

13/8/2026

Dear BSG committee and members

I write to express my interest in standing for **the position of Junior Deputy Chair of the BSG**, with the view to progress via Senior Deputy Chair and on to Chair over the next three years. My vision as part of the overall mission of BSG to advance the science of geomorphology, provide a service in education and teaching and promote the discipline is to encourage greater inclusivity, equitability and empowerment of diversity within Geomorphology. I am currently a Professor of Physical Geography at the University of Manchester, and the focus of my research is long term human-environmental interactions in dryland/desert environments.

As a member of the BSG since my PhD (2005-2009) I greatly value this professional organisation and the work it does in developing knowledge and understanding of the physical environment and areas of interaction with society. I have greatly enjoyed BSG conferences and being part of a vibrant and supportive academic community. I am also an active member of the Quaternary Research Association, where I previously served on their Executive Committee (2016-2020), and I would be keen to foster strong connections between these two communities. Taking a long-term perspective on landscape change and The Climate Emergency is particularly valuable, providing context for the pace of changes that we see today and understanding the resilience and adaptive ability of landscapes and ecosystems to those changes.

My recent leadership and administrative experience at the University of Manchester includes work in the EDI space, as the equity lead for postgraduate research students across the School of Environment, Education and Development, which is the largest school within the Humanities Doctoral Academy. I have been working for, and on behalf of, the PGR students in response to their concerns about racialised micro-aggressions, barriers that disabled students encounter, and challenges faced during the international student experience. I have applied learning from my involvement in the University of Manchester's Higher Education Anti-Racism Training, particularly around listening and advocacy. This applies equally to advocacy for disability and other protected characteristics. Responsibility to act as an advocate can take a variety of forms, from direct action (checking in with a target of abuse/aggression, or using respectful assertive, clear language in talking with a perpetrator if that feels safe), documentation (time, date and nature of event for reporting), disruption (for example moving the focus of a conversation), delaying (in this sense I mean de-escalation in a tense encounter) or delegation (seeking the advice and support of other colleagues, particularly those in professional services to tackle problems as they arise).

I have coordinated research activities for the Quaternary Environments and Geoarchaeology Research Group in my department of Geography and a wider cross-faculty network of archaeological colleagues.

This leadership reinforced the importance of listening to, and representing, a range of voice, and this is something I feel confident that I do well.

During my tenure I would be particularly keen to work with the Chair and Senior Vice Chair to consider whether an EDI remit could run over two years for an incoming Junior Vice Chair every other year (and in the alternate year Junior Vice Chair might work with the treasurer on financial matters). This would provide an opportunity for the Vice Chairs to follow up and implement changes beyond a 12-month period before handing that remit on to the next Vice Chair under the current model.

It has been heartening to see a demonstrable shift toward gender equality within Geomorphology during my time as an academic. As a member of the LGBTQ+ community it is also reassuring to experience geoscience shifting, along with UK society more widely, to a place where LGBTQ+ members feel comfortably supported.

The lack of racial and ethnic diversity within Geomorphology, Geosciences and STEM more widely, remains particularly problematic in the UK. I teach Ethnogeomorphology as part of a module “De-Colonising Geographies: Theory, Methods, Praxis” for final year geography BA/BSc students at Manchester, as one activity to open student’s eyes to different ways of knowing the world. The paucity of ethnic diversity in national and international geomorphological spheres is a wider systemic challenge. I am inspired by the work of Anne-Marie Imafidon, co-founder of STEMettes. Whilst they lead with encouraging girls and young women to pursue careers in STEM, recognises that gender inequality cannot be separated from racial and socioeconomic barriers. Anne-Marie is an impressive role model as a British Nigerian and I would be keen to see if STEMettes and Girls into Geoscience might both partner an event with the BSG, along with the Outreach and Education vice-chair (currently Kathryn Adamson at Manchester Metropolitan University, which neighbours my institution). At my local level, the University of Manchester 10/10 Programme may be a platform via which to encourage Black Heritage students specifically, to host networking in the geosciences space. I would be interested to pursue opportunities to widen this out. I work with geoscientists in Namibia and currently supervise two PhD students from India, who are impressive advocates for involvement in long-term (Quaternary) geomorphological research. I recognise that I am approaching these challenges with my privilege as a white woman and understand that there is a very long way to go beyond the small steps I am considering here.

I would enjoy the opportunity of working with the Executive Committee in supporting the BSG, and particularly Rob Bryant as Senior Deputy Chair and Ian Candy as Chair. I have experience chairing meetings and taking minutes, which will serve me well for the role, starting with chairing the EDI working group. I regularly assess research grants and have worked for the RGS to review the Henrietta Hutton research grant applications, which prepares me well to be part of the research subcommittee.

I am excited for the opportunity to support the British Geomorphological community and thank you for considering my application.



Professor Abi Stone