

## AAG Membership

The AAG currently has close to 12,000 members, almost one-third of whom are international. Find out more about the characteristics of the membership including by gender, race/ethnicity, educational attainment, and employment type, as well as involvement in the AAG’s Specialty and Affinity Groups.

### Total membership

The AAG was founded in 1904 with 48 members. Membership was rather elitist, limited to people with a doctorate who had published substantial research contributions, thus membership grew by only a handful year on year.

The American Society for Professional Geographers (ASPG) was formed in 1943 for qualified and enthusiastic geographers who were somewhat dissatisfied at not being able to join the AAG with its stringent requirements.

The ASPG quickly attracted professional geographers and membership soon far outstripped the AAG’s slowly growing numbers, as shown in Table 1, until the two organizations merged in 1948.

**Table 1: Membership of AAG and ASPG in the 1940s**

Year	AAG membership <sup>1</sup>	ASPG membership <sup>2</sup>
1942	177	N/A
1943	191	143
1944	206	?
1945	230	300
1946	247	605
1947	274	805
1948	Pre-merger: 306 Post-merger: 1,262 <sup>3</sup>	1,094
1949	1,306	N/A

Thus began a new era for the Association which saw particularly strong periods of growth through the 1950s and 60s, and again since 2000, as shown in Figure 1.

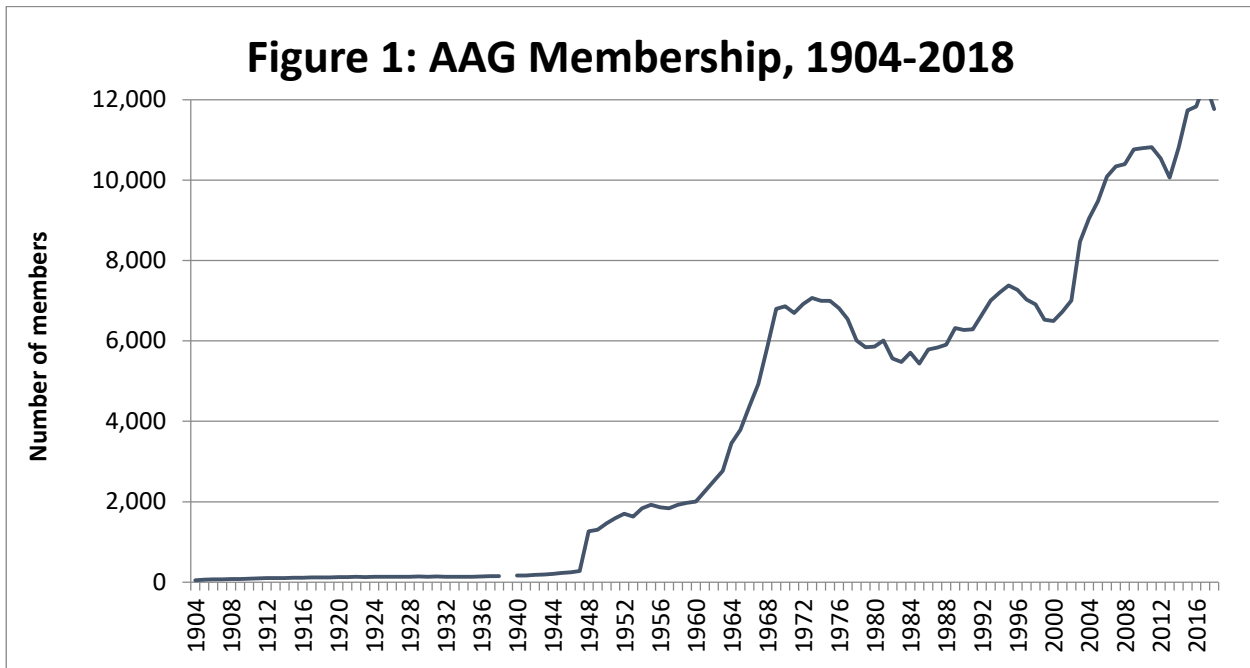
In 2018 there were 11,768 members, of whom 96% were individuals; the remainder comprised 445 organizations including academic departments, businesses, and other entities<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Source: AAG Handbook 2016, p15.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Preston E. James and Geoffrey J. Martin (1978) *The Association of American Geographers: The First Seventy-Five Years, 1904-1979* (Washington, DC: Association of American Geographers), p94 and 102.

