

# The NERA Researcher

## The President's Message



Rochelle Michel

The spring season is often a time for reflection. We may be reflecting on things such as students' academic, social, and emotional progress over the school year, academic decisions about schools in which to enroll, preparing for graduations and subsequent transitions, mid-year reviews of professional objectives, faculty evaluations, internships, new jobs, current and future lines of research, and the list goes on. Whatever your role, I hope that you make time this season to reflect on your accomplishments, as well as areas for growth and development. No matter the stage in your professional career, there is value in this reflective process.

NERA has been and continues to be a volunteer organization. Members are at the heart of volunteer organizations. We have some amazing members who help to make NERA an open, warm, and welcoming environment for graduate students, emerging scholars, teachers, school administrators, as well as researchers who have already made a long-standing mark on the field of educational research. As you will read in this edition of *The NERA Researcher*, there are many individuals working hard on behalf of NERA—including our 2019 conference program co-chairs, board of directors, committee chairs and committee members, those of you submitting workshop and conference proposals, and those who volunteer to review proposals and serve as conference session chairs and discussants. It really takes the whole NERA collective coming together to make NERA what it is today and to carry us into the next 50 years.

As I continue to reflect on this year's conference theme, *Transformation by Design*, it has provided me with an opportunity to reflect on our preparations for the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference, think about our evolution over the years, and make plans not just for this year, but continuing to strengthen our organizational foundation for years to come. I hope that you will join me on this journey. What does *Transformation by Design* mean for NERA as an organization? Does NERA need a "transformation" by design or otherwise, to continue for another 50 years? If our organization is to remain relevant and a conference of choice for educational researchers within the northeast region (and beyond!), we need to make sure that our conference program includes research that reflects the work being conducted by and of interest to our members, and reflects the variety of educational research fields in which our members work.

Be on the lookout for NERA communications about upcoming webinars, as well as additional information about the 2019 Annual Conference. Feel free to share your thoughts and ideas about how we can continue to serve our NERA members well into the next 50 years. You can email me at [rmichel@erblearn.org](mailto:rmichel@erblearn.org).

See you in Trumbull, CT—October 16-18, 2019.

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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

Greetings NERA Members,

It's finally spring! We hope everyone is enjoying the longer days and warmer weather.

This issue of *The NERA Researcher* contains the 2019 Conference Call for Proposals and some exciting information about the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary conference. Please consider submitting some of your work to present at the conference, and consider recommending the event to others in your network. Also, be on the lookout for other exciting opportunities in the upcoming months such as webinars and information about the Mentoring Program.

This issue also contains nomination calls for NERA awards and positions—all with deadlines of June 30, 2019. Please read the award descriptions and consider nominating a current NERA member.

As always, thank you to Barbara Helms for her assistance in editing *The NERA Researcher*. Enjoy the summer, and we look forward to seeing everyone at the conference this fall!

Katrina Roohr and Olcay Yavuz  
The Editors

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**Bridget Thomas**  
*Quality Information Partners (QiP)*

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*Educational Testing Service*

**Olcay Yavuz**  
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## Member News

**Olcay Yavuz**, the Founding Director of STEM Leadership Institute is organizing the State of Connecticut's largest STEM Leadership Professional Development Event on Monday, July 1st, 2019 at Southern Connecticut State University

**Bo Bashkov** and **Jerome Clauser** published the following: Bashkov, B. M., & Clauser, J. C. (2019). Determining item screening criteria using cost-benefit analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 24(2). Available online: <http://pareonline.net/getvn.asp?v=24&n=2>

**Adrian D. Martin** has published his edited volume "*Exploring Gender and LGBTQ Issues in K12 and Teacher Education: A Rainbow Assemblage*" with Information Age Publishing. The chapters in the volume provide insightful and useful resources for educators, teacher educators, and educational researchers engaged in inquiry and pedagogy to facilitate schooling systems that are inclusive, affirmative, and welcoming for all educational stakeholders. The volume is available both in print and digital format.

**Jess L. Gregory's** article entitled "Applying SERVQUAL: Using service quality perceptions to improve student satisfaction and program" was published in *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education*.

As of October 2018, former NERA President **John W. Young** is the Senior Research Fellow with Student Achievement Partners, the non-profit organization founded by developers of the Common Core Standards.

Please consider submitting your professional accomplishments to *The NERA Researcher* for recognition!

Submissions may be sent to [theneraresearcher@nera-education.org](mailto:theneraresearcher@nera-education.org).

