

**Minutes of the GENIP Meeting  
Denver, Colorado  
September 24 & 25, 2004**

**Friday, September 24, 2004**

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**Present:** Roger Downs, Michael Solem, Barbara Chow (afternoon), Ken Foote, Chris Shearer (afternoon), Dick Anderson, Sarah Bednarz

**Guests:** Robert S. Bednarz, Jodi Vender, Lanny Proffer, James Marran

GENIP met first with two representatives of the National Conference of State Legislatures, Julie Bell and Scott Young (7700 East First Place, Denver, Colorado 80230). NCSL reported that they are developing recommendations to improve NCLB at the request of members of state legislatures, their constituents. The data demands are tremendous for the state education agencies, many which have struggled to meet the unfunded expectations. Bell and Young, NCSL's NCLB expert, also reported that the feeling is that state budgets may improve in their next year but higher education affordability was a key issue. Many states are striving for K-16 systems and improved linkages between high schools and post-secondary education but that there appeared to be a lack of aggressiveness on the part of state legislators to set educational policy. Bell and Young suggested GENIP might wish to follow the model of promoting a national dialogue on geography through state forums. Most good things happen at the state level, they stated. Bell reminded us that we need to identify champions and partners in order to promote our issues. GENIP was invited to author an article about geography education for the NCSL publication *State Legislatures*.

Following lunch the group met at the Education Commission of the States with Charles Young, Dwayne Mathews, Kathy Christie, Mary Fulton and Jennifer Downey (700 Broadway, Denver, Colorado 80203-3421). Kathy Christie explained the function and role of ECS as a non-partisan body to provide coordination and data for governors, chief state school officers, higher education boards and legislatures by request. One of their key functions is to provide a bird's eye view of what is happening nationwide. In order to do that they conduct objective analyses and disseminate results. After a general discussion on NCLB, GENIP explored the idea of commissioning ECS to conduct a study in the range of \$25-30,000. High schools are an area of concern nationwide right now and might present a point of leverage for geography with workforce development. The narrowing of the curriculum is alarming many potential employers. Policy makers want to know about issues, research about the issues, what other states are doing, and where to get additional information. This might be a good outline for a study which would become a component of the ECS web site.

**Saturday, April 24, 2005**

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**Present:** Roger Downs, Michael Solem, Barbara Chow, Ken Foote, Chris Shearer, Dick Anderson, Sarah Bednarz

**Guests:** Robert S. Bednarz, Jodi Vender, Lanny Proffer, James Marran, A. David Hill, John Deal

**Apologies:** Duane Nellis, Michal LeVasseur

Downs began the business meeting by congratulating Michael Solem, Phil Gersmehl, and the AAG for successfully acquiring a FIPSE grant. The final products will be packaged under the name "A Modern Teacher's Guide to Geography."

The minutes from the Washington DC 2004 meeting were accepted (Shearer moved acceptance, Anderson seconded).

The order of the agenda was accepted with an admonition to minimize time on reports in order to maximize time to discuss upcoming business. One additional item was added to the agenda—the “Famous Women of Geography Education” Calendar, Jodi Vender reporting.

**AAG Report (available on line at <http://genip.tamu.edu/denver2004.htm>)**

In addition to the information contained in the report, Michael Solem reported that the new staff at AAG are working very hard to better represent geography in Washington DC. There is a horizontal structure of leadership; everyone works in a completely collaborative style—people are called in to manage multiple initiatives. Weekly staff meetings allow all staffers to be aware of what is going on in different areas. Doug Richardson and Patricia Solis encourage cross-fertilization.

John Wertman has begun to act to shape public policy, on the Hill meeting staffers, attending key meetings etc. He will meet in October during NCGE with NGS representatives to coordinate policy outreach efforts. Gary Fitzpatrick works part time for the AAG on creating an Office of the Geographer. There is no consensus on the location of this office. Marran asked if it has to be established by an Act of Congress but Solem was not sure.

Shearer asked if there has been an increase in the amount of money available for and given to geography. Solem does not think this is the case but that the impression of success might be the result of geographers aggressively seeking funds. Downs evaluated the funding opportunities offered by NSF and other federal agencies. NSF is flat, NASA is down, NOAA is flat, while NIH is up. Department of Education funding is very unsure.