<sup>3</sup> Some people were members of both organizations thus the pre-and post-merger figures do not tally exactly.

<sup>4</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2018.



## International members

In 2018 there were 3,552 members from outside the United States, comprising 30% of all members<sup>5</sup>. 1,446 (41%) of international members were students.

International members represented 100 different countries, as shown in Figure 2; the ten countries with the most members are shown in Table 2.

Figure 2: Global distribution of AAG Members<sup>6, 7</sup>



<sup>5</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2018.

<sup>6</sup> For an interactive version of this map visit [https://ktaylorag.carto.com/viz/6d263f84-8701-426a-b5b9-707e8ad2df3f/public\\_map](https://ktaylorag.carto.com/viz/6d263f84-8701-426a-b5b9-707e8ad2df3f/public_map)

<sup>7</sup> Current results are not available for this map as we enhance our data collection and reporting methods. Please refer to last reported results until new information becomes available

The AAG’s Developing Regions Program<sup>8</sup> represents 60 different countries. The ten developing regions countries with the most members are shown in Table 3.

**Table 2: Other countries with most AAG members, 2018**

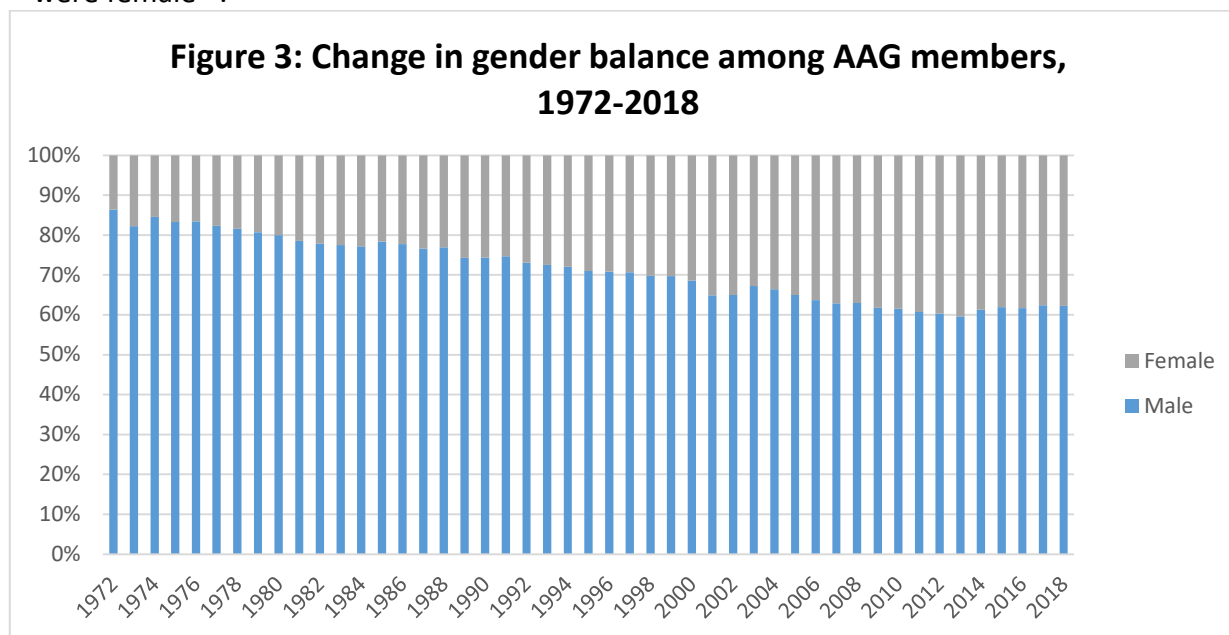
Country	Number
Canada	676
United Kingdom	610
China	529
Germany	127
South Africa	119
Australia	103
France	89
India	72
Sweden	71
Republic of Korea	61
Japan	61

**Table 3: Developing Regions countries with most AAG members, 2018**

Country	Number
China	529
South Africa	119
India	72
Republic of Korea	61
Brazil	44
Nigeria	40
Mexico	32
Turkey	27
Ghana	26
Russian Federation	23

## Members by Gender

- Currently 62% of AAG members who reported their gender are male and 38% are female<sup>9</sup>.
- When the Association was established in 1904, just two of the original 48 members were women. The proportion of female members has been rising very steadily since.
- Figure 3 shows comparable membership records dating back to 1972 when 14% of members were female<sup>10</sup>.