## **NERA Conference Overview and Welcome**

**October 16 – 18, 2019**

**Trumbull, CT**

Alejandra Garcia, Paola Heincke, and Bridget Thomas  
*2019 Conference Co-Chairs*

Dear Members,

This is a banner year for NERA—our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference! We are counting on you to celebrate it with us. Much has changed since 1969, so it is appropriate that this year’s theme is “*Transformation by Design*,” and we are planning the conference as purposefully as the theme indicates.

Mark your calendars and join us at the Marriott Hotel in Trumbull, CT on October 16-18, 2019. Membership and conference registration forms will be available on the [NERA website](#) this summer. If you haven’t yet, please submit a proposal and share the [call for proposals](#) with friends and colleagues. **The deadline for submissions is June 2, 2019.**

Many exciting things are in store for the conference participants this year, beginning with a stellar group of speakers and panelists:

**Keynote Speakers:** Three great keynote speakers are confirmed for Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday:

- Dr. Monika Williams Shealey – Senior Vice President of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Division at Rowan University;
- Dr. Alina von Davier – Senior Vice President at ACTNext; and
- Dr. Ezekiel Dixon-Román – Associate Professor and Chair of the Data Analytics for Social Policy Certificate at UPenn’s Social Policy and Practice program.

**Panelists:** In addition to the speakers, we will have a panel discussion featuring Kristen Huff – Vice President of Assessment and Research at Curriculum Associates, Alina von Davier – Senior Vice President at ACTNext, and Rebecca Zwick – Distinguished Presidential Appointee at the Educational Testing Service. The panel will be moderated by Ellen Forte – CEO and Chief Scientist of edCount LLC and will focus on the experiences these thoughtful leaders have had transforming themselves, their organizations, and the education field.

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## 2019 Conference Overview and Welcome

In addition, we are planning a variety of engaging professional development opportunities:

**3MT Competition:** Inspired by the University of Queensland's Three-Minute Thesis Competition (3MT), this year NERA will hold its own 3MT event. Conference participants can volunteer for one of the limited spots in the competition, in which they will have three minutes to efficiently explain the breadth and significance of their research in a presentation aimed at a non-technical audience. We will have two competition groups: graduate students and professionals. Winners in each category will receive prizes! If you were not able to attend the informational webinar about the 3MT on May 1, you can view the recording of the session available on the NERA website. An email seeking contestants for each competition group will be sent in late summer.

**Webinars:** We will be hosting three webinars tied directly to the conference. The first webinar, which explained the 3-Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition, was held on May 1. (The recording is available on the NERA website.) The next two upcoming webinars in the conference series are "Key Advice for Different NERA Research Formats" and "Getting the Most Out of the NERA Annual Meeting"—these will be held in the next few months. Be on the lookout for more details!

**Professional Development Workshops:** For the third time, we are soliciting proposals for workshops. The voting system initiated last year was well received and will be continued this year to ensure that the workshop selections are membership driven. Once the workshop deadline passes (May 17, 2019), we will compile the workshop descriptions and distribute them to members for a vote. Stay tuned!

Our committees are also working hard to offer the best experience to our conference participants:

**GSIC Sessions:** This year, GSIC will be offering two different sessions. The first one, titled "*Getting Through It: Managing the Dissertation Process*," is a panel discussion that includes doctoral students who recently finished their dissertations, sharing their stories and offering tips and guidance. The second one, titled "*The Business of Our Business*," is a small workshop/panel that will explain how to incorporate yourself into a separate legal entity for business purposes, legal issues you may face when working on a grant or contracting, and how to plan for and limit your potential tax liability.

**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.

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## 2019 Conference Overview and Welcome

**Conference App:** We will continue to use the conference app to provide conference information, facilitate interactions among NERA members at the conference, and allow researchers to share their slides and papers with colleagues easily. However, don't worry, we will also have a PDF version of the program available!

We are also planning some fun activities to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NERA. Make sure to pack your 1969 outfit for the party!

Finally, a sincere thank you to the 2018 NERA conference co-chairs, Jade Caines Lee and Tabitha McKinley, and Past President Javarro Russell for a successful conference and for their innovative ideas—like the Parent Room for expectant and/or nursing moms, which will also be available this year. Thank you also to those who responded to the conference evaluation survey. Your feedback has been invaluable for our planning!

If you have any questions or comments about the conference, please feel free to reach out to the 2019 co-chairs at [NERA.CoChairs@gmail.com](mailto:NERA.CoChairs@gmail.com). We are eager to connect with current (and soon-to-be) members.

We are looking forward to seeing you all in October at the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary NERA Conference!

