

## **Call for Volunteer Session Chairs and Discussants—August 29, 2014 Deadline 2015 AERA Annual Meeting**

The quality of the AERA Annual Meeting depends on education researchers with appropriate expertise serving as chairs and discussants for paper sessions and as chairs for roundtables. The Call for Chairs and Discussants for the 2015 Annual Meeting is open and accessible on the AERA website at <http://www.aera.net> (click on ‘My AERA’ at the top of the screen, after logging in and then scroll down to **2015 AERA Annual Meeting** and click on ‘Online Program Portal’). Researchers are encouraged to volunteer and provide sufficient information on their backgrounds and expertise to permit program chairs in divisions and SIGs to create sessions with persons appropriate to serve in these roles.

Persons interested in serving are encouraged to volunteer early. The portal for volunteers will remain open until August 29, 2014. After that date, program chairs and committees will be constituting sessions; chairs and discussants will be identified for their units’ paper sessions and roundtables.

In volunteering, please keep in mind that the 2015 Annual Meeting will be held from Thursday, April 16 - Monday, April 20 in Chicago, IL. Also, please review the roles and responsibilities of the chair and discussant, as set forth below. Serving as a chair or discussant is an important substantive role. The quality of sessions is enhanced by the participation of persons with appropriate substantive background and facilitative skill.

### **II. Volunteer for Service**

**When?** The system will remain open through 11:59pm Pacific time on August 29, 2014 for volunteering as chair or discussant only.

**How?** Individuals interested in being considered to serve as chairs or discussants are encouraged to register as a volunteer for a specific unit (division, SIGs, or committees) through the AERA 2015 Annual Meeting Online Portal (by clicking on ‘My AERA’ on the AERA website at <http://www.aera.net>).

**Where?** Individuals may serve for more than one unit as a chair and/or discussant. Keep in mind the participation limits as described in the Call for Submissions: an individual may not appear as first author on more than two submissions; in addition an individual may not appear on the program more than four times (e.g., in the role of chair, discussant, presenter, or participant).

**Who?** Any attendee may volunteer for consideration to serve as a chair or discussant. Chairs and discussants need to have substantive background and expertise appropriate to the substance of the session; thus, please answer the questions relevant to your background and experience. Graduate students may serve as chairs or discussants as long as they bring the appropriate level of expertise. All individuals selected as chairs and

discussants are expected to register and attend the Annual Meeting and be present at the scheduled sessions.

### **III. Paper Session and Roundtable Session Formats**

Paper and roundtable session formats are used by program chairs to group accepted papers. Formats provide a means for grouping related papers into sessions, with different opportunities for discussant and audience participation.

***Paper Session.*** Paper sessions must have a chair; discussant(s) are optional. Chairs and discussants for paper sessions are identified by unit program chairs, co-chairs, or chairs and program committees. In paper sessions, authors present abbreviated versions of their papers, followed by comments/critique, if there is a discussant, and audience discussion. A discussant (or discussants) is to be included as part of a paper session only if a discussant's expertise can add to the understanding of the papers. A typical structure for a session with four or five papers is approximately 5 minutes for the chair's introduction to the session, 10 minutes per author presentation, 20 minutes of critique, and 15 minutes of discussion.

Session chairs may adjust the timing based on the number of presentations and discussants (where applicable) scheduled for the session. Individuals must be attentive to the time allocation for presenting their work in paper sessions. In the case of multiple authored papers, more than one person may present, but multiple presenters are urged to be attentive to the total time available to them. They should take steps to ensure that including more than one speaker does not detract from the overall presentation of the work or infringe on the time allotments for other presentations.

***Roundtable Session.*** Roundtable sessions allow maximum interaction among presenters and with attendees. Papers accepted for roundtables will be grouped by the program chair into a table of three to five researchers of accepted papers clustered around shared interests. Each roundtable at a roundtable session will have a designated chair knowledgeable about the research area to facilitate interaction and participation. Because the emphasis is on interaction among authors and attendees, there will be no discussants. Each roundtable session will be scheduled for a 90-minute time slot. A typical structure for a roundtable session with four or five papers is approximately 5 minutes for the chair's introduction, 10 minutes per paper presentation, and 40 minutes of discussion. Because of the physical configuration of this type of session, no additional audiovisual equipment, such as a screen or overhead projector, is provided.

### **IV. Chair Role and Responsibilities**

***Chair Role.*** Chairs are responsible for the overall planning and execution of sessions to facilitate the sessions' success. Chairs are expected to orient the audience to the session and raise issues that can facilitate audience engagement. In some instances, chairs may also be invited to serve as discussants. While chairs need to be attentive to time allocations, the role of chair is much more than keeping time.

***Chair Responsibilities.*** Responsibilities fall into three areas – in advance of the session, at the session and after the session. A session’s success may depend on the Chair’s ability to limit the time of presentations and temper discussion from the floor to allow sufficient time for interaction.

In advance of the session, chairs are expected to (1) ensure that all presenters upload final papers no later than March 26, 2015 (2) read the papers for the session in order to organize thoughts to effectively introduce and guide the session and (3) contact any discussants to begin a conversation about shaping the session.

At the session, chairs are responsible to (1) open the session at the scheduled time and orient the audience to the context with a few brief introductory remarks (2) introduce the participants before their presentations (3) limit time for each presenter and discussant (4) raise issues that can facilitate audience engagement and moderate panel or floor discussions (5) adjourn the session in time to allow the room to clear before the next session begins and (6) be mindful of accessibility of sessions and help AERA cultivate a universally accessible environment.

In addition, chairs will be asked to encourage attendee participation in an attendee evaluation should the session be selected as part of the evaluations conducted on a sample of sessions at the 2015 Annual Meeting.

After the session, chairs are expected to complete an online information form to provide baseline information about the session.

## **V. Discussant Role and Responsibilities**

***Discussant Role.*** Discussants are responsible for commenting on papers and presentations to provide professional and constructive criticism and raise issues for broader consideration that connect to these works. The role of discussant is to serve as commentator about the papers and issues or substantive points pertaining to these works. It is expected that the discussant may draw upon his or her expertise or views in commenting on papers or presentations. The session, however, is not the appropriate occasion for a discussant to present his or her own work.

***Discussant Responsibilities.*** Responsibilities fall into two areas – in advance of the session and at the session.

In advance of the session, discussants are expected to (1) read the papers for the session in order to organize thoughts and prepare comments (2) prepare appropriate analytical or critical commentaries on the significance and contribution of the papers presented in the session and (3) connect with the session chair to review the shape of the session and time constraints on the length of discussion.

At the session, discussants are responsible to (1) serve as commentator about the papers and issues on substantive points pertaining to these works and (2) provide comments on papers that will assist authors in taking steps toward publication and minimize the time between presentation and publication - such commentary may include remarks in the session, comments written directly on the papers, and/or discussions with the authors.