<sup>8</sup> The Developing Regions Program enables people from particular countries who have an income of less than US\$25,000 per year (US equivalent) to join the AAG at a heavily discounted rate. For list of eligible countries see [http://www.aag.org/cs/membership/developing\\_regions\\_membership\\_program/eligibility](http://www.aag.org/cs/membership/developing_regions_membership_program/eligibility)

<sup>9</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2018; sample size 5,613.

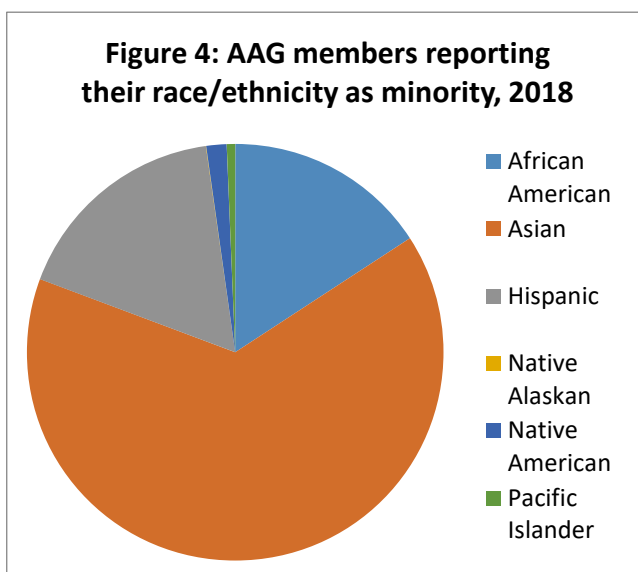
<sup>10</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1972 to 2018.

## Members by Race/Ethnicity

- 65% of current AAG members classify themselves as White Non-Hispanic while 14% did not report their race/ethnicity. See Table 4 for full breakdown<sup>11</sup>.
- Of the AAG members belonging to a minority, the greatest number (23%) are Asian; the next largest groups are Hispanic (6%) and African American (5.6%), as shown in Figure 4<sup>12</sup>.

**Table 4: AAG members by race/ethnicity 2018**

	Number	Percent
African American	548	5.6
Asian	2,250	23
Hispanic	591	6
Native Alaskan	1	0.0
Native American	55	0.6
Pacific Islander	23	0.2
White Non-Hispanic	6,329	64.6
<b>Total Reported</b>	<b>9,797</b>	<b>100</b>



