NAGT-GER Division Annual Report

Report to the NAGT Executive Committee Geoscience Education Research Division October 10, 2021

Current Division Officers

Past President: Kelsey Bitting
President: Emily Ward
Vice President: Leilani Arthurs
Treasurer: Cory Forbes
Secretary: Peggy McNeal
Media Director: Lauren Adamo
Graduate Student Liaison: Bailey Zo Kreager

Division Officer terms beginning at the annual meeting of GSA Oct. 10, 2021

Past President: Emily Ward (1-year term)
President: Leilani Arthurs (1-year term)
Vice President: Emily Scribner (1-year term)
Treasurer: Cory Forbes (3rd year of 3-year term)
Secretary: Peggy McNeal (2nd year of 3-year term)
Media Director: Larry Collins (1st year of 2-year term)
Graduate Student Liaison: Kristen Foley (1st year of 2-year term)

Division Priorities for 2020-2021

The division is now seven years old and includes 379 members. We continue to focus on the priorities identified from our strategic planning efforts in 2019-2020 which include:

- building strategic collaborations with other DBER and education research communities;
- building GER community capacity for future workshop leadership;
- building upon the GER community framework;
- building awareness of other conferences for border-crossers.

A major focus of this year's activities was on reviewing NAGT GER policies and revising those policies to be more equitable and inclusive. In the last couple of years, we have sought to diversify the social identity characteristics represented by community members highlighted in our newsletter spotlights, and to select featured articles and invite conference speakers who can help our community explore antiracist and inclusive education research methods and theoretical frameworks. While those efforts may have diversified the content of our division newsletter, we needed to do the work in thinking about our GER community and consider myriad ways in which we could create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for researchers of color. To this end, the GER Past President, President, and Graduate Student liaison, along with the
Editor-in-chief of the Journal of Geoscience Education and two other GER members formed a working group (a.k.a pod) in the Unlearning Racism in Geoscience (URGE) project (https://urgeoscience.org/). Over eight weeks this past spring, our pod drafted revised policies for review by our GER leadership and will reactivate this fall to revisit those policies for refinement and implementation. We used this anti-racist lens in creating a new Early Career Award opportunity through GER (spearheaded by Past President Kelsey Bitting). This effort and our draft deliverables will be described in more detail later in this report.

Of course, again, we continued to seek ways to support our community in weathering the challenges of COVID-19. As always, we continue to build community, promote GER, and provide networking and communication opportunities.

**Professional Meetings**
The 2021 Earth Educators Rendezvous was held virtually again this year due to conditions of COVID-19. The division helped to support the Geoscience Education Research: Statistics in Geosciences workshop. This workshop conveners, Dough Czajka and Josh Premo, focused this workshop on building knowledge on quantitative theory and the use of educational statistics in the geosciences. On Wednesday night, division officers Leilani Arthurs and Zo Kreager hosted a virtual happy hour via Zoom that was attended by almost 40 people. Finally, in what has now become a successful yearly workshop, Secretary Peggy McNeal hosted the third writing retreat during the Rendezvous for twelve attendees. Due to its popularity, it has extended into a writing circle which has met weekly over the last 15 months.

The GER Division officers (Led by Peggy McNeal) will chair a session at the 2021 Annual Fall Meetings of GSA. Both the past and current GSA sessions chaired by our division focus on GER Methods and Theoretical Frameworks. As in the past, both sessions received more abstracts than could be accepted as oral presentations; Vice President Leilani Arthurs and Secretary Peggy McNeal organized the 26 submissions into a single oral session and poster session.

At each of our sessions, we invite speakers from within our GER community and others selected from the broader disciplinary-based education research community. In alignment with strategic planning priorities of increasing diversity, equity and access, we invited Dr. Anita Marshall (University of Florida) to speak in our 2021 GSA Session. Dr. Marshall is the Director of Operations for the International Association for Geoscience Diversity (IAGD) where she focuses on geoscience education research. She describes her focus area as “the academic and social engagement in geoscience learning environments and the barriers to participation for underserved groups in STEM”. She is currently researching how to make field courses more inclusive and accessible through thoughtful design, use of technology and working in teams.

To disseminate information about methods and theoretical frameworks more widely, we continue to archive presenter’s public contact information and slides (if the presenter chooses to share them) on our website here: https://nagt.org/nagt/divisions/geoed/methods.
The Division has agreed to sponsor 6 sessions in 2021 focused on inquiry-based undergraduate geoscience laboratory experiences, impacts of COVID-19 on undergraduate instruction, undergraduate research experiences, assessment, and geoscience workforce development.

**Communications**

In 2020–2021, we continued to send out our Newsletter (the GER Exchange) to our members on a monthly basis from September – December and February – April. Newsletters include job and funding opportunities, highlight research articles of relevance to the community, promote relevant webinars or other professional development opportunities, and advertise for any sponsored sessions or events. We have continued our “Spotlight” feature to highlight the type of work done by various researchers in the community, including recent profiles of Dr. Alison Jolley (AJ), an Academic Development Lecturer at the University of Waikato, Dr. Carolina Michel, a geology faculty member at Chandler-Gilbert Community College, and Dr. Ángel A. García Jr. an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geology and Environmental Science at James Madison University. A full list of “Spotlights” can be found at [https://nagt.org/nagt/divisions/geoed/spotlight](https://nagt.org/nagt/divisions/geoed/spotlight). In alignment with the priorities identified by the strategic planning process described above, newsletters also highlight conference opportunities outside the geosciences with relevance to GER professionals.

