

# The NERA Researcher

## The President's Message



Charlie DePascale

All are Welcome at the NERA Table.

When I attended my first NERA conference in Kerhonkson, New York, I was struck by the sense of community. That feeling was reinforced by the fact that for three days you were totally enveloped by NERA. There were multiple plenary sessions across the three days, activities in the evening, and of course, all meals were shared together. Over the years, the interactions at those NERA meals have been among my most valuable times at NERA: reconnecting with a former client whom I had not seen in nearly 20 years; meeting a woman from California who was familiar with a report I prepared for the Massachusetts Department of Education; catching up with former interns; engaging in extended discussions with presenters; and last year, having the opportunity to listen to members' hopes and concerns for NERA.

Mealtimes are also the times when we celebrate NERA. We publicly acknowledge and thank the many volunteers who make the NERA organization and conference possible. We present awards to those people who have gone above and beyond to contribute to the organization and to those who have excelled. Through all of those activities, we share our vision of NERA and hopefully inspire others to join a committee, run for a board position, or just decide to return again next year. Mealtimes strengthen the communal bonds that make NERA what it is.

Since the conference moved from the resorts of the Catskills to the industrial parks of Connecticut, however, maintaining common meals has become somewhat of a problem. More people are able to commute to the conference, there are plenty of other hotels in the area where people may choose to stay, there are alternative places to get a meal, and frankly, meals are expensive. For members staying at the conference hotel, an extra \$110 per day is added to their hotel bill for meals. For those members purchasing individual meals, the cost can be \$50 per meal. We are all smart enough to figure out that lunch at the Subway on the corner or even in the hotel restaurant will not cost \$50. Consequently, more people are skipping meals and missing out on an important part of the NERA experience.

After much consideration and discussion of this issue over the last couple of years, the board has arrived at a solution that we think will enable all to participate in meals and make the conference more affordable. Beginning with the 2016 conference, a more reasonable cost for all meals will be included in the registration fee for the conference. No longer will meal costs be added to the hotel bill for people staying at the Trumbull Marriott. No longer will anyone have to purchase a meal ticket to join us at breakfast, lunch, or dinner. If you have registered for the conference, you can participate in all meals.

*What will this mean in terms of overall cost to attend the conference?*

First, we are not simply shifting costs from the hotel bill to the registration fee. Second, this will not be an a la carte system where members are asked to pick and choose individual meals. All meals will be included in the single registration fee. Yes, the conference registration fee will be higher than it was in 2015, but the overall cost will be lower for most members.

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## The NERA Researcher

The NERA Researcher is the official newsletter for members of the Northeastern Educational Research Association.

### Message from the Editors

Happy Spring, NERA Members!

Preparations are officially underway for the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual NERA Conference in October! Molly Faulkner-Bond, Joshua Marland, and Scott Monroe, our 2016 Conference Co-Chairs have filled this newsletter with a plethora of helpful information including a conference overview, call for proposals, and a list of frequently asked questions. This issue also contains important information about awards that are presented to deserving NERA members each year. These awards are an excellent opportunity to acknowledge a colleague and/or mentor who has influenced our field and organization. Please consider taking the time to submit a nomination!

We hope you find the contents of this issue both interesting and informational. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with anything you would like included in *The NERA Researcher*! We welcome member news and announcements, as well as ideas for any special articles you might have.

Once again thank you to Barbara J. Helms for her continued support with the newsletter—we couldn't do it without you!

Haifa and Katherine  
The Editors

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(Continued from page 1)

- Professional members staying at the Trumbull Marriott for 2 nights in 2015, paid a hotel bill of nearly \$575 and a conference registration fee of \$85 – for a total of \$660 to attend the conference. In 2016, the hotel rate will be \$137 per night plus taxes and a conference registration will be approximately \$150 – for a total of approximately \$450. (Final registration costs for 2016 will be determined at the spring meeting of the board.)
- Student members staying at the Trumbull Marriott in 2015 paid a \$35 registration fee, but had the \$110 per night per person food costs added to their hotel bill. In 2016, the hotel rate will be \$137 per room (for up to four people) and the conference registration fee will be approximately \$50-\$60.
- For members commuting to the conference and paying for multiple meals, costs will be reduced.
- For members commuting to the conference and paying for a single meal, costs will be approximately the same – within \$15-\$20.
- For members commuting to the conference and not attending any meals, costs will be higher, but still less than the \$185 I paid to register for NCME this year and significantly less than the \$625 registration cost for the 2016 CCSSO National Conference on Student Assessment. Most important, however, people attending the conference just to make a presentation and leave are missing out on what it means to be part of NERA and attend a convening of researchers.