The issue of the nature of the AAG intern position was discussed. AAG had requested that this position be converted to a permanent staff position. Offers were made to three applicants; all turned it down. The AAG felt they may be better able to hire a highly qualified individual on a permanent basis rather than as an intern. GENIP currently supports AAG’s public policy initiative (\$25,000) and NGS’s intern for the spring (\$6,000). Proffer suggested this is a threshold issue—if the job is *just* to do research, bring in a person with enthusiasm and a fresh approach, that is, hire an intern. If the scope of work includes a component of networking, relationship building, and policy recommendations, one needs to hire a permanent staff person.

There is a significant demand and need for careers information. It was suggested that GENIP might wish to consider this a one time seed money grant for \$12,000, to obtain a specific product. Consensus was that GENIP would like the product to be a web site / resource that school counselors, kids, and parents can use to determine the course work/preparation they need for a career in geography/geospatial technologies. The site should also include information useful for working on the Hill—that is, make the case for the importance of thinking spatially in business, industry, and science.

GENIP requested a document that describes precisely what the product will be, a draft of the methodology and an outline for the database which will be used to create a web site. It should revolve around course preparation for a range of geography-related career paths and be updatable over time.

A motion to change the previous intern funding to supplemental pay for full time staff member was made; Bird seconded. This is a one year proposition, tied to a specific product, to meet Roger’s approval. The vote was unanimous. The product should be ready for September, 2005.

**AGS Report (available on line at <http://genip.tamu.edu/denver2004.htm>)**

In addition to the online report, Mary Lynne Bird reported that editorials and op-ed pieces are being widely published due to an AGS initiative. There was a discussion about the need for a blog on geography and geography education. Joseph Kerski, USGS, provides this service to some degree.

## **NCGE (available on line at <http://genip.tamu.edu/denver2004.htm>)**

In addition to the online report, Ken Foote reported that David Lambert, executive director of the Geographical Association (UK) will attend the annual meetings in Kansas City October 20-23, 2004. Foote mentioned the need for additional publications to continue to develop the *Pathways* series. There are many areas in which geography education materials are needed and many opportunities for materials but producing a book is a timely process. Distribution is an issue. These are high-quality materials but they are not well known or widely disseminated. NCGE is using print-on-demand strategies so upfront costs are minimized. Foote also mentioned the need for shorter pieces—monographs longer than articles for JoG but shorter than full length books.

## **NGS (written report not submitted)**

The Society has made progress to improve the position of geography in federal circles, an initiative sparked by A. David Hill and Sydney Jumper over a year ago as a result of concern over NCLB. Congressmen willing to help such as Congressman Dennis Moore (D-Kansas; <http://www.house.gov/moore/>; <http://www.house.gov/moore/nr-geography-9-04.htm>; re-elected 2004) have been identified. The goal is to establish a permanent fund for geography. Obtaining an Appropriation is a long shot but feasible. Lanny Proffer distributed draft legislation, “Geography Education Act of 2005” This would supplement the kinds of activities which NGSEF has sponsored since 1986. The plan is to have a federal agency make a single grant to a group to administer the legislation; this follows the Civics NCLB model. Federal control would be limited but the program would be subject to federal oversight. The draft legislation is not directed towards any particular organization. GENIP discussed whether it would be able to administer a 30 million dollar a year organization. It would require ramping up to a permanent infrastructure with staff etc. An alternate role for GENIP would be to provide oversight without being the direct recipient. In all likelihood a governance board will be necessary. Patton Boggs representative Bob Jones will attend NCGE and begin to develop the infrastructure needed to build nationwide support. Grassroots support will be essential to the success of any legislation. Suggestion for Journal of Geography issue (see attached).

In other news, NGSEF has established a new geography education internship program in tandem with Texas State University. David Rutherford is the intern this year. He will work with Chris Shearer on projects to support the legislative initiative, for example, producing a collection of articles on the status of geography education (see attached). NGS is also beginning to explore the feasibility of an Ad Council campaign on behalf of geography. The Ad Council process is expensive and cumbersome but worthwhile—successful campaigns can change public attitudes. The challenge is to change peoples’ perceptions.

## **National Geography Challenge Update**

James Marran reported that the NCSS geography SIG is being revived by Paul Nagel as a way to extend the reach of K-12 geography within the social studies group. Marran also provided an update on the National Geography Challenge. It was established as the “Olympiad” in the early mid 1980s by NCGE to promote good geography and to support implementation of the Themes and Standards. The name was changed to the Challenge because of copyright restrictions on the word *Olympic*. The focus is on achievement, not winning. Participation rates depend upon the economy. NCLB has affected participation—schools do not wish to subject students to yet another test. Teachers receive a document linking activities with Standards in addition to test results. Banks of test questions now on NCGE web site. While there are not many possibilities for research GENIP could track progress over time.

