





Enhancing Departments and Graduate Education in Geography (EDGE) is a research and action project led by the Association of American Geographers (AAG) to support graduate education and professional development in geography.

Sponsored by the National Science Foundation's Research on Learning and Evaluation (ROLE)<sup>a</sup> and Research and Evaluation on Education in Science and Engineering (REESE)<sup>b</sup> programs, EDGE is:

1. **researching** issues affecting graduate education, professional development, and employment in geography;
2. **publishing** print and web materials for improving career preparation and advising;
3. **engaging** students, professionals, academic departments, and employers through workshops and conference presentations;
4. **collaborating** with geographers and higher education researchers to strengthen initiatives and programs for workforce development.

All of these activities are pursued in cooperation with academic departments, professional geographers, and public and private sector employers.

# Project Activities

## Phase 1 (2005–2009)

EDGE-Phase 1 supported a variety of activities aimed at improving theoretical and practical approaches to professional development in geography, with a focus on academic careers and departments. EDGE-Phase 1 developed quantitative and qualitative methods for analyzing departmental climates and the experiences of students in master's and doctoral programs. Another significant research outcome was a competency model that can be used for measuring and assessing the skills of professional geographers.

EDGE-Phase 1 produced two books supporting early career faculty development: *Aspiring Academics* and *Teaching College Geography*. The books offer practical advice on many topics, including time management, writing grant proposals, active learning,

academic publishing, and work-life relationships.

EDGE-Phase 1 involved collaborations with Oxford University's Centre for Excellence in Preparing for Academic Practice, the Professional and Organizational Development Network in Higher Education, and the Carnegie Foundation's Carnegie Academy for the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning program. The external evaluation of EDGE-Phase 1 produced evidence of the project's broader impacts in graduate education, including new and revised curricula in graduate programs, improvements to career advising and mentoring practices, and support for annual departmental leadership and faculty development programs.

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## Phase 2 (2009–2013)

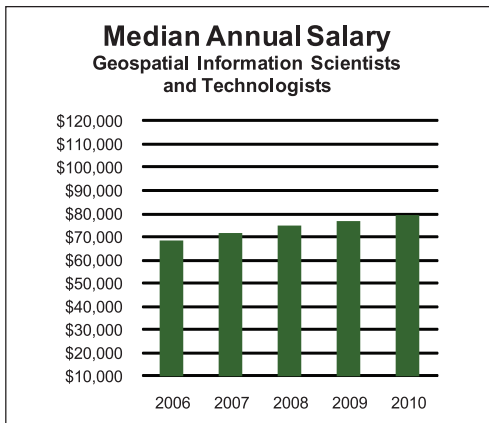
EDGE-Phase 2 is a multi-year research and action project focused on career opportunities for geographers in business, government, and nonprofit organizations. EDGE researchers are collecting a variety of data from professional geographers, employer organizations, and graduate programs in multiple studies that examine workforce development, industry trends, and the career paths of master's and doctoral students.

EDGE-Phase 2 will produce numerous publications including research articles for academic journals; a book, *Practicing Geography: Careers for Enhancing Society and the Environment*; an expanded Jobs and Careers section of the AAG website featuring

employment data, interviews with professional geographers, and career planning resources; and new content for the AAG's Healthy Departments website. EDGE is also sponsoring outreach activities including workshops and presentations at academic and industry conferences, college campuses, and mentoring sessions at AAG meetings.

The Center for Innovation and Research in Graduate Education (CIRGE) is conducting the external evaluation of EDGE-Phase 2 and will further assist the AAG's efforts to communicate the EDGE Project's outcomes to employer organizations, graduate programs, and professional associations.

# Resources for Professional Development



## Jobs and Careers Resources

EDGE regularly sponsors workshops, conference sessions, tutorials, and out-reach activities for career preparation and advancement, including the annual Jobs in Geography exhibition at the AAG Annual Meeting. The AAG Jobs and Careers website ([www.aag.org/careers](http://www.aag.org/careers)) offers additional resources for students and faculty advisors, including an interactive database that tracks categories, types, and numbers of geography-related occupations. The website also includes a collection of profiles highlighting the work and career paths of professional geographers such as Kate Pearson, William Shubert, Reena Patel, and Dave Selkowitz. The profiles compellingly illustrate how geographers are making a difference and why geography is excellent preparation for dozens of exciting career opportunities.

## Faculty Development Resources

The EDGE website ([www.aag.org/edge](http://www.aag.org/edge)) offers a large collection of faculty development activities for use in seminars and workshops, many of which are based on materials developed for the annual Geography Faculty Development Alliance workshops. The activities complement the books *Aspiring Academics* and *Teaching College Geography* and support professional training in many areas of academic practice, including time management, professional ethics, writing competitive research proposals, academic publishing, effective teaching, course design, and many other topics.



**Kate Pearson** of Habitat for Humanity International is helping communities recover from devastating natural disasters. "Even the poorest people living in the U.S. have it good compared to Haiti," she says.



**William Shubert** credits his undergraduate studies in geography with enabling him to communicate effectively using text, maps, and graphics, which directly supports his work at *National Geographic Magazine*.



**Reena Patel**, a Foreign Service Officer for the U.S. Department of State, says "being out in the world and meeting people" is one of the best things about her career.



**Dave Selkowitz** of the U.S. Geological Survey uses geospatial technology to assess the effects of climate change on Alaska's landscapes.

## Departmental Leadership Resources

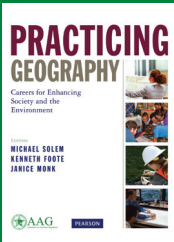
The AAG's Healthy Departments website ([www.aag.org/healthydepartments](http://www.aag.org/healthydepartments)) features a variety of resources developed by EDGE to support the annual AAG Departmental Leadership workshops. It offers links to disciplinary data sources and a collection of white papers on academic leadership, mentoring early career faculty, working in hybrid programs, and many other topics of interest to department chairs.



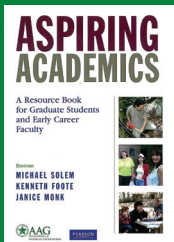
# Publications

## Books

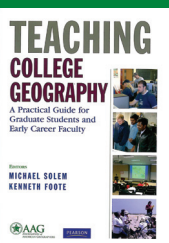
- Solem, M., Foote, K., and Monk, J., eds. 2013. *Practicing Geography: Careers for Enhancing Society and the Environment*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Education (published in February 2012)



- Solem, M., Foote, K., and Monk, J., eds. 2009. *Aspiring Academics: A Resource Book for Graduate Students and Early Career Faculty*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall



- Solem, M. and Foote, K., eds. 2009. *Teaching College Geography: A Practical Guide for Graduate Students and Early Career Faculty*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall



## Articles

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## For Additional Information

[www.aag.org/edge](http://www.aag.org/edge)

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