*How can we make this cost structure work?*

As we emphasize each year at the conference and repeat throughout the year, NERA is very thankful for the ongoing support of our sponsoring organizations. Without their commitment to the organization, the conference experience would be very different. With the modest increase in registration fees described above and the continued support of our sponsors, the board is confident that this new structure will not only work, but will allow us to maintain and grow the sense of community that brings us back to NERA each year.



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## Member News

Contact the *NERA Researcher* editors to have your news and accomplishments featured!

## Call for Proposals

47TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
October 26-28, 2016  
Marriott Hotel, Trumbull, Connecticut

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As a regional affiliate of the American Educational Research Association, NERA invites proposals for our annual meeting spanning all areas of educational research. We welcome proposals from new and experienced researchers and will consider both completed and in-progress research. Below you will find the conference theme, general requirements for NERA proposals as well as specific guidelines corresponding to the four session formats. For more information about the conference, including FAQs about NERA proposals, visit NERA at [www.nera-education.org](http://www.nera-education.org).

**Conference Theme:** *"Making an Impact – Effectively Communicating the Results of Educational Research"*

In some way, shape, or form the purpose of all educational research is to improve education. As defined by AERA, educational research examines "the human attributes, interactions, organizations, and institutions that shape educational outcomes" and "drives the development of new tools and methods." Regardless of the quality of the research, however, the goal of improving educational policy, practice, and outcomes cannot be achieved without effective communication. Effective communication is a dynamic process that involves the interaction among the researcher, the research, and the intended audience. All too often in educational research, we limit our role as researchers to delivering a message, regardless of whether that message is received, understood, or applied. For the 2016 conference, we encourage NERA members and affiliates to bring greater focus to both the content of our research communications (i.e., how our findings and messages can be made useful for various stakeholders) as well as the methods and avenues by which such messages are shared (i.e., how we disseminate our findings in ways that are accessible, engaging, discursive, and useful for various stakeholders).

### Submission Requirements

The proposal submission form will be online and accessible from the NERA website starting on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016. Submissions must include the following information:

- Complete information for author(s) including affiliation(s)
- Descriptive title (**maximum: 15 words**)
- Three keywords
- Description of research to appear in conference program (**maximum: 50 words**)
- Proposal (**maximum: 1000 words**)
  - Proposal should include: study purpose, theoretical framework, methodology, results, conclusions, and educational implications.
  - *Note:* Refer to the Proposal FAQ for details about organization for proposals that may not lend themselves to each of the sections listed above.
  - *Warning:* Proposals with more than 1000 words (NOT including tables, figures, and references) will not be accepted.

### Submission Review Process

- Proposals *must* be submitted electronically by **Friday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2016 (11:59pm EST)**.
- 2 to 3 NERA members will blindly review each proposal.
- Each proposal will be judged according to the following criteria: educational or scholarly significance, perspective or theoretical framework, appropriateness of methodology, clarity of expression, and appeal to NERA membership.
- Proposal decisions will be emailed in mid-August. Details about session dates and times will follow when the program is finalized.

## SESSION-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES – 2016 NERA CONFERENCE

When submitting your proposal, you will be asked to indicate which of the following session formats you prefer. We encourage submitters to select more than one possible option, as selecting multiple options increases your likelihood of acceptance. Regardless of the format you choose, your paper will be subjected to rigorous peer review by NERA volunteers. As each format provides a medium for contributing your research to the field, all session formats are equally important. We hope to maintain a variety of sessions to maximize the educational experience for NERA members.

### **Individual Presentations**

#### **Individual Paper:**

- Proposals should describe completed or nearly completed research to be presented in 10-15 minutes. Sessions will be organized so that 3-5 other individual presentations will be grouped according to similar research areas. A discussant will be assigned to read the papers in advance and offer a 10-15 minute presentation to spur discussion.

