SESSION & PANEL

# Health and Medical Geograp

Specialty Group



VOL 2

**WINTER 2017** 

#### LETTER from Eric Delmelle, HMGSG chair

Dear members,

I hope you had a pleasant holiday season and would like to wish you my best for this year. I would like to thank Marynia Kolak and Xiang Chen for putting this newsletter together.

Our group has been very vibrant in 2016, as you can probably attest from our presence at our annual meeting in San Francisco. I would like to thank Dr. Mei-Po Kwan for her efforts to reach out to organizers of the International Society for Urban Health (ISUH) and organize several combined sessions. In addition to 55 sessions that our group sponsored at the AAG, Dr. Kwan

helped to organize approximately another 50 that showed a mix of presentations from both AAG and ISUH members.

Figure 1 summarizes the upward trajectory of our specialty group since 2010. This year alone, we will sponsor 72 sessions. This is not only due to the increasing number of members (543 as I write this letter, although that number fluctuates), but also the realization that health is a key component of many other sub-disciplines within geography. I personally thank members of our group for organizing sessions and reaching out to other specialty groups.

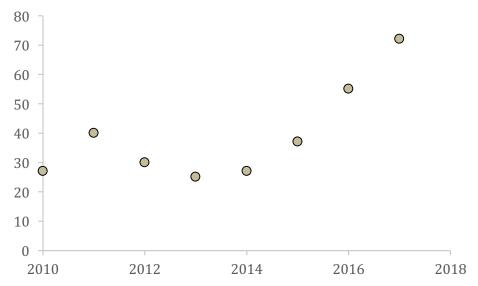


Figure 1: Variation in the number of sessions organized at our annual meeting. Source: aag.org



Figure 2. HMGSG's board members after our business meeting in San Francisco. From left to right: Jessica Finlay (Student Board, PhD Candidate, U of Minnesota); Dr. Xun Shi (Former Chair, Dartmouth); Dr. Eric Delmelle (Chair, UNC-Charlotte); Dr. Michael Widener (Vice Chair, U of Toronto - St. George); Dr. Xiang Chen (At-Large, Arkansas Tech); Dr. Mei-Po Kwan (Former Chair, UIUC); Dr. Yan Lin (At-Large, New Mexico); Marynia Kolak (Student Board, PhD Candidate, Arizona State); Michael Desjardins (Webmaster, PhD Candidate, UNC-Charlotte). \*Not Pictured: David Lamb, Webmaster, PhD Candidate, U of South Florida; Dr. Kirsten Beyer, At-Large, Medical College of Wisconsin; and Kevin Matthews, Webmaster, CDC.

Our last specialty group business meeting in San Francisco was very well attended. There were a few changes among our officers (Figure 2). As such, I take the opportunity to thank our outgoing chair *Xun Shi*, our student representative *David Lamb*, and webmaster *Kevin Matthews* for their hard work; all of them have helped with increasing the visibility of our specialty group. We welcome *Michael Widener* (University of Toronto) as vice-chair, *Xiang Chen* (Arkansas Tech) as board member, and *Marynia Kolak* (Arizona State University) as student representative. I am also excited to report that our website https://hmgsg.wordpress.com, Facebook page facebook.com/hmgsg and Twitter page twitter.com/HealthGeography are now maintained by both *David Lamb* and *Michael Desjardins*.

During our meeting, we recognized several scholars who have made a significant contribution to our discipline (Figure 3). Dr. *Mei-Po Kwan<sup>1</sup>* from the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign (UIUC) received the **Melinda S. Meade Distinguished Scholarship Award. The Emerging Scholar Award** was shared by both Dr. *Paul Mkandawire* (Carleton University, Canada) and Dr. *Kirsten Beyer* (Medical College of Wisconsin).

Our student members were also recognized for their outstanding research. *Dr. Peng Jia* (Louisiana State University) and Lea *Ravensbergen-Hodgins* (University of Toronto) received the **Jacques May Thesis Prize** for the doctoral and master category, respectively. *Sandy Wong* (University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign) and *Claire Hofius* both received the **Peter Gould Paper Competition Award**, at the graduate and undergraduate level, respectively. Finally, the specialty group awarded two **travel awards** to *Yanjia Cao* (University of Maryland) and *Emilv Rugel* (University of British Columbia).