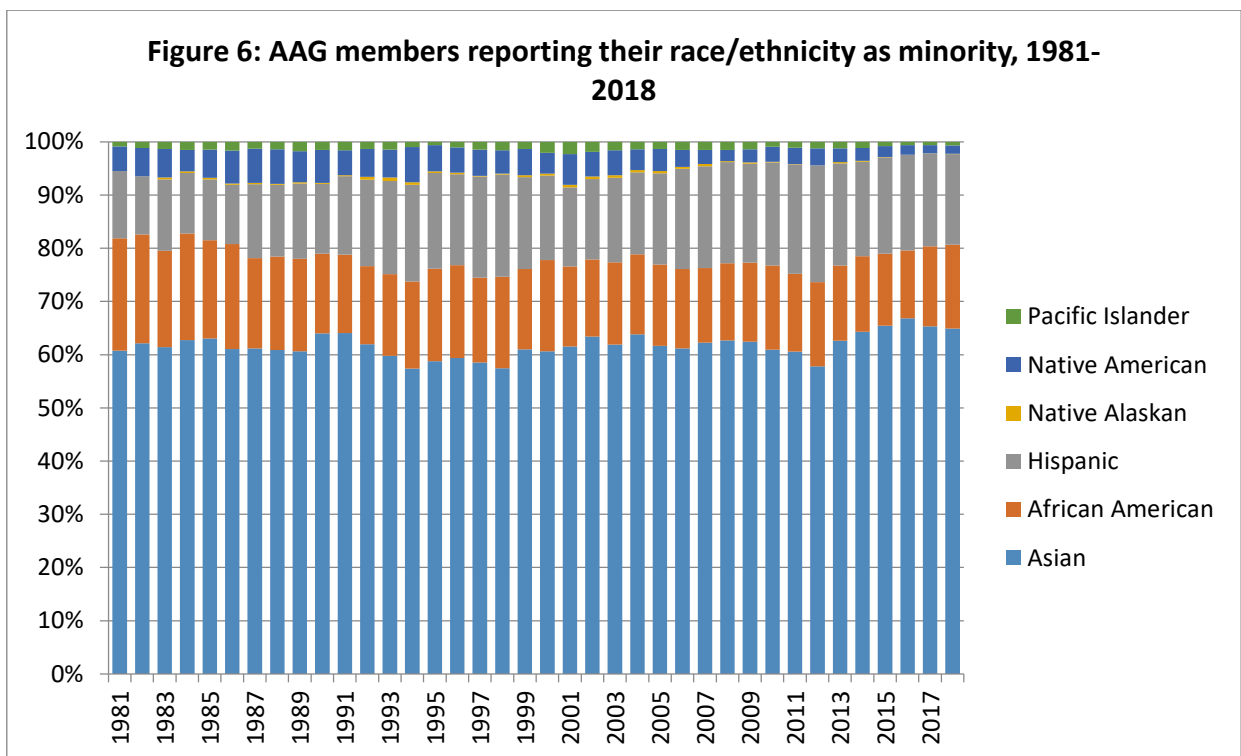
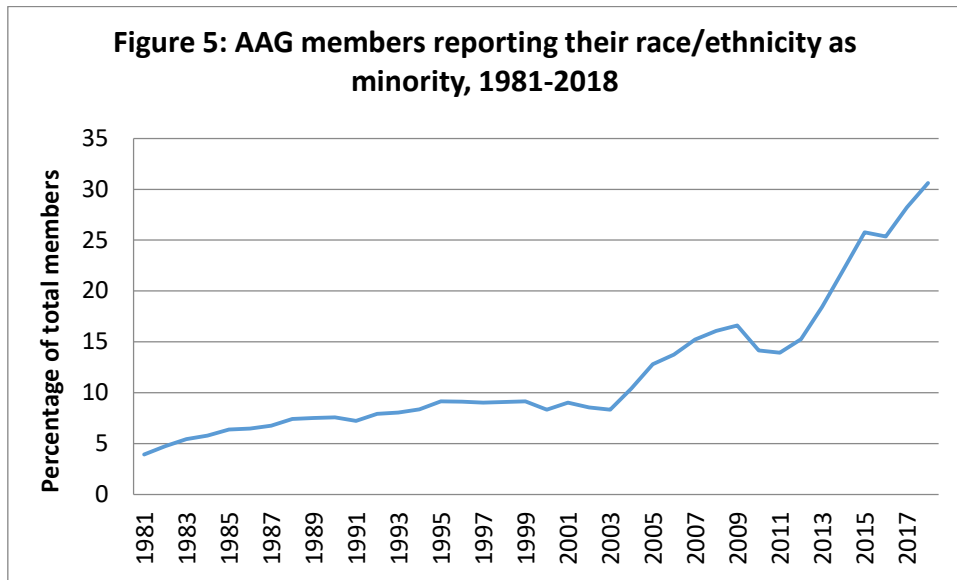
- Over the last 25 years, the proportion of AAG members reporting their race/ethnicity as minority has grown from under 4% in 1981 to over 35% in 2018. As shown in Figure 5, the increase in minority members was fairly steady until the early 2000s then started to rise more sharply<sup>13</sup>.
- Numerically the greatest growth has been among Asians but their overall proportion has only fluctuated slightly. As shown in Figure 6, the proportion of AAG members that are African American has decreased as a proportion of minorities while Hispanics have increased<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2018; sample size 9,797 (86.5% of all respondents; 13.5% did not report their race/ethnicity).