For this year, we are considering reducing the frequency of our newsletter to quarterly and using our GER Division email listserv more frequently to announce opportunities for our members.

To view past newsletters, visit the archive at [https://nagt.org/nagt/divisions/geoed/archive](https://nagt.org/nagt/divisions/geoed/archive).

**Awards**

As established in 2018, the GER Division offers two awards to senior researchers to recognize their work. The Transformation Award honors “colleagues who have made significant contributions to the development of and capacity for geoscience education research.” In 2020, this award was presented to David McConnell (North Carolina State University), and in 2021, to Renee Clary (Mississippi State University). The Collaboration Award honors non-GER colleagues who have “infused the GER community with new approaches to GER.” No recent nominations have been received for the Collaboration Award. Awardees receive Division membership for a year, and will be recognized at the NAGT luncheon at GSA the next time an in-person event is held.

Beginning next year, the division will also offer an Early Career Award aimed at recognizing the contributions of GER scholars within 10 years of completing their Ph.D. Establishing this type of award has long been a priority for the division, and thanks to the contributions of the Awards Committee this year (Kyle Gray, Darryl Reano, Emily Scribner, and Leilani Arthurs, led by Kelsey Briting), the division voted to approve the language of the new award at our October meeting.

In 2020, in response to the COVID-19 crisis and its impact on the community, the division also offered a Graduate Student Emergency Fund of up to $500 per person. Three applications
were received and are currently under review. While the fund was primarily intended to cover GER graduate students’ research-related costs, applications primarily requested support to cover the cost of housing and utilities.

**Finances**
As established in 2018, the GER division account is nested under the NAGT main account. The treasurer submits expenses to the NAGT executive office for payment. The division has an account balance of $8,544.83 (October 1, 2021). Please see our financial report for details on annual expenditure.

**URGE activities**
Over the 8-week program through URGE, Kelsey Bitting, Kim Hannula, Susan Meabh Kelly, Scott Werts, and I worked on the following documents for the GER Division: Complaints and Reporting Policy, Demographic Data, Policies for Communities of Color, Admissions and Hiring, Safety Plan, Resource Map and Management Plan. I have selected two activities to highlight that describe how our pod approached these topics: Demographic Data and Admissions and Hiring.

We gathered the demographic data for our membership since the inception of the Division with help from the NAGT office. Analysis of these data gave us insight to the current demographic makeup of our Division and re-enforced that we have work to do in order to recruit and retain a diverse GER membership. Our pod discussed how creating an inclusive environment is first and foremost so that our actions are effective in the recruitment and retention of scholars. We decided that drafting a statement for our webpage could set the tone in welcoming a broad array of scholars to our organization. With regard to admissions and hiring, some of the suggestions did not specifically apply to our Division, however, we used the concepts laid out as part of the project to consider how we advertise, recruit and select participants for our officer positions, awards, scholarships and researcher spotlights. Draft documents for this and other policies were presented to the larger GER group of officers for discussion and comments for revision. Other policies and procedures for our Division are closely aligned with the national NAGT organization and thus further discussion with the national leadership is required before we finalize our policies and post them to our Division website. The URGE project will continue this Fall 2021 to further refine and implement the new policies. We plan to revisit our draft documents and start up where we left off in our monthly Division meetings after the new officers have been installed.

**Concluding Thoughts and Welcome**
Throughout another incredibly difficulty year dealing with a global pandemic, our division and the leadership team have worked hard to continue offering a space for networking, to spotlight and support GER researchers from diverse backgrounds and to work on making the GER Division a welcoming and inclusive community for GER scholars. I am excited to see continued growth in the division in the coming year.

I especially want to thank Dr. Kelsey Bitting for her service to the Division as she will be rotating off the leadership team this year. She has made incredible contributions to
the Division first as Communications Director and then in her leadership roles. I know that she has been an incredible support to me and others in the Division and we will miss her tremendously. Another big congratulations to our outgoing Graduate Student Liaison Dr. Zo Kreager who is now in a tenure track position at SUNY-Oneonta. Zo was integral in improving the networking among GER graduate students and made contributions to many GER activities throughout her term. Lastly, I want to thank Dr. Lauren Adamo for taking the lead on distributing the monthly GER newsletters. Collating and disseminating the materials for the newsletter is no small feat and Lauren handled the duty with ease. I also want to thank Drs. Leilani Arthurs, Cory Forbes, and Peggy McNeal for their continued service, and to welcome to our new officers Dr. Emily Scribner (VP), Dr. Larry Collins (Media Director) and Kristen Foley (Graduate Student Liaison). I look forward to our division’s continued work together!

Emily Ward, on behalf of the 2020-2021 NAGT-GER Division Executive Board:

- President Emily Ward, Rocky Mountain College
- Past President Kelsey Bitting, Elon University
- Vice President Leilani Arthurs, University of Colorado-Boulder
- Treasurer Cory Forbes, University of Texas-Arlington
- Secretary Peggy McNeal, Western Michigan University
- Media Director Lauren Adamo, Rutgers University
- Graduate Student Liaison Zo Kreager, SUNY Oneonta