Our specialty group is maintaining its upward trajectory with (1) the addition of new members (2) the increasing number of sessions that our group is sponsoring, and (3) the pool of students participating in our paper, thesis, and dissertation competitions. Due to the rapidly growing number of student members, the board recognizes a need to support them and, accordingly recommended the following changes (effective this Spring 2017):

- An increase of the prize for the winner of the Jacques May Thesis Prize, doctoral category to \$350 in lieu of \$250, and
- An increase in the number of travel awards to attend AAG meeting, from 2 to 4 (\$200 each)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> We are also very happy to share that Dr. Kwan was awarded the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation (www.geog.illinois.edu/about/news/kwan\_guggenheim)



Figure 2. Dr. Xun Shi presenting our 2016 awards to Dr. Mei-Po Kwan (a), Dr Kirsten Beyer in (b), Dr Peng Jia in (c), Lea Ravensbergen-Hodgins in (d), Sandy Wong in (e), Claire Hofius in (f), and both Yanjia Cao and Emily Rugel in (g)

At our upcoming annual meeting, the Health and Medical Geography Specialty Group will sponsor many sessions; some of those are highlighted in this newsletter. Noteworthy is the increasing number of sessions which are co-sponsored by other specialty groups, such as the Spatial Analysis and Modeling, Urban Geography, Geographical Information Science and Transportation to name a few. Again, this underscores the multidisciplinary nature of our specialty group. There are several events I would personally like to invite you to:

#### Thursday April 6<sup>th</sup>

From 9:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Tremont, Marriott, First Floor in Suffolk, Marriott, Third Floor **Peter Gould Undergraduate Student Paper Competition** (last two papers in the session)

#### Friday April 7th

From 8:00 AM - 9:40 AM in Tremont, Marriott, First Floor **Peter Gould Graduate Student Paper Competition** 

From 11:50 AM - 1:10 PM in Simmons, Marriott, Third Floor **Business Meeting** 

From 1:20 PM - 3:00 PM in Room 310, Hynes, Third Level

Emerging Scholars in Health and Medical Geography featuring Dr. Kirsten M. M. Beyer and Dr. Paul Mkandawire

At 3 PM directly followed by

The Melinda Meade Distinguished Lecture featuring Dr. Mei-Po Kwan also in Room 310 Hynes (same place)

directly followed by

Health and Medical Geography Reception (same place)

At our business meeting, we will recognize recipients of the Peter Gould Paper Competition, the Jacques May Thesis/Dissertation Prize. We will also reveal the awardees for the Emerging Scholar(s) in Health and Medical Geography, and the Melinda Meade Distinguished Scholar. **We welcome nominations for both awards.** 

During our meeting, former students and Michigan State University colleagues will hold a special presentation to honor Dr. John Hunter, who recently passed away. John was a pioneer in the field of medical geography and contributed tremendously to our field. We will exhibit his work and then open up the floor for comments from the group as a memorial.

During our business meeting, we will also elect two new board members, a vice-chair, and a graduate student board member. We are seeking nominations for these positions.

As you can see, we will have a reception (with adult beverages). This event will be an excellent opportunity to strengthen existing ties among our members, but also welcome individuals from other specialty groups.

This newsletter highlights some sessions that members of our group are organizing. It also contains a piece lead by Amber Pearson (from Michigan State University), contrasting the difference in research themes among our members and members of the Health Geography Study Group from the Institute of Australian Geographers.

I hope you will enjoy this newsletter, and look forward to seeing you in Boston.

Eric Delmelle

#### SESSION & PANEL AAG 2017 Preview

#### American Association of Geographers Annual Meeting (at Boston, MA in 2017)

Graduate Student Health and Wellbeing: A Frank Discussion

Organizer(s): Matthew Kerr (mkerr6@vols.utk.edu)

Historicizing the Mind. Between conscious and unconscious states of mentation

Organizer(s): Dr. Hazel Morrison, University of Durham, (hazel.morrison@durham.ac.uk)

Human Behavior Analysis with Contextual Factors using Machine Learning

Organizer(s): Shiran Zhong, Department of Geography, University at Buffalo & Ling Bian, Department of Geography, University at Buffalo

Geocomputation for urban environmental health issues

Organizer(s): Xiao-jiang Li (xiaojiang.li@uconn.edu), Carlo Ratti (ratti@mit.edu)

Geography and Substance Use

Organizer(s): Kathleen Stewart, University of Maryland (stewartk@umd); Jeremy Mennis, Temple University (jmennis@temple.edu)