<sup>12</sup> Source: *ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1981 to 2018.

<sup>14</sup> Source: *ibid.*



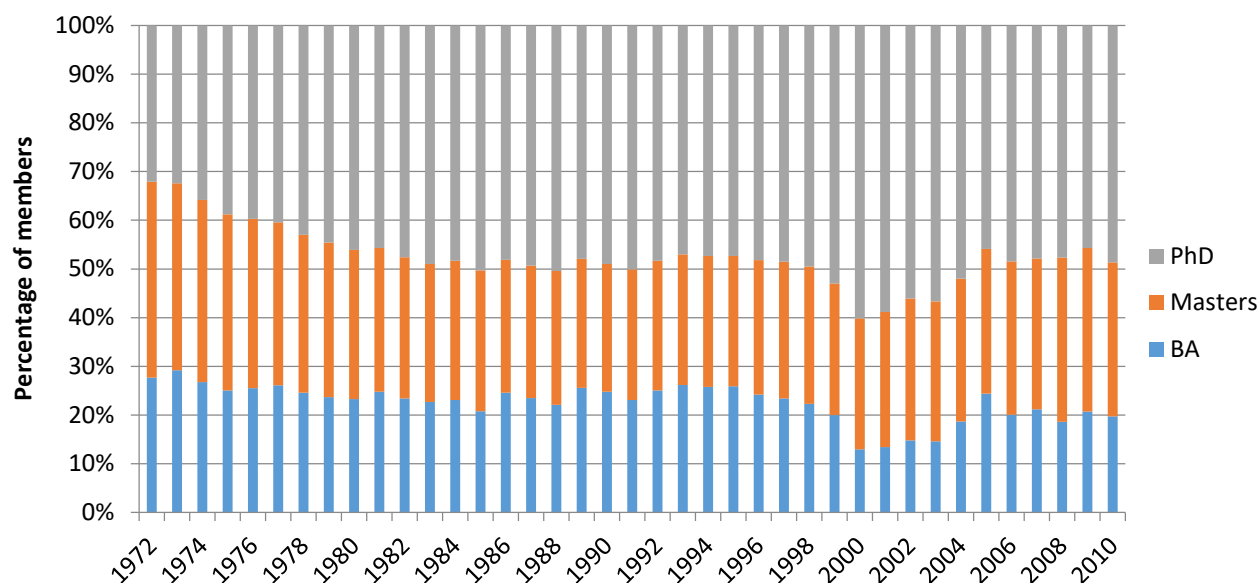
## Members by Educational attainment

In the most recent year for which data was collected (2010), almost half of AAG members had a PhD. A master’s degree was the highest educational qualification attained by 32% of members and 20% of members had only a bachelor’s degree. Figure 7 shows the change over time, revealing a steady increase in members with a PhD<sup>15 16</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1972 to 2010; relative proportions calculated by excluding the people who did not declare their educational qualifications.

<sup>16</sup> Apart from 2000-2004 where the data are slightly skewed by educational attainment being optional to declare and 15-30% of respondents choosing not to give this information.

**Figure 7: AAG members by highest degree attained, 1972-2010**



*Note: Current results are not available for Figure 7 as we enhance our data collection and reporting methods. Please refer to last reported results until new information becomes available*

## Members by Employment type

Working in higher education dominates the AAG membership. Of those members who reported their employment type in the most recent year, just over half were faculty or researchers affiliated with colleges, universities or community colleges, while a quarter were students. The full distribution is shown in Table 5<sup>17</sup>.