Best,

Alejandra Garcia, Paola Heincke, and Bridget Thomas  
2019 NERA Conference Co-Chairs



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## Call for Proposals

50TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
October 16-18, 2019

Trumbull Marriott Shelton, Trumbull, Connecticut

As a regional affiliate of the American Educational Research Association, NERA invites proposals for our annual meeting that span all areas of educational research. We welcome proposals from new and experienced researchers and will consider proposals for both completed and in-progress research. Below you will find the conference theme and 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: “Transformation by Design”

This is NERA’s 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference! The field of educational research has moved and been transformed in the 50 years we’ve hosted conferences. Some of those changes have been purposeful, while others have not—and just about all have had consequences. Over a thousand years ago (and in Latin), St. Jerome wrote “Good, better, best. Never let it rest; ‘til your good is better, and your better is best.” Let’s make NERA relevant a thousand years from now; the research our members conduct can still have an impact then. Recall that what is often considered the first standardized test, the civil servant evaluations of the Han Dynasty, existed two thousand years ago. With that in mind, what is the goal of your research? What do you hope it leads to? How will it impact the future? As the 2019 theme suggests, let’s be purposeful in our research so that we transform the education field *by design*. Who knows what the future holds, but it may be your work that is quoted centuries from now for how it transformed education.

As our president, Rochelle Michel has stated: “In order to enact meaningful change, we need to be intentional in our actions.” For the 2019 conference, we encourage NERA members and affiliates to be thoughtful about the changes they seek to affect, and how their research supports that transformation. **Although we STRONGLY encourage session proposals related to the conference theme, this is not a requirement for submissions.**

### Submission Requirements

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

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## Call for Proposals

### Submission Format

The proposal submission form is online and accessible at the NERA website. At the time of submission, authors will be required to select from a list of descriptive keywords to categorize their proposal.

### Submission Review Process

- Proposals *must* be submitted electronically by **Sunday, June 2, 2019 (11:59 pm EST)**.
- 2 to 3 NERA members will conduct a blind review of 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 to the first authors in mid-August. Details about session dates and times will follow when the program is finalized.
- It is critical to meet the **June 2 deadline** so that reviewers have time to review each proposal, authors can be informed of proposal decisions expeditiously, and a program can be finalized and shared with members promptly.



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## SESSION-SPECIFIC GUIDELINES – 2019 NERA CONFERENCE

When submitting your proposal, you will be asked to indicate which of the following session formats you prefer for your research. We encourage everyone to select more than one possible option, as selecting multiple options increases your likelihood of acceptance. Regardless of the session 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 this year to maximize the educational experience for NERA members.

### 1. Individual Presentations

#### a. 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 individual presentations will be grouped according to similar research areas. In most paper sessions, a discussant will be assigned to read the set of papers in advance and present a 10-15-minute synthesis, critique, or analysis of the set of papers to spur discussion.

#### b. Roundtable:

Roundtable sessions allow maximum interaction among presenters and attendees putting greater emphasis on the discussion. Each table will have 3-5 researchers of accepted papers clustered around shared interests. Each session will have a designated chair knowledgeable of the research area, to facilitate interaction and participation, and when appropriate a discussant will be assigned to a roundtable session as well.

#### c. Individual Poster:

Proposals should describe a research project, either completed or nearly completed, that lends itself to a visual display and would benefit from informal individualized discussion and feedback. Similar to the individual paper presentations, each poster will have a discussant. Specific directions for the size of the poster will be posted on the NERA Conference website and are available in the [FAQ document](#).

### 2. Theme-Based Paper Session/Symposium

Proposals for this format should describe a set of 3-5 presentations organized around a common theme. The chair and discussant for this session format must be identified in the proposal. The format and procedure for these sessions are identical to the *Individual Paper Presentation* sessions.

#### Call for conference volunteers and reviewers!

NERA is a volunteer-based organization. If you want to be a part of what keeps it going, volunteer to be part of a committee or to help the conference as a chair, discussant, and/or proposal reviewer here: <https://www.viethconsulting.com/members/form.php?orgcode=NERA&fid=3097449>

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

Thank you,

Alejandra Garcia, Paola Heincke, and Bridget Thomas

NERA 2019 Conference Chairs

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Network with NERA members using our [LinkedIn group page!](#)

## Call for Proposals Frequently Asked Questions

### **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 researcher should show the potential of the work 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 descriptive proposal 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 for your proposal as your first choice and two additional descriptors as next-best options.

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

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

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

Discussants must be able to review research papers before the session in order to prepare properly for discussion. You will be asked to email your research paper to the discussant not later than October 1.