Geographies of Disability

Organizer(s): Sandy Wong, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (swong16@illinois.edu), Susanne Zimmermann-Janschitz, University of Graz, Andrew Myers, University of Montana

Uncertainty propagation in combining social media data with GIS

Organizer(s): Enki Yoo (eunhye@buffalo.edu), Zan Dodson (zan.dodson@pitt.edu)

Public Participation and Digital Geographies

Organizer(s): Ian Rossiter (ian.rossiter@uga.edu) or Dorris Scott (dorris.scott25@uga.edu), Jerry Shannon, University of Georgia (jshannon@uga.edu)

All Things Nuclear in a Post-Fukushima Context: Geographical Perspectives

Organizer(s): Misa Yasumishi (misayasu@buffalo.edu), Marissa Bell (mzbell@buffalo.edu), Dai Yamamoto (dyamamoto@colgate.edu) or Chris S. Renschler (rensch@buffalo.edu).

Modeling Spatial Accessibility to Health Care Facilities

Organizer(s): Yanjia Cao (yanjiac@umd.edu) or Zhu Jin (zhujin@buffalo.edu)

Urban parks and green space: Working for the city

Organizer(s): Dorothy C. Ibes, PhD College of William & Mary (dcibes@wm.edu), Meredith Whitten, London School of Economics & Political Science (m.whitten@lse.ac.uk)

Aging, Health, and Health Care

Organizer(s): Mark Rosenberg, Queen's University, Kyle Plumb, Queen's University, Jessica Finlay, University of Minnesota (finla039@umn.edu)

Greening of Urban Spaces in Post-Industrial, 'Shrinking', or 'Legacy' Cities

Organizer(s): Dr. Richard Sadler, Michigan State University (sadlerr@msu.edu)

Mobile Methods in Transport Research Organizer(s): Geoffrey Battista, McGill Department of Geography, (geoffrey.battista@mcgill.ca)

Unique Hazardscapes: Electrical Power Failure in a Changing Climate

Organizer(s): Paul Chakalian, David Hondula Arizona State University. (paul.chakalian@asu.edu)

Global Urban Observation: Urban health and well-being

Organizer(s): Dr. Hua Liu, Old Dominion University, hxliu@odu.edu, Dr. Qihao Weng, Indiana State University, qweng@indstate.edu

**Uncertainty in Spatial Patterns** 

Organizer(s): Rui Zhu (Department of Geography, University of California, Santa Barbara) Kevin Mwenda (Department of Geography, University of California, Santa Barbara)

Health and Discourse Across Scales Organizer(s): Skye Naslund (snaslund@uw.edu) and Maggie Wilson (mmw36@uw.edu) Special Session on Geographic Data Science Organizer(s): Alex Singleton, Dani Arribas-Bel, Seth Spielman, Nick Malleson, Mark Birkin, Marynia Kolak.

Spatiotemporal Symposium: Historical Medical/Health Geography Organizer(s): Amanda Weber (amanda.weber@okstate.edu) and Brian Bossak (bossakbh@cofc.edu).

Symposium on Spatiotemporal Thinking, Computing and Applications
Organizer(s): Manzhu Yu at myu7@gmu.edu.

Capturing Context: Integrating Geography and Social Networks

Organizer(s): Debs Ghosh (debarchana.ghosh@uconn.edu) and Jeremy Mennis (jmennis@temple.edu)

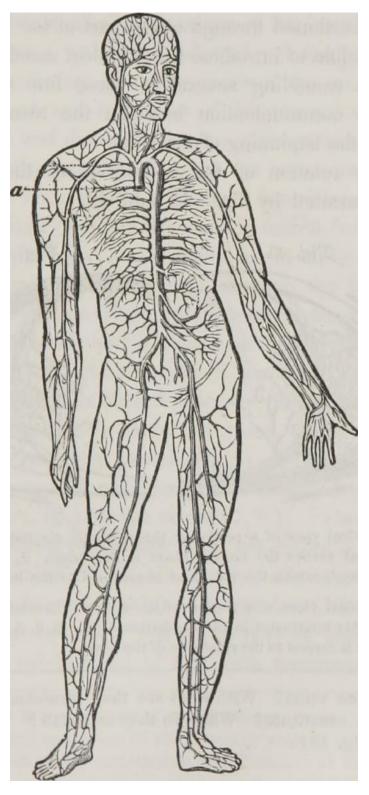
Penchansky and Thomas' (1981) Theory of Access: The Role of Availability, Accessibility, Accommodation, Affordability, and Acceptability in Health Studies
Organizer(s): Yolanda J. McDonald, Texas A&M
University, ymcdonald77@tamu.edu