**Table 5: AAG members by employment type, 2018**

	Employment Type	Number reported	% of reported
Education & Research	Community College / College / University	1,687	50.21
	Research Center	50	1.49
	Student	1,044	31.07
	K-12 teacher or administrator	10	0.3
Government	Federal Government	90	2.68
	State/Local Government	74	2.2
	Other Government	15	0.45
Other	Private Industry	105	3.12
	Nonprofit	40	1.19
	Military	9	0.27
	Self-Employed	29	0.86
Not employed	Unemployed	23	0.68
	Retired	163	4.85
<b>Total</b>		<b>3,360</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>17</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2018; sample size 3,360; a further 7,963 people did not report their employment type.

As a large and increasing number of people choose not to report their employment type, it is not very instructive to examine the actual numbers in each category; however, the proportion of members reporting each category does reveal some trends for the data available over the last four decades<sup>18</sup>.

- The proportion of members reporting their employment as College/University has increased gradually from 41.5% in 1972 to 50.21% in 2018, and as Research Center from 0.5% to 1.49%.
- The category of K-12 has dropped gradually from 5% in 1972 to 0.3% in 2018, and Military from 1.7% to 0.27%.
- The categories of Federal Government, State/Local/Other Government, and Private Industry have experienced fluctuations but shown an overall decline between 1972 and 2018.
- The categories of Non-Profit, Self-Employed, and Retired have fluctuated but stayed around the same level between 1972 and 2018.

## Specialty and Affinity Group membership

The AAG has 65 Specialty Groups representing different sub-disciplines of geography, thematic areas or geographical regions which members can opt to join.

Currently the most popular Specialty Groups, each with over 1,000 members, are: Cultural and Political Ecology, Geographic Information Science & Systems, Spatial Analysis and Modeling, and Urban Geography; the full distribution for the most recent year is shown in Table 6<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Source: Annual AAG membership data, 1972 to 2018.

<sup>19</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2018.

**Table 6: Membership of AAG Specialty Groups, 2018**

Specialty Group	# of Members
Africa	442
(Geography of Food and) Agriculture	573
Animal Geographies	170
Applied Geography	478
Asian Geography	467
Bible	50
Biogeography	320
Black Geographies	338
Business Geography	139
Canadian Studies	85
Cartography	456
China	535
Climate	601
Coastal and Marine	264
Communications	123
Cryosphere	93
Cultural and Political Ecology	1105
Cultural Geography	965
Cyberinfrastructure	150
Development Geographies	631
Digital Geographies	245
Disability	75
Economic Geography	845
Energy and Environment	536
Env. Perception & Behavioral Geog.	340
Ethics, Justice, and Human Rights	363
Ethnic Geography	182
Eurasian	110
European	151
Film Screening & Making	2
Geography Education	380
Geomorphology	285
GI Science & Systems	1525
Geographic Perspectives on Women	472
Geography of Wine, Beer, and Spirits	153
Hazards	576
Health & Medical Geography	556
Historical Geography	361
History of Geography	81
Human Dimensions of Global Change	572
Indigenous Peoples	326
Latin American	508
LatinX	91
Landscape Geography	327
Legal Geography	116
Middle East	136
Military Geography	108
Mountain Geography	182
Paleoenvironmental Change	134
Polar Geography	94
Political Geography	810
Population	306
Qualitative Research	425
Recreation, Tourism, and Sport	247
Regional Development and Planning	527
Religions and Belief Systems	90
Remote Sensing	683
Rural Development	363
Sexuality and Space	189
Socialist Geography	760
Spatial Analysis and Modeling	1025
Study of the American South	107
Transportation Geography	403
Urban Geography	1819
Water Resources	600

The AAG also has seven Affinity Groups for people with shared characteristics. Their membership is shown in Table 7<sup>20</sup>.

**Table 7: Membership of AAG Affinity Groups, 2018**

Affinity Group	No. members
Caregiving	36
Community College	164
Public Private	169

<sup>20</sup> Source: AAG membership data, 31 December 2018.



Retired Geographers	64
Stand Alone Geographers	221
Graduate Students	1416
Undergraduate Students	255

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*Prepared by Dr Jenny Lunn*

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*American Association of Geographers*

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*Updated by Emily Fekete*

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***The full datasets used to compile this report are available to download from the Disciplinary Data Dashboard:***

***<http://www.aag.org/disciplinarydata/aagmembershipdata>***