

***2004 Annual Report of the
Human Dimensions of Global Change Specialty Group
of the Association of American Geographers***

I. Mission Statement (no change)

The HDGC Specialty Group seeks to promote communication and interaction among geographers interested in the human dimensions of global environmental change, and to enhance the contributions of geographers to human dimensions of global change research.

II. 2002-2003 Dues (no change)

Regular Members: \$5.00; Students: \$1.00

III. Board of Directors

Immediate Past Chair (until 3/04)

Susanne Moser, Ph.D.,
National Center for Atmospheric Research
smoser@ucar.edu

New Chair

David Carr, Ph.D.
University of California—Santa Barbara
carr@geog.ucsb.edu

Outgoing Secretary-Treasurer (until 3/04)

Kirstin Dow, Ph.D.
Stockholm Environment Institute, on leave from University of South Carolina
kirstin.dow@sei.se

New Secretary-Treasurer (Chair-Elect)

Shannon O'Lear, Ph.D.
University of Illinois-Urbana-Champaign
solear@uiuc.edu

Outgoing Directors

Jennifer L. DeHart, Ph.D.
Allegheny College
jdehart@allegheny.edu

Brent Yarnal, Ph.D.
Pennsylvania State University
alibar@essc.psu.edu

New Directors (as of 3/04)

Colin Polsky, Ph.D.
Clark University
cpolsky@clarku.edu

Hallie Eakin, Ph.D.
Universidad Nacional Autonoma De Mexico
eakin_unam@yahoo.com

Student Director

Shannon Donnelly
Indiana University
sdonnell@indiana.edu

Webmaster

Rob Neff
Pennsylvania State University
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Newsletter Editor

David Carr, Ph.D.
University of California—Santa Barbara
carr@geog.ucsb.edu

IV. Accomplishments, Activities Scheduled, Future Plans and Directions

Newsletter

The HDGC Newsletter (published two or three times a year) is usually edited by the SG Chair. Over the past year, two newsletters were prepared by then- SG chair, Susi Moser, one in summer/fall 2003, the second just prior to the 100th Annual Meeting in Philadelphia. (Both are attached.) Since the newsletter is only published electronically, no cost is incurred in its publication. The current circulation of the newsletter is about 230, with a number of recipients overseas. The newsletter is available online at the HDGC website, which is hosted by <http://www.essc.psu.edu/hdgc/>.

Student Travel Awards

Two travel awards of \$500 each were given to SG student members Rebecca Powell (University of California, Santa Barbara) and Robert Neff (Penn State) to help defray costs of attendance of the Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Change Research Community in October 2003. Reports back from the awardees reflecting on

their experience at the Montreal conference were an award requirement and can be found in the Spring 2004 newsletter. The SG also committed to providing a similar travel award to a student attending a HD conference on urban global change in Shanghai, China (organized by SG member Bill Solecki). Because of the SARS outbreak this conference is rescheduled from 2003 to May 2004. Thus the travel award will be paid in 2004. (For additional information on the conference see:

<http://www.montclair.edu/globaled/shanghai>)

National Councilor Elections

On behalf of the Specialty Group, outgoing SG Chair, Susi Moser, and SG member, Roger Kasperson nominated Kirstin Dow, outgoing HDGCSG Secretary-Treasurer and vulnerability expert (Stockholm Environment Institute and University of South Carolina) as candidate for National Councilor of the AAG. She was elected to that position in March 2004, and will therefore not assume the SG chair position (see below).

2004 Annual Meeting

At this year's annual meeting, the Specialty Group was represented as cosponsor of 22 sessions. Lead sessions showcasing Human Dimensions research included Interactions Between Global Environmental Change and Urban Processes, Environmental Change Scenarios and Vulnerabilities, Coupling land and climate systems, Environmental Conflict and Resolution, Commodities at the Periphery, Transnationalism, The Millenium Development Goals and the Role of Geography in Poverty Alleviation, Scale and the Political Ecologies of Environmental Conflict and Sustainability etc. Human Dimensions research and researchers were also prominently represented in two Centennial plenary sessions, featuring SG members Billie L. Turner and Diana Liverman. Finally, there was a panel discussion on coastal futures, examining the intersection of global change and societal dynamics in coastal areas. Beyond the co-sponsored sessions, there were numerous human-dimensions related papers demonstrating the far-reaching interests of SG members.

The HDGC SG was one of only two specialty groups who prepared a poster for the Geography Timeline, reflecting the evolution and contributions of HD scholars, and especially AAG members, to this growing and increasingly important subfield. Outgoing Secretary-Treasurer, Kirstin Dow, took the lead in putting together the poster, with contributions from Bill Solecki and Susi Moser. The poster is attached.