It was suggested that groups of home schoolers could participate to expand enrollment numbers.

GENIP discussed ways to encourage geographers to sponsor schools in their area. AAG/NCGE could establish a campaign to sponsor schools. PTA's could sponsor.

### **GIS Issues**

John Deal, CEO of GEO 360 and a professional geographer "works on the planet." His interest in geography education comes from his role as a *working man geographer*. He reminded GENIP that industry works with education primarily for enhanced public relations.

### **Treasurer's Report**

Richard Anderson presented the Treasurers Report. A question was raised about how much time we spend "lobbying." We need to characterize this NOT as lobbying but as a "research and monitoring" position. Federal regulations require organizations to keep track of time spent influencing legislature. Consensus agreed that the position should be titled *Public Policy Analyst*. Michael Solem will provide a copy of the final letter agreeing to the position. Two other minor changes need to be made to the Report: a) the position of project associate from NCGE needs to be eliminated; and b) Royal Bank of Scotland needs to be added to list of CDs.

A request from NCGE was submitted to reconsider Handling Costs (see attached). A general re-examination of the agreement will be conducted at the Spring meeting.

There was a motion to accept the Treasurers Report by Shearer; seconded by Chow. All approved. GENIP extended its thanks again to Dick Anderson for his outstanding service as Treasurer.

### **Miscellaneous Other Business:**

*The Outstanding Women in Geography Education Calendar* is completed. The list was compiled with the help of Jan Monk. Jan Smith and Jodi Vender submitted a request for \$2500.00 to cover expenses per a former agreement; the motion was approved. The profits from the sale go to the NCGE Womens' Scholarship Fund

*Cambridge Studios'* partner Lance Wisniewski requested a letter of support for a proposal from GENIP. Downs agreed to complete the letter.

After a review of applications for the 2004 *Travelocity Award*, Reach the World, an organization that works with at-risk kids in New York City, was selected (see attached). The award will be presented in Kansas City at NCGE

In 2004 10471 students took *AP Human Geography*. GENIP discussed the need for a letter to College Board to remind them of our continued interest in the growth and development of the program. There is a need to market the program and to target key areas to offer summer institutes. A plan was developed to offer incentives to hold summer trainings (\$1000 each up to five), with the West Coast (California) and East Coast likely targets. In addition, Downs will contact Pat Gober to coordinate other plans. James Marran and Sarah Bednarz agreed to develop a plan and follow up with newsletter articles, data collection from regional College Boards and other actions as needed.

Information about a key planning meeting for NASA—to create a Roadmap—was announced. Osa Brand and Michal Levasseur planned to attend.

### **Debriefing Meetings with NCSL and ECS**

In a debriefing of the Friday meetings GENIP decided to request from NCSL a list of state legislators with a background in education. We need to develop a set of goals and a specific “ask.” Goals might be to make legislators aware of state Alliances, endowments, and \_\_\_\_ (further thought is needed). The creation of a State Geography Educator—a point person from whom information flows, was suggested. That person would have to invest a considerable amount of time. The logical person would be the state Alliance coordinator.

In exchange GENIP should offer an article for the NCSL publication. Another need is linkage between specific legislators and geographers. It was suggested that GENIP could create a database of basis statistics from which a two page fact sheet could be easily generated and periodically updated. Yet another needed product is a 10 page white paper on programs that work. It could be derived from the Grosvenor Grants and other successful geography-based funded projects. As much as possible the geography education community needs to emphasize student outcomes but very little student data is available.

The suggestion to commission ECS to conduct a study for GENIP was made. The geography education community would benefit from such a study, perhaps the first of several, e.g., relations between student achievement and....\$25-50,000 range would attract ECS's interest. Such a study should be framed as a benefit to our and ECS's constituency. The study could see wide dissemination on the policy notes page on the ECS web site. Other potential areas in need of study include critical thinking skills and student achievement in geography. The focus must be: What do we know—evaluation and recommendations? What do we want to do?

Consensus is that the message must be: learning geography helps students to be better citizens. GENIP members agreed that we need to follow up on this. The idea is worth pursuing and quickly.

Chris Shearer volunteered to have David Rutherford staff us to a decision.

A question was posed related the role of teachers/grassroots support for our legislative initiatives. The discussion concluded with the sentiment that the Alliances and their coordinators are key to popular support.