Panel: What is "rural"?: Discussion Based on US Usage

Panelists: Dr. Michael Ratcliffe, U.S. Census Bureau, Dr. John Cromartie, USDA, Dr. Hart, University of North Dakota, and Dr. Sara McLafferty, Professor, University of Illinois, and Dr. Kevin Henry, Assistant Professor, Temple University. Organizer(s): Yolanda J. McDonald, Texas A&M University, ymcdonald77@tamu.edu

Geospatial approaches to uncertainty in health data.

Organizer(s): Daniel Griffith, Qing Luo and Huayi Wu



From the First book on anatomy, physiology, and hygiene: for grammar schools and families (1849). 61410640R.nlm.nih.gov

### **COMPARISON OF THEMES** in American & Australian Health Geographers' research

Amber L. Pearson<sup>1,2</sup>, Lukar Thornton<sup>3</sup>, Neil Coffee<sup>4</sup>, Eric Delmelle<sup>5</sup>

1 Michigan State University, Department of Geography, East Lansing, MI, USA
2 University of Otago, Department of Public Health, Wellington, New Zealand
3 Deakin University, School of Exercise and Nutritional Science, Melbourne, Australia
4 University of South Australia, Division Office Research Health Sciences, Adelaide, Australia

few health geographers among the Institute of Australian Geographers (IAG) set out to start a new specialty group, or study group, last year – with success. In forming the group, they decided to hold an annual workshop for health geographers, to precede each annual conference of the IAG. This year, an American health geographer, Amber Pearson, was invited to give a talk at the workshop for this newly formed and growing study group. She gave a talk comparing the themes in research of health geographers based at American and Australian universities. The methods and findings from that comparison are reported here.

#### Methods

To answer the question, "What themes of research are best characterizing American and Australian Health Geographers?", data was sourced for each group. For the American geographers, a list of all members of the American Association of Geographers' Medical & Health Geography specialty group was compiled by the Chair, Dr. Eric Delmelle, in April 2016 (n=651). For the Australians, the website for the new study group was visited (https://www.iag.org.au/study-groups/health-geographystudy-group/hgeogdirectory/) in May 2016 (n=21). In both cases, websites of health geographers were visited and text from bio or research areas was selected and compiled into one text file for Americans and one for Australians. Only health geographers with an affiliation at an American or Australian institution were included, regardless of membership in the group, or nationality of the individual. Note that this cohort is a dynamic one, where changes may occur in membership or affiliation at any time.

Next, a script was developed and run to sum counts of word usage per term, performed separately for Americans and Australians. Then, exclusions were removed including: 'the', 'an', prepositions, 'he', 'she', 'journal', 'department', 'health', 'geography', 'medical', and affiliations. Singular and plural words were combined (eg, 'cancer' and 'cancers'). Last, words with at or above the median usage values were selected and assigned font size based on usage, to form a word cloud.

#### Results

Points of difference between American and Australian health geographers

Among American geographers, there was a clear focus on global, infectious diseases, largely in Africa, and global. Priorities included inequalities, risks, care and cancer. Women, rural, national and subnational and city scales as focus of engagement and research. American geographers use both GIS and remote sensing technologies but also spatial analytical methods such as clustering and accessibility. There were observed trends in complementary disciplines including history, epidemiology, and ecology.

Among Australian geographers, there was a primary focus on hazards and adaptation. The built environment was observed as a priority for research, particularly in relation to physical activity, transport, and accessibility. The government was a source of intervention, management and change at the area levels with a focus on services. There are also social dimensions for research including mental health, cognitive development, behaviors and drugs. Methodologically, trends included statistical analyses and applications.

Common themes between American and Australian health geographers

As geographers, we expand the meaning of 'environmental' to include the built, physical, social dimensions of our lives which influence health, as seen in the use of terms such as 'environmental' and 'social' and 'planning' and 'community'. A clear theme of equal opportunities for health and attention to justice was seen in terms such as 'public', 'access', 'population' and 'services'. The places and focus of engagement and research for both groups included 'local', 'south', 'human' and 'urban'. A common set of tools used in our research were 'spatial', 'science', 'GIS' and 'map'. The importance of context and thinking broadly about research implications was observed through common usage of 'systems' and 'development'.



