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## Report of the Program Committee, 2003

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The 58<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Southeastern Division of the Association of American Geographers (SEDAAG) was held in Charlotte, North Carolina on 23–25 November, 2003. The meeting included 33 sessions, consisting of 14 regular paper sessions, nine special sessions, two panel sessions, two student honors sessions, two poster sessions, and two undergraduate Gamma Theta Upsilon (GTU) sessions. The number of regular and special paper sessions was higher than last year, but slightly fewer than the Lexington meeting in 2001. Papers were organized into sessions on a variety of topical areas including southern studies, political regions, gender, justice and social theory, recreation and tourism, hazards, spatial modeling, remote sensing, biogeography, climatology. A field trip led by Heather Smith and Bill Graves, *A Walk through Charlotte's Revitalizing Center City*, was conducted on Sunday in the downtown area of Charlotte.

Participation statistics from past programs and reports show that this meeting rivaled the past two years in many respects, breaking previous records in some categories. A total of 162 presentations were listed on the program (not including three withdrawals and two rejections). This broke down to 27 posters, 10 student honors papers, 11 panelists, 11 GTU papers, and 103 papers in special and general sessions. The total was four more than last

year's 158 presentations, but eight less than the 170 presentations in Lexington in 2001. Excluding panelists, 151 presentations were given this year, three more than 2002, but one shy of the 152 presentations in 2001 (presumably the record). The 27 poster presentations this year set the record by a large margin over the previous mark of 17 set in 2000 at Chapel Hill. The large number of physical geography and GIScience posters appears to be an important trend for the future, and may explain the slight reduction in papers over the past two years. A total of 286 names are listed in the program (authors, co-authors, organizers, chairs, discussants, panelists, or World Geography Bowl participants) versus 363 reported in Richmond and 382 in Lexington. Comparing these numbers of participants may not be valid, however, due to differences in the way the data were extracted. For example, if redundant names are not carefully filtered out (a time-consuming process), the number of names listed on the 2003 program jumps to 477. The usual double-blind review process was instigated this year and all papers and posters were sent out to two reviewers. Two papers were rejected. In each case, both reviewers had recommended rejection. The Wheeler Award (first paper submission received [early July, 2003]) went to Sanford Bederman, Georgia State University. In short, participation in SEDAAG meetings continues to increase indicating

a growing number of scholarly exchanges at near-record levels, and a promising future for the health and vitality of the organization.

PowerPoint software loaded on PCs that operate computer projection systems were set up in each of the six rooms for all of the paper sessions. A series of *New Voices of the Southeast* sessions, an innovation conceived by SEDAAG President Ron Mitchelson, was implemented this year. These sessions showcased new geography professionals in the region. Three *New Voices* sessions with twelve papers were organized by Allan James and Kavita Pandit. We are enthusiastic about the outcome and the future potential of this program.

President Mitchelson called the meetings to order Sunday night, and introduced James H. Woodward, Chancellor, UNC-Charlotte, as well as Owen J. Furuseth, Dennis Rash, and Tyrel G. Moore, all of UNC-Charlotte. Mitchelson also presided over the Business Meeting where Douglas Richardson, AAG Executive Director, addressed the members. Holly Hapke, Chair of the Honors Committee, presided over the Honors Luncheon. The tradition of inviting the President of the AAG to present the Honors Address at the Honors Luncheon was continued at Charlotte. Dr. Alexander B. Murphy presented the Honors Address entitled "*Coping with a Fast-Changing World: Why We Need Political Geography.*" Awards for the best Masters and Ph.D. papers were announced at the luncheon, as well as several other special SEDAAG awards: *Research Honors Award*, *Outstanding Service Award*, *Best*

*Paper in the Southeastern Geographer Award*, and the *Merle C. Prunty, Jr. Scholarship*. The World Geography Bowl, organized by Laurence Carstensen, continued to play an important role in the meeting. A preliminary round-robin competition on Sunday narrowed the field. A competition between the Student All-Stars and the Professional Dream Team was followed by the Championship Event on Monday night. The Dream Team defeated the Student All Stars, while the Georgia team overcame the Tennessee team in the Championship Round.

To disseminate information prior to the meeting, the abstracts were posted on a web site in South Carolina and linked from the SEDAAG web site in early November. It was followed by the *Program at a Glance*, and later, the full program. As decided by the Steering Committee last year, program mailings and printed abstracts were eliminated. David Cowen, chair at USC, generously provided postage to send papers to reviewers and discussants. The Program Committee last year recommended that we work to find an alternative to having each participant submit five copies of each paper, and this year we continued the inevitable migration to digital communications. Digital copies of papers were requested from many participants and many were notified by email that their papers or posters were accepted for presentation. Most authors submitted digital copies of their abstracts as instructed, and this greatly facilitated the compilation of a list of abstracts online.