#### **Information Blitz:**

- An Information Blitz session is a fast-paced session with short presentations each providing highlights of a study. Presenters will have 5 minutes and a maximum of 4 Power Point slides to describe their study. It's an opportunity for presenters to offer a preview of their research and highlight their findings to a large group. Proposals should follow the same format as an individual paper and describe a research project, either completed or nearly completed. Opportunity for extended discussion will follow the full set of presentations.

#### **Roundtable:**

- Roundtable sessions allow maximum interaction, with an emphasis on discussion between the authors and participants. Each table will have 3-5 researchers of accepted papers clustered around shared interests, as well as a designated moderator to facilitate interaction and participation.

#### **Poster Forum (NEW!):**

- For 2016 we are combining features of the traditional poster session with last year's successful new blitz format. Presenters should prepare traditional posters with detailed information about their study and results, and also 4 PowerPoint slides (maximum) which will be shared electronically prior to the poster session to give attendees a short preview/overview of each study.

### **Theme-Based Paper Session/Symposium**

- These sessions contain a set of 3-5 presentations organized around a common theme. Themes may range from a quantitative method to a broad policy topic, and should connect all papers in the session. In addition to submitting individual paper proposals for each presentation, the organizer must also provide a rationale for the relevance and importance of the theme itself. The chair and discussant for this session must be identified in the proposal submission.

### **Special call for teacher researchers!**

Click the following link for more information about the special call for teacher researchers to attend NERA and present their research: [http://www.nera-education.org/award\\_nominations.php](http://www.nera-education.org/award_nominations.php)

### **Call for conference volunteers and reviewers!**

Keep an eye out for an e-mail seeking volunteers as proposal reviewers, session chairs, or discussants.

If you have any questions, please contact the conference chairs at [NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com](mailto:NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com).

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## 47th Annual Conference Overview and Welcome

Hello NERA Members,

Planning for the 2016 conference is well underway and it should be a very exciting conference! First, we want to thank everyone for responding to the 2015 conference evaluation survey that has been useful in helping us plan the next conference. This year's conference will return to the Marriott Hotel in Trumbull, CT. The dates of the Conference are October 26-28, 2016.

Membership and conference registration forms will be available on the NERA website: <http://www.nera-education.org> this summer. Our conference theme is "Making an Impact – Effectively Communicating the Results of Educational Research." As you prepare your proposals and presentations, we ask you to consider who or what your research is intended to impact and how best to present your findings to communicate with your fellow researchers and your intended audience.

We are excited to bring back the new Data Blitz session format introduced last year, under the new name of Information Blitz. A success in their first year, these sessions are designed to highlight research in a brief 5-minute presentation followed by opportunities for discussion with individual presenters.

Additionally, we have a number of other great sessions and activities planned:

**Professional Development Workshops:** There will be pre- and in-conference workshops, including but not limited to the following topics: Data Visualization, Evidence-Centered Design, Mixed Methods, Scale Development, and Propensity Score Matching

**Working time for Special Interest Groups:** We will have time for individuals and groups with shared interests to meet and work together on collaborative projects, or simply to brainstorm ideas for future collaborations.

**Conference App:** This year we are excited to introduce a conference app which will facilitate interactions among NERA members at the conference as well as allow researchers to easily share their slides and papers with their colleagues.

**Mentoring:** The mentoring program will provide graduate students with the opportunity to meet with professionals in the field. Mentors can provide individualized feedback on research projects and/or dissertations, as well as provide guidance during the conference.

We are excited to announce our keynote speakers and invited panelists, who will be addressing our conference theme from a variety of perspectives:

### Keynote Speakers:

**Jonathan Supovitz**, co-director of the Consortium for Policy Research in Education (CPRE) and a professor in education policy and teaching at the Graduate School of Education, University of Pennsylvania. He is also co-author of the *#commoncore Project – How social media is changing the politics of education*.

**Lee Bladgett**, professor of Economics and Director of the Center for Public Policy and Administration at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She is also author of the book, *The Public Professor – How to Use Your Research to Change the World*.

### Invited Panels:

**National Panel** – Our national panel will feature **Juliane Baron**, Director of Government Relations for AERA and **Jill Barshay**, contributing editor and author of the weekly column, *Education By The Numbers*, for *The Hechinger Report*.