Figure 1: Research themes - American Health Geographers



Figure 2: Research themes - Australian Health Geographers

## **HEALTH CARE ACCESS:**

#### The Hollow Promise

Ronald E. Cossman and Peter A. Morrison
An essay, which appeared in the Starkville Daily News on October 19, 2016.

ealth insurance ought to assure everyone access to primary health care. In communities across the nation, though, Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) afford only token access—a hollow promise masked by a statistical defect in official measures of primary care availability.

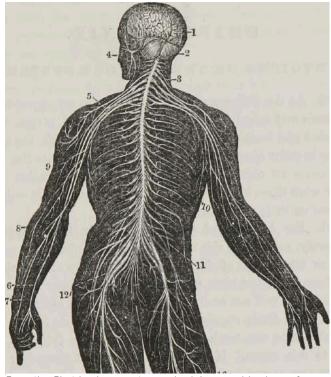
Access depends on how many primary care practices--the front line for timely cost-effective health care—serve an area's residents and will accept you as a new patient. That's not what federal statistics count when designating Health Professional Shortage Areas (HPSAs) in Mississippi, where the shortage of access to primary care is particularly acute.

An area's HPSA score perpetuates the fiction of access in two ways. First, it counts primary care physicians individually instead of in practices, which are the local points of access to care. Second, that score rests on the erroneous presumption that every practice fully accepts every form of health insurance. In short, HPSA math greatly overstates the number of physicians available to you and your family.

Our study exposing this fiction in Mississippi, whose 2,138 primary care physicians are clustered in just 678 practices across the entire state (three doctors per practice, on average). For a typical Mississippi county with nine primary care physicians, HPSA math counts nine separate local points of access. Those nine physicians actually offer only three local access points.

We surveyed those practices, placing 678 anonymous telephone calls requesting a future "new patient" appointment. Practices contacted granted a first appointment for only 50% of those requests if Medicaid was the insurer and 78% of requests if the insurer was Blue Cross & Blue Shield (Mississippi's largest private insurer). Do the math: 2,138 physicians, but only a third of that number (678) are practices or access points, of which only half (339) will accept your Medicaid health insurance-across the entire state's 700,000 Medicaid-enrolled residents. That's slightly more than 2,000 Medicaid card holders per available access point. (Details at: https://youtu.be/EkaD\_hs5yGw .)

Independent physicians (unlike those in public health clinics and other government-funded healthcare organizations) operate as small independent businesses. As professional service providers, they accept or decline patients with an eye to business realities. Covering office overhead and earning a living necessarily figure into that decision, given what a patient's health insurance pays.



From the First book on anatomy, physiology, and hygiene: for grammar schools and families (1849). 61410640R.nlm.nih.gov

The local doctor count is used to target reimbursement rates, student loan repayments, and other incentives intended to draw more primary care doctors to the nation's lowest-scoring areas—purportedly those most severely underserved. The resulting misallocation of healthcare resources leaves chronic illnesses and disabilities untreated and preventable deaths unheeded in many other places, where people in need cannot schedule appointments to access primary health care in their community.

By understating shortages of primary care across the nation, HPSA scores perpetuate the hollow promise of health care for all. What really counts is how many primary care practices actually serve an area's residents. Without access to this local front line system, those in need fall back on publicly accessible alternatives. They dial 911 or show up at costly emergency departments.

 Prof. Ronald Cossman heads Mississippi State University's Center for Health Workforce. Dr. Morrison is an applied demographer based on Nantucket Island, MA

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### JOBS in Health Geography

# Tenure-track Position in Environment Planning, Policy, and Design

The School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. Deadline: March 15, 2017.

(http://jobs.aag.org/jobseeker/job/32851993/Environmental Planning%2C Policy%2C and Design/University of Waterloo/?str=1&max=25&long=1&vnet=0)

# Tenure-track Position in Community and Cultural Heritage Planning

The School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. Deadline: March 15, 2017.

(http://jobs.aag.org/jobseeker/job/32851930/Community and Cultural Heritage Planning/University of

Waterloo/?str=1&max=25&long=1&vnet=0)

# Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in Epidemiology and Health Disparities

Department of Internal Medicine, University of New Mexico, NM. Deadline: March 15, 2017.

