is restructuring and population growth and decline contribute to land use changes and trace gas production in smaller places, and how sensitive such places are to global environmental change. To do so, the project will draw upon the long-term regional commitment of selected college and university teaching institutions, the underutilized talents of their faculty, and the reservoirs of local knowledge centered in their geography departments.

We also have two efforts underway to increase the demand for our knowledge. Before the year is out we hope that we can arrange a meeting between the Presidents of the AAG and NGS and the appropriate staff of the Office of Science and Technology Policy to increase our access to scientific advisory and policy boards. And a major report will be forthcoming from the National Research Council Committee reviewing the discipline, the Rediscovering Geography Committee. The report will be directed toward the science and users of science community and will be built around what geography can contribute to the great questions of both science and society.

Finally, it is important to acknowledge a tension in all these undertakings, between two sets of equally socially-concerned geographers, what I would designate as the fixers, and the critics. The difference was sharpened for me by an exchange between my predecessor and two critics, in which Tom Wilbanks said: "the central issues—for most of our fellow citizens as well as our policymakers—have to do with jobs and income . . . and we are not contributing very much to the discussion of these issues." He went on to advocate strengthening our links to business and industry and to research related to current economic needs (President's column, February 1993). To which, Jones and Roberts replied by asking: "Are we reading the same literature? Hasn't our discipline been a leader in charting and theorizing transformations in the space economy during this period? . . . Aren't we now engaged in serious reflection on the global economy, the restructuring of US industry, and the upheaval of old geographies that thereby ensued?" (April 1993)

There are clearly ideological differences between Wilbanks and Jones and Roberts, although perhaps not as large as any of the three might imagine. More important, there is a functional difference, one that many of us share, between seeing our major role in addressing social issues as fixers who can actively place their knowledge in direct efforts to make things better and critics who see little hope in making things better and certainly not until their basic critique is widely accepted.

Now this distinction is clearly an over-simplification, as in all roles many of us are both critics and fixers. But I would argue that recognizing the difference is a first step to appreciating each other more and the ways in which we can be helpful to each other. For indeed, the Association's agenda is to seek ways in which the best of our understanding, critical or otherwise, can address human survival.

**Will Gray:** How Geographers Can Connect with Policy Makers

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It's a great day for geography. Opportunities for geographic input to decision-making abound. In the United States we make collective decisions within large geographic aggregates of smaller spatial units, ranging in scope from metropolitan area organizations, airshed, and watershed councils, to interstate compacts for water and transportation. Almost every policy decision by such governmental organizations touches on our expertise, yet geographers are too often absent from the process. Many geographers avoid participating in public policy service because it is so different from the working environment to which they are accustomed. Policy work is often poorly focused, and the roles of the decision-making process are in constant flux. Unlike the academic world, where the faculty member occupies a clearly defined position of authority (such as it is), the expert in the public policy debate must constantly prove his or her mettle. Often, public involvement in policy processes means dealing with individuals or groups who are vehemently opposed to a possible solution, or even to the debate itself.

I have been fortunate to have had opportunities to mix my research and teaching with policy experiences, as an expert witness in legal proceedings, as a member or chair of several National Research Council and similar boards and committees, and recently as a member of a Presidential commission on river policy. I have learned the following lessons:

1. You must approach them; they won't come looking for you. Initially, you must put yourself forward to make yourself and your expertise known to decision makers. Opportunities for entry-level volunteer (read "unpaid") involvement include service on technical advisory panels, review boards, and work as a commentator on management plans by governmental agencies. Opportunities for paid service include consulting activities identified through professional contacts, including
former students. In many cases, the decision makers simply don't know you are available. Once they identify you, they often welcome your input.

2. Identify opportunities in unconventional ways. Search for opportunities for policy-related service in newsletters, Web sites of governmental agencies, non-governmental advocacy organizations, and general news outlets, including regional publications. If you do field work in a particular area, introduce yourself to resource analysts, planners, and managers who deal with the area. After you meet with them, send them copies of your publications or course outlines, and offer your services.

3. Have something to offer. Credentials give your advice legitimacy and enhance the potential influence of your contribution. Any citizen might adopt an advocacy position, but geographers can offer important additional input to decision making by applying their knowledge gained from research and teaching. Your vita is your calling card, and it must reflect the potential for your contribution.

4. Make the most of your strengths. By keeping your public policy work aligned with your teaching and research, you maximize your contribution and strengthen your expertise. Teaching, research, and public service should mutually enhance each other.

5. Search for benefits to you. Policy-related efforts usually don't offer financial rewards, but they definitely offer benefits. They provide access to new data and ideas, contacts to develop into internships and employment for students, sources of funding for later development, and opportunities to extend professional contacts. In the long run, the career advantages offered by these benefits are worth more than short-term contract money.

6. Be forceful and convincing. Once you secure appointment as an advisor to committee members, make substantive contributions. This arena is not for shrinking violets. Don't shrink the process: the people you serve with expect you to give your time, energy, and enthusiasm to the decision at hand. Figure out how the process works and who makes the important decisions. Learn the system.

7. Ask questions. Most policy processes are overloaded with acronyms, strange and wondrous jargon, and oversimplified language that is everyday lexicon for the policy maker and mostly unintelligible to everyone else. What you don't know can limit your effectiveness. If you don't know what

FACA (Federal Advisory Committee Act) and FOIA (Freedom of Information Act) mean and how they work, ask. You will have plenty of opportunities to avoid problems for your policy colleagues by avoiding scientific jargon and speaking in plain English when addressing technical issues.

8. Develop a network. Use the service opportunity to develop and expand your network. Introduce yourself to others in the process, and get to know them while making sure they get to know you. Word of mouth is the most important method of advertising your contributions in the policy area. The more contacts, the better.

9. Be prepared to lose. In all policy and decision making processes there are short-term winners and losers. The positions you take will often not prevail. You should be prepared to compromise, and to lose. Positions that seem obviously correct to you from a technical standpoint may be culturally unacceptable, too expensive, or politically problematic.

10. Win with grace. The positions you take may sometimes be successful, but arguing about it creates resentment among those who disagree with you, and you may need their support on the next issue. They are your potential network, so rubbing it in is risky business. In many cases, you will not get credit for successes because the decision maker you advise will use the credit for his or her own political capital. Your reward is your influence.

Involvement in public policy issues benefits us as individual professionals. For geographers in business, the involvement develops valuable contacts with potential clients, and increases our visibility to those who might retain our services. Those of us in the academic world can import our policy involvement directly into the classroom, demonstrating to our students that the geographic principles we offer have direct social and environmental relevance. Policy experience is essential to the effective researcher because experience in dealing with decision makers indicates the truly important research problems. Participation has a moral imperative as well. Many professional geographers have spent their entire lives developing knowledge and experience, often supported by taxpayers, and we have an obligation to share the results of that investment with those who pay the bills. Geography is well worth that investment, and we can make a difference.