**State and Local Panel** – Our state and local panel will feature **Carrie Conaway**, Associate Commissioner, Office of Planning and Research for the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education; **Angelina Lopez**, Director of Special Projects & Knowledge Management, NYC Department of Education; and **Sarah Darville**, Bureau Chief for *Chalkbeat New York*.

We hope that you are planning to attend the conference, and that you will also encourage friends and colleagues to do the same. Once again this year we will be using the online proposal submission process. Please see the Call for Proposals and FAQ for more information. We also encourage you to distribute the Call for Proposals to other educational researchers who may not have access to this publication. The proposal system will open in early May and you will have until June 3rd to submit your proposals. We are looking forward to another successful and exciting NERA conference! Email us if you have any questions: [NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com](mailto:NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com).

Thank you!

Molly Faulkner-Bond, UMass Amherst  
Joshua Marland, UMass Amherst / Highlander Institute  
Scott Monroe, UMass Amherst  
NERA 2016 Conference Chairs

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## Frequently Asked Questions

47TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

October 26-28, 2016

Marriott Hotel, Trumbull, Connecticut

**2016 Conference Theme:** *"Making an Impact – Effectively Communicating the Results of Educational Research"*

### **Does my research project have to be complete to be accepted to NERA?**

Not necessarily. In progress or nearly completed research will be considered for the conference, but the research should show potential of being ready for presentation by the date of the conference. We strongly encourage individuals to submit their in-progress work as roundtable presentations. This format facilitates greater discussion between participants and the audience, allowing you to receive input and feedback that could inform your research or help to overcome potential hurdles.

### **How are the proposal descriptive keywords used?**

These terms are used in several ways. Specifically, they will be used to match the proposals to the appropriate reviewers, to place the proposal in the best-fitting session, and to assign an appropriate discussant to the session. Please select the descriptor that is the best match to your proposal as your first-choice and two additional descriptors as next-best options.

### **What is the review process like?**

The conference chairs make the final decision based on both the reviews and availability in the conference program. Reviewers are NERA member volunteers, who have self-identified as being willing to review proposals in the same topic area as the proposal keyword.

### **When will my research paper need to be ready?**

Discussants must be able to review research papers prior to the session in order to properly prepare for discussion. You will be asked to email your research paper to the discussant by October 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Will a projector and laptop be available in my session?**

Institutional sponsors will be supplying LCD projectors for each session. Arrangements only need to be made to have a laptop present at the session. The chair of the session will arrange the laptop and file transfers to the laptop by email before the session. Presenters are expected to cooperate with chair requests.

### **What if my proposal is accepted to NERA but I am unable to attend NERA when the time comes?**

Submitting to NERA is a sign that you intend to attend the conference if accepted. If something prevents you from being able to attend, and co-authors or colleagues cannot present in your place, you must withdraw your presentation *before* the session by emailing [NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com](mailto:NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com).

### **What size should my poster be?**

Easels with foam display boards will be available for poster presentations. Poster size should be no larger than 36" x 48". The display should be easily read and clear from a distance of at least 3 feet from the board. The title, author, and affiliation should be at least 36 point font. The rest of your lettering should be at **least 28 point font**. Be sure to include diagrams, figures, photos, bulleted text, or other visuals that describe your research. More information regarding posters will be posted on the NERA website.

Presenters should also prepare four PowerPoint slides (maximum) which will be shared electronically prior to the poster session to give attendees a short preview/overview of each study.

### **You have several session options for submitting proposals. Are any considered more rigorous than others?**

No. All formats are peer-reviewed methods for disseminating your research. The rigor of the peer review process is the same for **all** proposals submitted to the conference. Peer review allows NERA to maintain an appropriate level quality for the experience of those presenting their research, as well as those receiving the research.

### **What is an Information Blitz session?**

Information Blitzes have become a popular format to allow a large group of researchers to present the highlights of their research in one session, while the audience has the opportunity to hear many diverse research topics. There could be as many as 15 presenters in one Information Blitz, where each presenter has 5 minutes and a maximum of 4 PowerPoint slides to provide an overview of their research.