(https://unmjobs.unm.edu/applicants/jsp/shared/frameset/Frameset.jsp?time=1488474539889)

#### **Full-time Lecturer**

The Department of Earth Science & Geography. California State University, Dominguez Hills, CA.

Deadline: March 22, 2017.

(http://jobs.aag.org/jobseeker/job/33166155/Fulltime Lecturer in Department of Earth Science %26 Geography/California State University Dominguez Hills/?str=1&max=25&long=1&vnet=0)

#### Tenure-Track Instructor or Assistant Professor in Health Information Tech

SUNY Broome Community College Binghamton, NY.

Deadline: March 24, 2017.

(https://sunybroome.interviewexchange.com/jobofferdetails.jsp;jsessionid=7202B25C0A92245CC28A527A7CED2EFE?JOBID=81363)

## Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in Health Policy

School of Health Studies, Western University, ON, Canada. Deadline: March 31, 2017.

(https://www.higheredjobs.com/search/details.cfm?JobCode=176439 262&Title=Probationary%20Tenure-

Track%20Appointment%20in%20Health%20Policy)

#### Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in Public and Environmental Health

Department of Community Health Behavior and Education, Georgia Southern University, GA. Deadline: April 3, 2017. (https://www.higheredjobs.com/search/details.cfm?JobCode=176443 342&Title=Assistant%20Professor%20-%20Search%2067470)

#### **Lecturer in GIS**

Department of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies, Montana State University Billings (MSUB), MT. Deadline: April 3, 2017. (https://employment.msubillings.edu/postings/2215)

## Tenure-Track Instructor in Geography

Cerritos College, Norwalk, CA. Deadline: April 14, 2017. (https://cerritos.peopleadmin.com/postings/873)

## Assistant or Associate Professor in Health Informatics

Binghamton University, NY. Deadline: April 14, 2017. (https://binghamton.interviewexchange.com/jobofferdetails.jsp;jsessionid=35A009063390B5413B4E5D05CDE0558C?JOBID=81680)

## **Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in GIS and RS**

George Mason University, VA. Deadline: April 14, 2017. (http://jobs.aag.org/jobseeker/job/33046643/Tenure-Track Assistant Professor%2C Remote Sensing%2FGIScience/George Mason University/?str=1&max=25&long=1&vnet=0)

# Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in Environmental Economic Geography

Simon Fraser University, British Columbia, Canada. Deadline: April 21, 2017.

(http://jobs.aag.org/jobseeker/job/33046643/Tenure-Track Assistant Professor%2C Remote Sensing%2FGIScience/George Mason University/?str=1&max=25&long=1&vnet=0)

# Tenure-Track Assistant Professors in Geography

(a) Physical Geography, (b) Transport Geography, and (c) Urban Planning. Department of Geography, The University of Hong Kong, China. Deadline: April 22, 2017. (http://jobs.aag.org/jobseeker/job/33046643/Tenure-Track Assistant Professor%2C Remote Sensing%2FGIScience/George Mason University/?str=1&max=25&long=1&vnet=0)

# HMGSG Newsletter Vol. 2 WINTER 2017

#### **Event** Calendar

#### **Upcoming Conferences**

April 5 – 9 American Association of Geographers Annual Conference, Boston, MA

July 2 – 7 International Medical Geography Symposium, Angers, France

July 7 – 9 International Geography Youth Summit 2017

September 7 – 9 Geomed, Porto, Portugal

October 13 – 14 East Lakes Regional Division Fall Meeting

April 10 – 14, 2018 American Association of Geographers

Annual Conference, New Orleans, LA

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#### **NEXT ISSUE**

TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE NEWSLETTER

Email updates, essays, and news to

Michael Widener at

michael.widener@utoronto.ca

#### HMGSG Officers for 2016-2017

THE 2016/2017 LEADERSHIP TEAM IS MADE OF THE FOLLOWING:

CHAIR Eric Delmelle (2016-2017)

**VICE CHAIR** Michael Widener (2016-2017)

AT-LARGE MEMBERS Yan Lin (2015-2017)

Kirsten Beyer (2015-2017)

Xiang Chen (2016-2018)

STUDENT MEMBERS Marynia Kolak (2016-2018)

Jessica Finlay (2015-2017)

**WEBMASTER** Michael Desjardins

David Lamb (continuous)