#### **Home Schooling White Paper (available on line at <http://genip.tamu.edu/denver2004.htm>)**

Jodi Vender presented the paper GENIP commissioned. National professional organizations have not addressed home schooling. The needs of this community are simple: cheap is good; free is better. But Ms Vender stated that home school parents were willing to pay for good materials. They are consumers of maps and place-location based materials which match their perception of geography.

Downs stated that this is an opportunity to do something in a way that no other discipline is doing. We could develop an on-line presence to show case and promote geography, to review and recommend resources, and even to disseminate new resources. We could provide vignettes of how home schoolers can use high quality geography materials. It would be essential to link materials to real world issues. It was suggested that GENIP could provide multiple levels of service: a free area and a subscription level. Among the other components of a potential web site were:

- Activities, lesson plans etc.
- Assessments
- Resource review section—with links
- Discussion Forum
- Assistance in answering questions
- Information on group and individual competitions
- A regular feature area
- GENIP column
- Feature family stories
- Online classes for AP/College credit

Foote expressed the opinion that it is important to address this audience and proposed that GENIP authorize a further investment to mock up the web site. It is estimated that a web site like this could be set up for about \$150,000. Once established the challenge is to sustain the web site and to attract visitors and to keep them coming. As this proceeds we should seek external funding opportunities e.g., foundations such as Johnson and Johnson, Macarthur, Annenberg, Kellogg Foundation (Contacts: Bill Richardson and Ann Peterson).

Chow asked whether it was perhaps better to focus on parents at large, not exclusively home schooling parents, in order to reach a larger audience. A further question was raised about the appropriate role for GENIP in a home school initiative. Are home schoolers interested at all in the National Geography Standards? GENIP members agreed that the answer was no. Shearer expressed further doubt about whether this was the audience we wanted to focus on. Are there more significant areas in which we could invest our time and efforts? Standards are the vehicle for moving geography in the schools. We need to emphasize significant content, knowledge, and skills.

Foote motioned to invest an additional \$2500 to mock up a web site and to begin preliminary grant writing to support a web initiative. The motion was seconded by Bird. In the discussion Chow expressed a preference for a broad-based parental focus. Downs suggested a staged approach: the first stage developed would be for home schoolers; additional stages would include features for parents in general.

What is the scope and sequence for parents, asked Chow. Members included these ideas for the project:

- Link to existing resources;
- Establish a framework on which future work can be developed;
- Assemble a 30-40 page product;
- Focus on student achievement;
- Maintain focus on the geographically informed person (GIPs) and further development of the Standards.
- Write materials with the understanding that resources for home schoolers are also good for teachers.
- Write materials that would be easily repurposed;
- Recycle existing materials by taking advantage of previous materials developed;
- Write materials that incorporated the Standards without making them explicit.

The motion passed with all approving; Downs abstained.

### **Top Level Executive Group**

A. David Hill set the context by reviewing briefly the history of GENIP. In the late 1970s the AAG became interested in geography education. As AAG Council discussed various projects such as the formation of the Guidelines committee, they saw a need for a group of all the professional associations concerned with education to coordinate activities. Sam Natoli organized such a group—GENIP-- and we are still functioning. Hill stated it was gratifying to see an active, ongoing, powerful GENIP.

Hill then presented a proposal to establish an advisory board of top level advisors for geography education, an idea developed by Sid Jumper. There are many geographers who have been executives and we could add others—both academics and businesspeople—who could contribute a valuable perspective to our work.

Marran asked if the proposal for an Executive Group was similar to a national forum strategy as suggested by NCSL. A number of potential members were identified: a former executive from Hormel (please provide name), David Ward, Risa Palm, Gil Grosvenor, Jack Dangermond, National Academy members. These individuals appreciate geography and see its need. Chow agreed the Executive Group was a good idea but that it would need to define specific tasks such as to speak on behalf of geography to Congress, to advise on

policy, to advocate, to write opinion editorials, and to participate in Hill briefings. We would need to emphasize that members would be part of a powerful group and to specify the time they would have to expend. Foote spoke in support of the proposal putting it in the framework of university Visiting Committees which provide feedback on programs. He pointed out such a group would also be a way to publicize what is going on within the geography education community. David Ward has expressed interest but has not been asked. Downs asked if Chow would work to develop the list and to identify people who are articulate and can testify. Foote, Hill, and Chow agreed to develop list and follow up.

The meeting ended with a discussion of possible places to meet in the Spring in Washington DC, including PTA, Education Week, GED, the national association of Charter Schools.