All presenters must send their slides to the organizer of the session ahead of time so that no time is wasted between presenters. Each presenter will make a brief presentation, moving quickly from one presentation to the next. When all presentations are completed, audience members will be able to engage in extended discussions with individual presenters. We expect this to be a fun and informative session for the presenters and their colleagues in the audience!

*Continued on page 11*

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**What are the submission parameters for theme-based paper sessions/symposia?**

Those presenting theme-based paper sessions or symposia are only required to submit one proposal for all papers in the session, with a maximum of 1,000 words. The submission should include a description of how the papers are related to each other, as well as a short description of each of the papers that are included in the session. Lastly, during submission, proposers can indicate that they are submitting a theme-based paper session/symposia.

**What is the role of the Chair?**

The role of the chair is to facilitate the organization of the presentation session. Duties may include collecting the papers, communicating with authors, managing audio/visual equipment, and ensuring the timeliness of the session. In some cases, the chair would assist in facilitating discussion among the audience members and authors.

**What is the role of the Discussant?**

Discussants are responsible for drawing from their expertise to comment on papers and presentations. The goal is to provide professional and constructive criticism and raise issues for broader consideration that connect to these works.

**How do round table sessions work?**

Round table sessions offer the most opportunity for interactions among presenters and participants. Three to five researchers with similar interests are assigned to a table, along with a moderator with some expertise in the topic area. Individual researchers do not make a formal presentation as in a paper session, but may provide a brief overview of their work and specific issues that they would like to discuss. The majority of the time during a roundtable session should be devoted to discussion among the assigned researchers and other participants.

**What are the conference registration fees?**

Registration fees will be posted on the NERA website later this spring. For planning purposes, we anticipate that the conference registration fees will be Professionals: \$150-\$160; Retirees: \$50; Students: \$50. Late fees will be instituted after October 1. In a shift from previous years, 2016 registration fees include all meals during the conference. All registrants must also be NERA members. Information about membership and dues can be found on the NERA website ([www.nera-education.org](http://www.nera-education.org)).

**Are my registration fees adjusted if I just come for one day or part of a day?**

NERA makes a great effort to keep registration fees as low as possible for all attendees; therefore, it is not possible to provide adjusted registration fees for partial attendance.

**What is the room rate at the Conference Hotel?**

The Conference will be held in the Marriott in Trumbull, CT. Room rates for the 2016 conference are \$137 per room per night (not per person). Note that meal costs are no longer incorporated into the hotel room rate.

**How will I submit my NERA proposal?**

An online submission system to submit proposals will open on May 2, 2016.

You may contact the conference co-chairs with further questions at [NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com](mailto:NERAConferenceChairs@gmail.com).

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## SPECIAL CALL FOR P-12 PRESENTERS & TEACHER-AS-RESEARCHER AWARD

The Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) extends a call for teacher-researchers to present their work at the 47th Annual Conference in October 2016. We encourage teachers, professional learning teams, coaches, school administrators, and other stakeholders to submit a proposal. Proposals can focus on completed research projects or works in progress. Consider submitting proposals based on students' learning goals, growth targets, and teacher artifacts that show evidence of practice. Other hot topics include:

- Differentiating instruction
- Supporting diverse learners
- Inclusive classrooms
- Co-teaching / collaborative teaching
- Common Core State Standards
- Close reading
- Academic writing
- Technology integration
- Assessment
- Interdisciplinary planning and teaching
- Common planning
- Home-school connection
- Reading intervention and remediation
- Teacher evaluation
- Coaching

This conference is an ideal form for teachers enrolled in graduate programs to disseminate their research. Teacher-researchers should also apply for the Teacher-As-Researcher (TAR) Award. The TAR recipient is a teacher (P-12; i.e., preschool through high school) who has conducted classroom research to modify and improve his or her teaching efforts and instructional effectiveness. The purpose of the award is to encourage teachers to conduct research and to use the findings of that research to inform their own teaching.

All attendees must register for the conference. Check the NERA website in May for information about how to register. Professional development credits for conference attendance are available. Please feel free to contact Darlene Russell at [rus-seld@wpunj.edu](mailto:rus-seld@wpunj.edu) with any questions.