### **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 I am 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 [NERA.CoChairs@gmail.com](mailto:NERA.CoChairs@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 in a 36-point font or larger. The rest of your lettering should be in a font of at least 28-points. 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 quality level for the experience of those presenting their research, as well as those receiving the research.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

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

Those presenting proposals for theme-based paper sessions or symposia are required to submit only one proposal for all papers in the session, within a maximum of 1000 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, proposers can indicate within the submission 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 the works.

### **How do roundtable sessions work?**

Roundtable 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 the other participants.

### **Where can I go to determine the conference registration fees?**

Registration fees are posted on the NERA website during the latter half of spring. There are three cost brackets: Professional, Retirees, and Students. Late fees are instituted after October 1. All registrants must also be NERA members. More information about membership and dues can be found on the NERA website ([www.nera-education.org](http://www.nera-education.org)).

### **Is there a special room rate at the conference hotel?**

Yes, NERA negotiates a special room rate for their members each year at the conference hotel. Room rates and information on how to register are posted on the NERA website during the latter half of spring. There is a limited number of rooms available at the negotiated room rate each year. More information about registering for both the conference and a hotel room can be found on the NERA website ([www.nera-education.org](http://www.nera-education.org)).

### **Are meals included with registration?**

Yes, NERA is pleased to provide meals with conference registration regardless of whether members stay at the conference hotel or not. Meals are provided within or in front of the ballroom. Please reach out to the NERA co-chairs about any dietary concerns or restrictions you may have at [NERA.CoChairs@gmail.com](mailto:NERA.CoChairs@gmail.com).

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

An online submission system to submit proposals is currently open with a deadline for submission of **June 2**. You may contact the conference co-chairs with further questions at [NERA.CoChairs@gmail.com](mailto:NERA.CoChairs@gmail.com).

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## Call for Nominations for the Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award for Distinguished Mentoring

The Thomas F. Donlon Memorial 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 NERA members who have demonstrated distinction as mentors of colleagues and students 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.

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 **Marcia Delcourt** via email at [delcourtm@wcsu.edu](mailto:delcourtm@wcsu.edu) by **June 30, 2019**. In addition to the nomination letter, all nominations must be accompanied by at least three letters of support indicating how the nominee distinguished her/himself as a mentor. Up to five separate letters of support can be sent for each nominee. The award will be presented at the 2019 NERA conference. Please contact Marcy if you have any questions about the Donlon Award or the nomination process.

Information about the 2018 award recipient, Dr. Jody Piro, is located at <https://www.nera-education.org/thomas-f-donlon-memorial-award.php>.



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## Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award Committee

Looking for a way to serve NERA? Consider helping to review NERA papers for the Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award Committee.

Each year in November, members of the committee are assigned 1–4 papers to read and review. The committee members anonymously and independently evaluate each submission using an established scoring guide. Committee members are appointed by the NERA President as this is an important role that helps determine which paper will represent NERA at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) Annual Meeting each spring. Each year the recipient of this award receives a \$500 stipend to travel to the AERA conference, and presents the winning paper during a special session for the distinguished papers from each of the regional educational research associations.

The Lorne H. Woollatt Distinguished Paper Award is named in honor of Lorne Woollatt, a distinguished New York State educator and NERA member. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please email the committee Chair, **Abby**, at [lau.abigail@gmail.com](mailto:lau.abigail@gmail.com).

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## 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 throughout 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.

Nomination letters should be sent as an email attachment to **April Zenisky** at [azenisky@educ.umass.edu](mailto:azenisky@educ.umass.edu) no later than **June 30, 2019**. 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. Inquiries regarding this award may also be sent to April.

For information on the 2018 award recipient, Steven Holtzman, please check out [https://www.nera-education.org/leo\\_d\\_doherty\\_memorial\\_award.php](https://www.nera-education.org/leo_d_doherty_memorial_award.php).



## Call for Nominations NERA President and Board Members

We are seeking nominations for the following open elected positions:

**NERA President** (3-year term, President-Elect, President, and Past-President)

**NERA Board Members** (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 2019 election. Please send your nominations for President and Board Members to **Javarro Russell** at [jrussell@ets.org](mailto:jrussell@ets.org) by **June 30, 2019**. Note that all nominees must be current members of NERA. Please consider nominating yourself or a colleague for one of these important positions!



