic introductory document with talking points to approach Knowledge Keepers for current and future use by Committee Co-Chairs.

We then held a Circle brainstorming session about actions we could consider for the Committee, and began populating a workplan. A key early action will to develop Resources list of accessible materials (journal articles, books, podcasts, videos, reports, etc) that CAG members can use for their own learning, teaching, research, and service in the academy and profession). These resources will be made available on the CAG website by early Fall. Other actions, once determined, and assigned to a Committee member to champion for the coming year will be reported on in our minutes. CAG member ideas are also welcome!

Our next Committee meeting will be on Monday, June 20th at 3:00 pm ET. Any CAG member is welcome to attend; they simply need to contact one of the Co-Chairs to be added to the Zoom room.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaimy Fischer and Heather Castleden, Committee Co-Chairs