### **Call for Candidates – NERA Needs You!**

We are seeking nominations for the following open elected positions:

- NERA President (3-year term as President-elect, President, Past President)
- NERA Board Members (2) (3-year term)

We have many great members who can be NERA's next leaders but we need nominations from you to put together the slate for the 2016 election. Please send your nominations for President and Board Members to April Zenisky, NERA Past President, at [past-president@nera-education.org](mailto:past-president@nera-education.org) by **May 30, 2016**. Note that all nominees must be current members of NERA.

**Consider nominating yourself or a colleague for one of these important positions!**

### **Winner of the 2015 Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award**

Congratulations to Heba Abdo and co-authors on the paper entitled, *"Psychological Praise Metrics in K-12 Education,"* for winning the Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award.

The Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award is an award named in honor of Lorne Woollatt, a distinguished New York State educator and NERA member. NERA research papers submitted for this award are evaluated on a 35 point scale. The winner is also awarded a stipend for travel to present the awarded paper at the American Educational Research Association Conference (AERA) held April 8-12 in Washington D.C.

Heba Abdo is a Leadership Teacher at Rutgers University School System Improvement Project. Her co-investigators, Christian Matthews and Carolyn Ross, also work on this project as Senior Program Administrator and Leadership Teacher, respectively.

The award-winning paper addresses the issue of frequency, specificity, and immediacy of actual and recommended use of teacher praise for reinforcing academics and behaviors at all grade levels. Research indicates that a lowered amount of praise is given as grade levels increase. Greater decreases were found in specificity and immediacy of praise. Higher grade teachers appeared to be very aware of a need to make changes in giving praise according to the characteristics investigated. The authors suggest that there is a need for better professional development around praise and rationales for the resulting differences, especially at the high school level.

### **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE THOMAS F. DONLON MEMORIAL AWARD FOR DISTINGUISHED MENTORING**

The Thomas F. Donlon Award for Distinguished Mentoring was established in 2000 in recognition of Tom's long and valued contributions to NERA, particularly as a mentor to so many colleagues. Since then the award has been presented annually to other NERA members who have demonstrated distinction as mentors of colleagues by guiding them and helping them find productive paths toward developing their careers as educational researchers.

The practice of mentoring in education has been going on for centuries and most of us can name a person who helped us move our careers along by being more than just a friend or colleague. That person may have been an advisor in developing your research agenda or perhaps brought you to NERA for the first time after suggesting that you might be ready for a conference presentation.

At this time nominations are again being sought for this annual award. Nominees must be NERA members and may be nominated by any member(s) of NERA to whom they served as mentors. If you would like to see a member of NERA who was your mentor be recognized for his/her contributions to your success, send your nomination to **Lisa Keller** via email at [lkeller@educ.umass.edu](mailto:lkeller@educ.umass.edu) by **July 1, 2016**. In addition to the nomination letter, all nominations must be accompanied by at least three letters of support indicating the ways in which the nominee distinguished him/herself as a mentor. Up to five separate letters of support can be sent for each nominee. The award will be presented at the 2016 NERA conference. Please contact Lisa if you have any questions about the Donlon Award or the nomination process.

### **CALL FOR NOMINATIONS FOR THE LEO D. DOHERTY MEMORIAL AWARD FOR OUTSTANDING LEADERSHIP AND SERVICE TO NERA**

The Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award is given to a longstanding NERA member who exemplifies the qualities that Leo Doherty brought to NERA members, his colleagues, and students over his career. The award, instituted by the NERA Board of Directors in 1981, honors the memory of Leo Doherty. He was instrumental in the development and growth of NERA as a professional association for educational research. His leadership qualities, which were both ethical and humane encouraged others to pursue and achieve their goals. Thus, this award is presented to NERA members who have exhibited outstanding leadership and service to our organization.

The Leo D. Doherty Award Committee for 2016 strongly encourage nominations for this award. Nomination letters should be sent as an email attachment to Helen Marx at [marxh1@southernct.edu](mailto:marxh1@southernct.edu) no later than June 30, 2016. Nomination letters should explicitly name the nominee and offer a concise and compelling case for the candidate in terms of their leadership and service to NERA.

## Update from NERA Mentoring Program Co-Chairs

Jonathan Rubright

Juliette Lyons-Thomas

The NERA Mentoring Program welcomes its newest Co-Chair: Juliette Lyons-Thomas from the Regents Research Fund. Both of us thank Ross Markle for his many years of service to this program, and for his work and vision to grow the program year after year. Jonathan and Juliette look forward to working together with the NERA membership to ensure meaningful and continued mentoring opportunities beneficial to both mentors and mentees.