2004 Business Meeting

The Business Meeting was held on March 16, 2004 in Philadelphia with a strong showing of 21 members in attendance. After distribution and formal acceptance of last year's business meeting minutes, the agenda listed the following discussion items:

1. Chairs Meeting – report back
2. Treasurer's Report
3. Bank Account – relocation
4. Elections of Board Members
5. Human Dimensions Specialty Group affairs
6. Web maintenance/needs

7. Plans for AAG meeting in Denver in 2005
8. Plans for IGU in Scotland in summer 2004
9. Reports from open, collaborative international and national initiatives of interest to HDGCSG

Of these, the most important were the election of a new chair*, two new regular board members and a new secretary-treasurer the decision to move the HDGCSG bank account to one administered by the AAG; improvements in the services of the SG to its members; and plans for next year's meeting in Denver.

* **Note:** A new chair had to be elected, despite the SG's rule that the Secretary-Treasurer automatically becomes the next chair, because past S-T and chair elect, Kirstin Dow was elected to the position of National Councilor and unable to serve in both capacities at the same time.

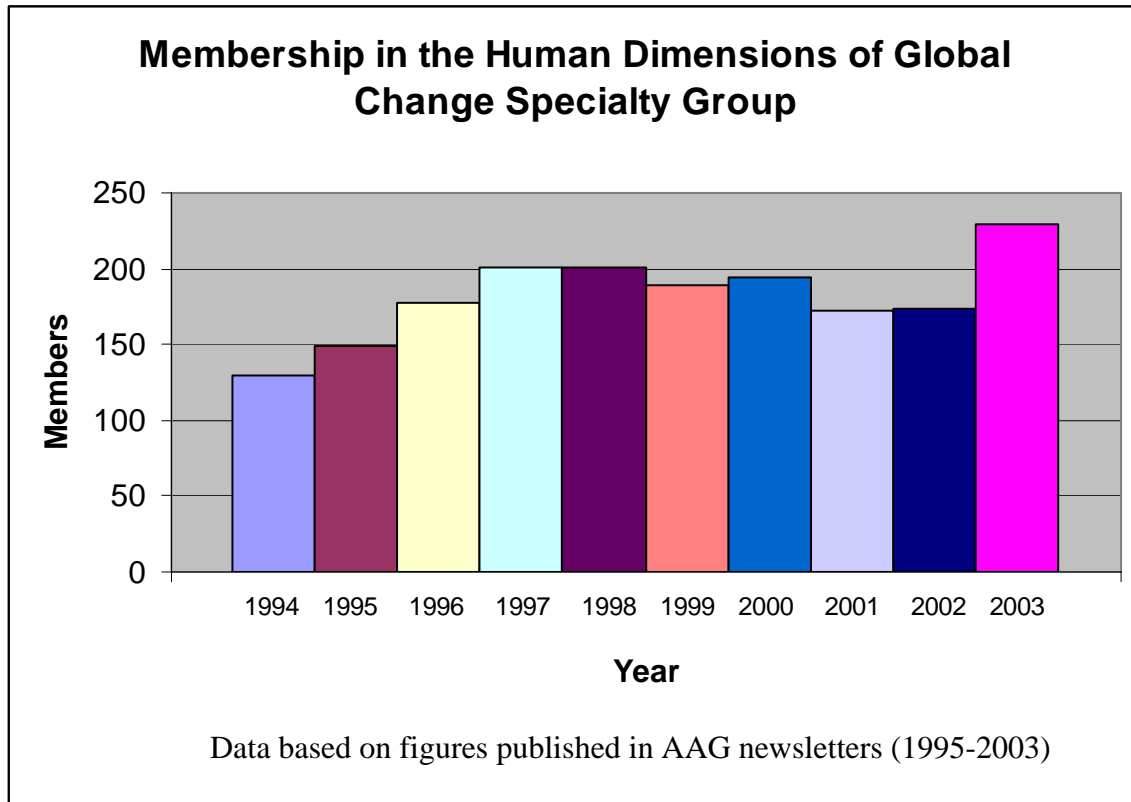
Future Directions

- 1. Sustain valuable information distribution to specialty group members –** SG members expressed appreciation for the announcement distributed by the chair (job and conference announcements etc.) and hopes that this service would be maintained by the incoming chair.
- 2. Generate ideas for SG-sponsored sessions early in the AAG year –** Members would like to begin generating ideas for the following year's AAG Annual Meeting and organizing sessions much sooner, i.e., shortly after the Annual Meetings as ideas and contacts to other members and colleagues are fresh. The Chair will initiate this effort through a call to SG members via the group's listserv.
- 3. Organize field trips or pre-conference meetings –** Members expressed interest in organizing another field trip and/or pre-conference get-together of SG members at next year's Annual Meeting. Susi Moser offered to organize a meeting at the National Center for Atmospheric Research. The chair will request additional suggestions for field trips or lunch meetings and panels via the group's listserv.
- 4. Promote greater interaction with IGU and other scientific associations –** Several SG members are involved in IGU and other association and international conferences. A desire was expressed to ask these members to report back to the SG to keep members informed of related activities and developments. In addition, greater interaction between the AAG and other professional associations interested in human dimensions work would be welcomed. The chair will remind members to report back to the SG and to forge connections where possible.

