Africa Specialty Group Annual Report 2010

This annual report was submitted by Dr. Abigail Amissah-Arthur, Chair ASG

A. Specialty group officers
B. Minutes of the 2010 annual business meeting
C. Sessions sponsored by the ASG
D. News

A. SPECIALTY GROUP OFFICERS 2008-11

Chair
Abigail Amissah-Arthur, Cardinal Stritch University
abigail.arthur@gmail.com

Director of Communications
Rachel Bezner Kerr, University of Western Ontario rbeznerkerr@uwo.ca

Director of Finance
Seth Appiah Opoku, University of Alabama
sappiah@bama.ua.edu

Director of Socials and AAG Conference Coordinator
Calvin Masilela, Indiana University of Pennsylvania
cmasilel@iup.edu

Student Directors:
Caroline Faria and Hillary Brooke

B. Minutes: 2010 Africa Specialty Group Annual meeting, April 16, 2010
Washington, D.C.

Agenda for the ASG business meeting scheduled for Friday, 4/16/10, from 11:50 AM - 12:30 PM in Washington Room 1, Marriott Exhibition Level.

1. Welcome and membership news (Abigail Amissah-Arthur or representative)
2. Financial Status (Seth Appiah-Opoku or representative)
3. Presentation of Outstanding Student Paper Award (Caroline Faria), and report of the Student Director (Caroline Faria)
4. Presentation of Kwadwo Konadu Agyemang Distinguished Scholar Award recipient (Francis Owusu or other committee member)
5. Presentation of Africa Specialty Group Service Award recipient (William Osei or other committee member)
6. ASG Newsletter (Rachel Bezner-Kerr)
7. Search for the Associate Editor for the Africa Geographical Review (Godson Obia)
8. Outgoing (Term ends June 30th 2010) AGR Editor’s report (Bill Moseley)
9. Any other Business
1. Welcome and membership news (Calvin O. Masilela representing the Chair, Abigail Amissah-Arthur)

Calvin read a statement from Abigail Amissah-Arthur, the Chair of the African Specialty group who was unable to attend this year’s meeting. A summary of her statement was:

Message from the Chair, Dr. Abigail Amissah-Arthur to members of the Africa Specialty Group

Welcome to the 2010 annual Africa Specialty Group meeting. Unfortunately I am not able to be with you at this meeting this year. I have had to stay home and attend to the emergency medical needs of a close family member. I hope to be with you all at the next year’s AAG meeting. I am glad that Dr. Calvin Masilela has graciously agreed to preside over this meeting.

I am pleased to report to you that from all accounts we have had a very productive year.

1. Last year I reported to you that our total membership stood at 275, this year I am happy to report that we now have 350 members. Through the hard work of a number of people notably Caroline Faria our Student Director, we have seen a significant jump in membership especially that of student members. Later on Caroline will talk more about her efforts in recruiting more students to our group.

2. In line with the increased membership is the increased revenue. Seth Appiah Opoku our Director of financial affairs will talk more about our finances. Since Seth is not able to attend he has requested that Dr. Masilela present his report.

3. I am also glad to note that we saw a tremendous increase in the number of applicants for our student paper award competition. This is the first year since I have been monitoring the trends in submission for this award that we have received as many applicants as we saw this year. I will let Caroline discuss this further when she introduces this year’s winner and presents the award.

4. This year also mark a change in terms of membership involvement in the activities of our group. When we had requested for volunteers to serve of 4 different committees that we set up for the student paper competition, Kwadwo Konadu Agyemang distinguished scholar award, the distinguished service award and the search committee for the Associate Editor, we received so many volunteers that I was overwhelmed and encouraged. I want to use this opportunity to express my thanks to all who served on those committees. Your collective effort is what keeps our group strong. Let’s keep up the group work. Later on today, I will call upon the chairs or representatives of each of these committees to provide us with updates on their tasks.

5. This increased level of member involvement has also translated into record number of sessions by our group at this year’s AAG. We are sponsoring a record 28 sessions! This is about double the number of sessions sponsored in each of the last 5 to 8 years. I am really proud to be a member of the Africa Specialty Group!

6. Our journal, the Africa Geographical Review continues to grow strong and attract more submissions. I want to use this opportunity to thank our outgoing Editor, Bill Moseley for a job well done. I also want to use this opportunity to welcome Kefa Otiso to the Editorship position. Kefa would become the editor on July 1st as Bill’s term ends June 20th of this year. Bill will later on today provide us an update on issues related to the journal. We will also hear from Dr. Godson Obia the chair of the search committee for the Associate Editor position on the progress his committee has made so far in identifying a new Associate Editor.

7. Once again I want to thank you all for taking the time to attend this year’s meeting. I wish you all a successful and fruitful deliberation at this years’ AAG meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Abigail Amissah-Arthur

2. Financial Status (Seth Appiah-Opoku represented by Calvin Masilela)

The financial status of ASG is good; we have a balance of 627.69 in the main account and $4416.17 in the AGR account as of March 2010.

3. Presentation of Outstanding Student Paper Award and report of the Student Director (Caroline Faria)

A graduate student paper – several strong papers, many submissions with several sub-disciplines submitted
Brian Dowd, University of California, Santa Cruz was the winner. He wrote a paper about Bt cotton in Burkina Faso. This paper will be published in the African Geographical Review.

4. Presentation of Kwadwo Konadu Agyemang Distinguished Scholar Award recipient (Calvin Masilela)
   Committee: Francis Owusu, Calvin, Bill Moseley, Isaac Luginaah
   put out the call for Feb. 15 deadlines
   received 2 outstanding nominations – Garth Myers and Michael Woods
   difficult choice to make – both advancing African scholarship in general
   Garth Myers the winner of this award
   thanked the nominator who organized this nomination for him, and touched because Konadu who inspired him in his work, linking very empirical work to theoretical and conceptual concerns
   Calvin Masilela reminded members – when call comes out, please reach out, you know who has contributed to the field; make the effort to nominate people.