Recall that the NERA Board of Directors supports two approaches to establishing mentoring relationships: 1) conference-based connections and 2) an online message board. Both approaches share the common goal of increasing mentoring relationships among NERA members; each have their own unique advantages.

The conference-based Mentoring Program has existed for several years and serves as a focused, hand-selected match-making process. Each year, the Mentoring Program co-chairs collect information from members who want to be a mentor or want to be mentored. Mentor-Mentee pairs are matched based on research interests, career goals, or areas of desired growth. Pairs are encouraged to talk before, and to meet during, the annual NERA conference. Participants in this process receive the benefit of a structured and informed match, have dedicated time during the conference to meet, and can make new connections outside of their existing social networks.

The mentoring message board is available 24 hours a day and can be accessed via the "Mentoring Board" link listed under the Mentoring tab on the NERA website. From there, members can sign up to be a mentor or potential mentees can view the contact information for mentor volunteers. Utilizing this approach, members can sign-up or reach out at any point throughout the year and have the freedom to form their own mentor-mentee relationships. This may be especially useful to members who cannot attend the annual conference.

Watch your inbox this summer for an invitation to participate in this year's Mentoring Program. As always, feel free to reach out to Jonathan or Juliette should you have any questions. Happy mentoring.

### CALL FOR LORNE H. WOOLLATT DISTINGUISHED PAPER AWARD

Educators are encouraged to submit a 15-20 page original research paper on any educational issue of interest for the Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award. The paper must be accepted for and presented at the NERA 2016 conference. There may be single or multiple authors. The submission will be peer reviewed and rated on a thirty point rubric. The winner(s) will be notified by both email and post in the beginning of January. The author of the winning distinguished paper will receive a stipend of \$500 and present at the American Educational Research Association conference in 2017. Papers may be submitted in blind and authored copies via email after the NERA Conference in October to **Johan van der Jagt** at [j.w.van-der-jagt@att.net](mailto:j.w.van-der-jagt@att.net).

The Lorne H. Woollatt Award was renamed in 1990 to honor this New York educator who published, *The evolution of state-local governmental relationships in New York State (Staff study of the fiscal policy for public education in New York State)* in 1948. Woollatt was an active member of NERA.



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### Tentative Plans for NERA 2016 GSIC in-conference Sessions

The Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) is in preparation of two in-conference sessions for the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual NERA Conference in 2016. The sessions will feature two topics closely relevant to graduate students:

- **Tentative Session #1 – Grant Writing:** Graduate students at NERA attending this session will learn about the grant writing process, gather tips on how to write a good grant, and learn about different types of grants. The session will primarily focus on research and dissertation grants.
- **Tentative Session #2 – Best Practices for Writing CVs, Resumes, and Cover Letters:** Graduate students at NERA attending this session will gather suggestions and tips on constructing an effective CV, resume, and/or cover letter.

***Stay tuned for more information about GSIC sessions!***

### Call for Proposals for the 2016 NERA Conference

GSIC would like to encourage all graduate students to submit both completed and in-progress research to the 2016 NERA Conference, which will take place from October 26-28, 2016 at the Trumbull Marriott Merritt Parkway Hotel in Trumbull, CT. The online proposal submission system will be open from the beginning of May through June 3rd.

NERA is especially supportive towards graduate students, which helps to reduce the stress of presenting at conferences. When presenting at NERA you will receive positive feedback and constructive criticism on your papers from respected professionals in the field. Presenting takes practice and because of NERA's supportive attitude towards graduate students, it is a great place to present your papers!

### Benefits of Being a NERA Member as a Graduate Student

Besides the 3-day annual conference, NERA offers other professional development opportunities for graduate students throughout the year:

- **Free Webinars** on research methodology and special topics in educational research. Graduate students have the opportunity to learn from experts and leading researchers about the current development and future directions of a research topic.
- **Mentorship program** where graduate students and young professionals can network with a NERA mentor concerning research projects, professional advice, and career development. During the annual NERA conference, mentees can meet their mentors in person to learn from them during the happy-hour social activity.

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