V. Membership and Participation

Membership as of June 2003 is estimated to be about 230 members, including nearly 200 regular members and about 35 student members, according to information circulated to

Specialty Groups from the AAG office. Comparing membership over the years since founding of the Specialty group, we observe significant growth in the early years, overall stability of the membership with slight year-to-year variation (see graphic). We believe these changes reflect both the growing interest in our subfield as well as overall AAG membership fluctuations. The current size is in the same range as long-established Specialty Groups such as GPOW and Hazards.



A listserv for the HDGCSG until now was always maintained by the Specialty Group Chair. Due to constant problems with bounce-backs and updated membership lists only upon request, the outgoing chair, Susi Moser, supported the call of other specialty group chairs during the chairs meeting to the AAG headquarters to find a way to centrally maintain specialty group servers. This would ensure that old members are immediately removed, and new members immediately added to the ongoing conversations among SG members. The HDGC SG urges the AAG office to implement this change as soon as possible.

The listserv is primarily used for announcements from the chair (or from members via the chair) to the group. Most frequent type of announcements include job, post-doc, and research opportunities, conference or journal calls for papers, specialty group-related business, and occasionally calls to members to speak out publicly about specialty group-related issues.

The Group includes an active core set of individuals. Most members have significant contact with the HDGC community outside of geography and are active with the Open Meeting of the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change research community. Several SG members also provide links to key committees within the IGU, e.g., on vulnerability or urban issues.

VI. Financial Report

The HDGCSG's bank account has been kept until now at Wainwright Trust & Bank in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and was jointly administered by the Secretary-Treasurer, Kirstin Dow, and the outgoing chair, Susi Moser because it was too complicated to establish an account in Sweden and transfer funds there.

The balance appears to be relatively stable over the past two years. The statement below was prepared by the secretary treasurer and distributed to members at the business meeting and – embedded within the business meeting minutes -- via the listserv.

Item Description	Action	Balance
Balance 2003 Meeting		\$ 2,111.46
Additional membership income for 2002 (received 5/27/03)	+ \$ 104.00	\$ 2,215.46
Student travel award, Neff (7/27/03)	– \$ 500.00	\$ 1,715.46
Student travel award, Powell (7/28/03)	– \$ 500.00	\$ 1,215.46
Annual Membership income, Feb 2003-March 2004	+ \$ 614.00	\$ 1,829.46
Interest income (Feb 2003- march 2004)	+ \$ 1.47*	\$ 1,831.20
Balance as of March 13, 2004		\$ 1,831.20

* **Note:** The declining interest despite growing income reflects the general economic situation of the country.

The SG anticipates spending another \$500 for a student travel award for the Shanghai, China conference, organized by Bill Solecki (see above).

At the 2004 Business Meeting, attending SG members voted to have the account moved from Cambridge, MA to an account administered by the AAG, following the example of many other specialty groups. Outgoing chair, Susi Moser, initiated this process after the Philadelphia Meeting with various AAG staff, but is still awaiting response and conclusion of the matter. (Status 4-20-04)

We also agreed that the SG would retain the position of Secretary-Treasurer to handle business meeting reporting and all financial matters.

VII. Special Requests or Questions for Council

1. The HDGC SG supports the call by other specialty groups to centralize listserv management at the AAG in Washington, and urges rapid implementation.

2. It has been the experience of the outgoing HDGC SG chair that requests to AAG staff require a very long time and repeated emails or phone calls before receiving any response. While we understand that AAG central office staff is stretched thin among many requests, we strongly hope that ways can be found to improve the service and responsiveness of AAG staff. Recent examples of issues that have not been responded to in reasonable time include:
 - a. Updating the AAG website with contact information about the current chair, and removing a typo in the name of the specialty group. (Took about 1.5 years to get it changed)
 - b. Request for information about moving the SG bank account to an AAG account. (Still no reply after weeks of repeated inquiry)

Submitted April 22, 2003 by:
Susanne C. Moser, Immediate Past Chair