5. Presentation of Africa Specialty Group Service Award recipient (William Osei or other committee member)
   Membership: Sara Elliot, Isaac Luginaah, James Saku, George F. Roberson and William Osei
   received very few applications, but very good applications
   nominated Dr. Joseph Oppong unanimously
   plaque is in the mail

   Comments from Committee to the President and Executive of ASG:
   need to have an advertisement for the award into the AAG newsletter and use people’s networks, 4-6 months prior to the award deadline.
   if no nominations are received or no qualified applicants, they should not automatically award it every year.
   an award selection committee should also note be a nominating committee; nominations can be derived from self, general calls and a nominating committee;
   service should reach well beyond publishing, need to broaden reach. Communications plan would help drive awareness

6. ASG Newsletter (Rachel Bezner-Kerr)
   will come out in the summer, look for a post AAG call for submissions

7. Search for the Associate Editor for the Africa Geographical Review (Godson Obia)
   search – had 2 excellent applications, will make decision by June 30th
   plan to interview them here at the AAG but with the economic situation not as many people are here, but both would be excellent associate editors
   Isaac Luginaah (University of Western Ontario) and Seth Appiah-Opoku (University of Alabama)
   selection committee not a nomination committee, since we are choosing the associate editor

8. Outgoing (Term ends June 30th 2010) AGR

   Editor’s report (Bill Moseley)
   pass on Kefa’s regards, urged everyone to submit manuscripts and to be prompt if you are reviewers
   Kefa takes over June 30th, has worked with Bill for last 2 years to ensure institutional memory, good system, Kefa well placed to enhance the profile of the journal
   submissions: 2007/08 15 each year; 2009 – 24; so far this year 2010 – 10 (good trend)
   Financial information: Income for 2009 (volume 29)
   Next volume (June) - $3818.64 cost, income - $5836.
   last year we created a separate AGR sub account, 80% of your dues go into the AGR, rest goes into ASG general account.
   getting subscription services
   selling back issues, some libraries buy back issues
o have a subsidy 2009 – 2010, possibly 2011
o website gets a lot of traffic, set up June 2006, 17,000 hits
o now carried by SCOPUS, have applications by IBSS and ISI – critical for this to be considered a credible journal
o 360 individual subscribers and 44 institutional subscribers
o (up from 9 a few years ago)
o cost of producing 2 volumes of $18, members get it for $12.

**Big Issue: Moving Towards a Search for a Commercial Publisher**

- he believes that we need to consider approaching commercial publishers who could run the journal on our behalf;
- have internationalized the editorial board, 2 issues a year, financial books in order.

**Pros:**
- relieve administrative burden on editor (e.g. advertisers, subscriptions)
- increased distribution and visibility
- reduce financial uncertainty
- increase long term

**Cons:**
- some loss of control
- selling out to commercial interests?
- have formed a committee to explore this issue: Tom Bassett, Maano Ramutsindela (South African Geographical Journal) and Padraig Carmody (Irish Geography Journal) - 2 others with experience moving to a commercial journal
- want feedback from us

*Joseph Oppong moved that they approve the committee to move forward on this issue, seconded and approved by a majority of the group.*

10. Any other Business

Announcement for next year’s session on persistence of refugee camps in Africa. Marilyn Silberlein at Temple University (pauling@temple.edu) “The Persistence of Refugee Camps in Africa”

*Minutes submitted by Rachel Bezner Kerr.*

**C. Sessions organized by the ASG members at the annual meeting 2010**

The following are the sessions that the Africa Specialty Group is sponsored at the 2010 annual AAG meeting:

1. Africa Specialty Group Business Meeting
2. Beyond 2015: Sustainable Approaches to Maternal Health and HIV/AIDS Mitigation
3. CHANS: East Africa Climate-Land Interaction Project in Savanna Ecosystems (EACLIPSE)
4. Debating The Theory, Practice & Impact Of Transfrontier Conservation I
5. Debating The Theory, Practice & Impact Of Transfrontier Conservation II
6. Environmental Change in the Atlantic World, Part 1
7. Environmental Change, Livelihood Strategies and Health in Africa I
8. Environmental Change, Livelihood Strategies and Health in Africa II
10. Fieldwork in an African Setting II
11. Fieldwork in an African Setting III
12. Geographies of Slavery: Mobilities, Borders and Emancipations
13. Geographies of Slavery: Politics of Memory
14. Geographies of Slavery: Theoretical and Empirical Innovations
15. Harnessing Information Technology for Africa's Development in the 21st Century
16. In Memoriam: Glen S. Elder
17. Integrating Ecology and Political Ecology I
18. Integrating Ecology and Political Ecology II
19. People, Livestock and the Environment I
20. People, Livestock and the Environment II
21. Post-Apartheid Geographies of South Africa and its Region 1
22. Post-Apartheid Geographies of South Africa and its Region 2
23. Post-Apartheid Geographies of South Africa and its Region 3
24. Post-Apartheid Geographies of South Africa and its Region 4
25. The Economic Crisis and/in Africa
27. The Rising Powers and the ‘new’ geographies of international development I
28. The Rising Powers and the ‘new’ geographies of international development II
29. Urban Food Security: A Future Research Frontier?

D. News
On the recommendation of Dr. Godson Obia and the members of the ASG Associate Editor Search Committee, Dr. Isaac Luginaah of the University of Western Ontario was offered the position of Associate Editor for the African Geographical Review. Dr. Luginaah accepted the offer. His term began July 1, 2010. Please join me in welcoming Isaac on board the leadership of our esteemed journal.