

# DRAFT

## MINUTES

**RTS Business Meeting Agenda 2024**  
306B (Pālolo), Third Floor, Hawai'i Convention Center  
**Recreation, Tourism, and Sport Specialty Group**  
**American Association of Geographers**  
<https://holycross.zoom.us/j/97043483776>

Tuesday, April 16, 2024

1:20-2:40pm

In-person/streamed/hybrid

The meeting was held in-person with two options for joining virtually (through the secure AAG site or through the open zoom link circulated prior to the meeting). All attendees were in person; no members joined online.

The meeting was opened by RTS co-chairs Jennie Germann Molz and Joseph Cheer. The agenda was circulated and approved by attendees.

Four reports followed. The first was a brief overview of the RTS group for which the co-chairs invited long-term members in attendance to provide some background on the purpose and role of the RTS group.

Jennie Germann Molz circulated a financial report and itemized the current year's dues and sponsorship income as well as pending expenses. She noted that the average dues income in recent years is not sustainable to cover standing annual expenses.

Kaitlyn Matyuch provided the student representative report, including comments submitted by her co-representative Piezhe Li, outlining their goals for expanding student input and participation in the group.

Joseph Cheer provided the report on the *Tourism Geographies* journal noting the journal's impressive recent success as the top tourism journal in Scopus and the second top geography journal.

Joseph also announced the four 2024 RTS award winners:

- Student paper award: Shize Zhang
- Early career researcher paper award: Loretta Bellato
- John Rooney Award: Dr. Stroma Cole
- Roy Wolfe Award: Professor David Weaver

Jennie Germann Molz moved a proposal to raise the RTS specialty group membership fees to \$10 (non-student) and \$2 (student) and invited discussion.

**Motion 04162024-01: Proposal to raise RTS specialty group membership dues from the current \$7 regular/\$1 student to \$10 regular/\$2 student.**

Rationale: To ensure the group's financial viability moving forward, the RTS Co-chairs propose an increase in dues from the current \$7 regular/\$1 student to \$10 regular/\$2 student. AAG specialty group member dues currently range from \$5-\$20 regular/\$1-\$6 student. The proposed dues increase

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remains well within these ranges. RTS member dues subsidize the awards and annual social event. A dues increase will allow RTS to continue its activities despite fluctuations in AAG attendance.

Comments were predominantly positive in light of the fact that our current dues do not fully cover standing annual expenses, several other specialty groups are raising their fees, a general rise in costs. A friendly amendment was made to raise the non-student fee to \$15 in the hopes of forestalling another fee rise in the near future. A counterpoint was made that while the absolute cost of the membership is quite reasonable even at \$15, the psychological impact of doubling the dues may preclude some members from re-enrolling. A vote was taken of all current RTS members in attendance at the business meeting. The vote was unanimous in support of increasing the dues.

An open discussion followed to consider the ongoing relevance of the named awards. Some members in attendance were able to provide more background on John Rooney and Roy Wolfe and the rationale for naming the awards after these pioneering scholars. A correction to the nomination process was discussed. In the past couple of years, the previous year's award winner was asked to provide a list of nominees, however the longer-term practice has been to ask all previous award winners (not just one year prior) to nominate candidates to the list. One suggestion was to consolidate the awards into one award with a more generic name (along the lines of excellence and impact in the field). Another idea was to keep both awards separate to recognize both research and practical impacts, but make the name generic. Transparency about process and criteria was also raised as an important point, as was the wish to signal a global and inclusive approach. Some debate ensued regarding criteria, including whether the awardee must be an active member of RTS and presenting/attending regularly at the AAG. Some felt this was an important distinction of the award while others wished to open it up to scholars who may not be able to join/attend the AAG. A final recommendation was made to create an *ad hoc* committee to research the background of the current named awards, to write biographical sketches on Roy Wolfe and John Rooney to be published on the aagrts.org website, to establish clear criteria for the selection committee, and to consider how our awards might contribute to JEDI initiatives.

## Announcements

- RTS Board openings were announced and a number of people volunteered. More volunteers are always welcome!
- The social event was announced.

There was no new business.

The meeting adjourned at 2:35pm.