

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

## **Annual Report (2025)**

**Report prepared by Co-Chairs: Jaimy Fischer and Sarah Rotz**

This is the third annual report of the Standing Committee on Decolonizing and Indigenizing the Professional Association. The current Committee, whose membership is noted below, continues until the 2025 AGM, at which time a call for new members will be circulated via the CAGlist. The Committee's membership includes:

**Knowledge Keeper, Adele L<sup>n</sup>b<sup>o</sup>Δ<sup>n</sup>q<sup>o</sup> Arseneau, Métis Nation**

**Knowledge Keeper, Celeste Smith, Oneida Nation, Six Nations of the Grand River**

**Co-Chair Jaimy Fischer, Métis Nation, University of Toronto**

**Co-Chair Sarah Rotz, York University**

**CAG President | Ex-officio Member, Susan Elliott, University of Waterloo**

**Aishah Cader, City of Toronto**

**Deondre Smiles, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe, University of British Columbia**

**Emmanuel Kofi Ackom, University of British Columbia**

**Heather Castleden, University of Victoria**

**Hosea Patrick, University of Toronto**

**Jenna Dixon, University of British Columbia**

**Léa Denieul Pinsky, Concordia University**

The Standing Committee met three times during 2024-2025, with a fourth meeting scheduled for May 9, 2025; agendas and minutes are not currently posted on the CAG website but they are available by contacting either of the Co-Chairs or the CAG executive assistant. Any member of the CAG is welcome to participate in the Committee's meetings as non-voting individuals.

### **Major initiatives.**

#### **July 26, 2024**

The Committee reviewed ongoing work and planned next steps across several initiatives. The D&I Survey was advanced, with time allotted at the next meeting for group input and reframing. The Committee confirmed that its contributions would appear as a dedicated one-page insert in the national CAG newsletter, enabling bilingual distribution and alignment with official communications; the first submission was planned for Fall 2024.

The Committee decided to discontinue plans for a D&I Service Award and instead considered the creation of an *Honorary Indigenous Geographer* recognition, modeled on the AAG's program. This recognition would honour individuals whose work meaningfully advanced Indigenous geographies, regardless of academic affiliation.

Membership succession planning continued, with Heather Castleden and Edward Johnson concluding their terms. A Co-Chair vacancy was posted following the meeting, with the incoming Co-Chair tasked with inviting a new Knowledge Keeper.

A concept paper was submitted to the CAG Executive proposing a two-phase strategy to secure sustained funding for Knowledge Keeper participation. Phase 1, implemented following the 2024 AGM, added a voluntary donation option to the membership renewal and registration process. Phase 2 proposed a modest membership fee increase in 2025 to establish a permanent D&I Committee budget line, primarily to support Knowledge Keepers and secondarily to fund other Committee initiatives. The Executive was expected to vote on the proposal at its August 2024 meeting.

### **October 10, 2024**

The Committee elected Dr. Sarah Rotz as incoming Co-Chair and welcomed new members Jenna Dixon and Aishah Cader. The D&I Survey was confirmed as a go, with revisions underway to clarify the target audience, consider coordination with the CAG IPWG and EDI Committee. Drafting and outreach were delegated to subgroups, with feedback and editing to follow.

The Committee confirmed that its first newsletter insert would be launched in November 2024. The proposed *Honorary Indigenous Geographer* recognition was discussed, with follow-up to the Executive pending. The member donation portal to support Knowledge Keeper participation was launched on the CAG website. The Committee also discussed budget planning for Knowledge Keeper compensation, including adjustments to honoraria and additional meeting hours.

As per the Committee's Terms of Reference, Jaimy and Heather drafted letters of appreciation to be distributed by the CAG President to outgoing and current D&I Committee members.

### **February 7, 2025**

The Committee welcomed Dr. Sarah Rotz as incoming Co-Chair and Celeste Smith as a new Knowledge Keeper.

Conference planning was a central focus. The Co-Chairs prepared an abstract for a Fireside Chat session featuring the Committee's Knowledge Keepers and committed to submitting it to the conference organizers. They were also tasked with contacting the Local Organizing Committee to request a plenary slot. The Committee reviewed budget constraints for D&I activities at the conference, and the Co-Chairs were asked to contact the CAG Executive and Working Groups to request financial support for Knowledge Keeper participation. The question of a potential CAG membership fee increase to help establish long-term funding for D&I initiatives was raised again and will be re-presented to the CAG Executive.

Although the Committee had provided substantial input to the revised CAG AGM Manual last year, the revisions had not yet been approved. The Co-Chairs were tasked with inquiring about the delay.

The D&I Survey reached its penultimate revision stage. Distribution logistics and platform selection (Google Forms vs. Qualtrics) were discussed, along with anonymity measures and outreach strategies. A final round of internal review was initiated before circulation to departments and national networks.

Another funding application to the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (FHSS) was under development for submission by February 28 (not awarded). A follow-up was also planned with the CAG President regarding the distribution of letters of appreciation to past and current Committee members and Knowledge Keepers. The Committee also discussed content planning for the spring edition of its newsletter. The review of the Terms of Reference was tabled due to time constraints, and members were asked to update their content on the CAG website and sign up for 2024–2025 work plan items ahead of the next meeting.

### **May 9, 2025**

At its forthcoming meeting, members will provide updates on the annual workplan, revisit the Committee's Terms of Reference, and finalize the D&I Survey for launch in time for the CAG Annual Meeting (*launch date to be confirmed*). A significant portion of the meeting will be dedicated to preparing for the Knowledge Keepers' Fireside Chat session at the AGM. The Committee will also discuss the potential motion regarding CAG membership fee increases to support sustained funding for D&I initiative, and will plan for drafting our action-oriented statements for National Indigenous Peoples' Day (June) and National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September).

**Collaboration with IPWG:** On April 14, 2025, the D&I Committee Co-Chairs met with IPWG Co-Chair (Smiles) to discuss opportunities for collaboration. Topics included the possibility of coordinating a concurrent session at the CAG Annual Meeting and IPWG's review and input on the D&I Survey prior to its launch. The groups agreed to continue coordinating across both committees going forward.

**Announcing an Upcoming Vacancy: Co-Chair Position:** As per the Committee's Terms of Reference, Co-Chair Jaimy Fischer will step down at the close of the 2025 CAG Business Meeting at the Annual General Meeting in Ottawa, Ontario, to make room for new leadership. The Committee also extends heartfelt appreciation—*Kinenaskometin / Maarsii*—to Knowledge Keeper Adele for her meaningful contributions. The incoming Co-Chair will be responsible for inviting a new Knowledge Keeper to join the Committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Jaimy Fischer and Sarah Rotz, Committee Co-Chairs