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## NERA Mentoring Program Update

Tanesia Beverly, *Law School Admissions Council*  
Jerusha Henderek, *National Board of Medical Examiners*

The Mentoring Program strives to facilitate meaningful connections for NERA participants through two key approaches: 1) conference-based connections, and 2) an online message board through the NERA website. The conference-based Mentoring Program has existed since 2012 and uses a focused, hand-selected match-making process. Each year, the Mentoring Program co-chairs collect information from members who volunteer to be a mentor or who want to be mentored. Mentor-Mentee pairs are matched based on research interests, career goals, or areas of desired growth. Pairs are encouraged to communicate before and meet during the annual NERA conference. Participants in this process benefit from receiving a structured and informed match, having dedicated time during the conference to meet, and being able to make new connections outside of their existing social networks.

The other approach that is offered is the mentoring message board. This service is available 24 hours a day and can be accessed via the *Mentoring Board* link listed in the *Mentoring* dropdown 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. Using 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 NERA annual conference or would like to set up a time to meet at another professional meeting.

The co-chairs will be sending information this summer about how to participate in the conference-based Mentoring Program. Please feel free to reach out to Tanesia ([tanesia.beverly@uconn.edu](mailto:tanesia.beverly@uconn.edu)) and Jerusha ([jhenderek@nbme.org](mailto:jhenderek@nbme.org)) should you have any questions or suggestions for improving the Mentoring Program. We are looking forward to working with the NERA membership over the coming year!



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## **Membership Committee and Infrastructure Committee Joint Update**

Madison Holzman, *Curriculum Associates*  
Jonathan Steinberg, *Educational Testing Service*

Since the last edition of *The NERA Researcher*, the Membership Committee has focused on initiatives to increase NERA membership and conference attendance. To meet this goal, the Membership Committee scoured websites of educational institutions and related organizations to gather contact information for over 1,300 education professionals. This is similar to an initiative undertaken several years ago which proved to be extremely successful.

The reason for a joint article with the Infrastructure Committee for the spring issue is that we have partnered with them and leveraged their savvy skills (thank you to Kelly Foelber) in order to prepare the prospective database to be integrated with the existing NERA member database. This will allow us to send both current and prospective members emails about the annual call for conference proposals, as well as webinar announcements, training opportunities, and general NERA updates. We hope we'll be able to welcome many new members in the coming months. We will report back with a membership update after the conference!

The Infrastructure Committee will continue to work with our technology vendor, Vieth Consulting, to ensure membership status and billing information is current and accurate through this database update initiative. In addition, our next major task will be to efficiently coordinate conference proposal submissions and reviews, as well as scheduling of conference sessions.

Both committees welcomed new volunteers over the past several months thanks to a coordinated outreach effort (thank you to Jason Kopp and April Zenisky). Several individuals chose to volunteer with one of the committees for the first time or continue their previous engagement with the committees.

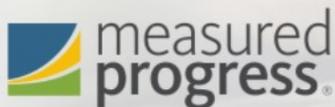
As always, we welcome any suggestions and feedback related to NERA membership and infrastructure activities! Please reach out with any questions or concerns as the conference approaches.

Warm regards,

Madison Holzman, Chair, Membership Committee ([E-Mail Madison](#))

Jonathan Steinberg, Chair, Infrastructure Committee ([E-Mail Jonathan](#))

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## Communications Committee Update

Bo Bashkov

*American Board of Internal Medicine*

Happy spring, everyone!

Can you believe it's already May? Winter came and went, and here we are again preparing our proposals for this year's (50<sup>th</sup>!) NERA conference. In this update, I would like to acknowledge all the hard work the Communication Committee has been doing over the past few months to keep everyone informed about upcoming deadlines and events. In addition, I hope you will read the call below for an exciting opportunity to serve on our team starting this fall.

### Communications Committee Kudos

There is a lot of work and coordination that happens behind the scenes among the conference co-chairs, our President, Rochelle Michel, the infrastructure team, and of course our newsletter editors. The Communications Committee plays a crucial role in these efforts, and I would like to acknowledge this work.

Chi Hang Au of James Madison University has done a fantastic job as webmaster since he stepped into this role last fall. Having been in this role previously, I know how thorough and persistent one needs to be to update every section of the website. Our email coordinator Mina Lee of the University of Massachusetts Amherst and our social media coordinator Frank Padellaro of Measured Progress have also been extremely prompt and efficient in disseminating important information to members and prospective members regarding our organization and the upcoming conference. Working with them is a pleasure. Last but not least, Monica Erbacher (University of Arizona) and Jeanne Horst (James Madison University) are always an email away as former chairs and advisors to this committee, and I am grateful for their continued support. Thank you all for being awesome team players!

The Communications Committee currently consists of six members, three of whom will be rotating off after the conference in October 2019. This means that in the coming months, the Committee will be accepting inquiries and applications to fill **two regular member positions** and **one Social Media Coordinator position**. If you feel passionate about serving on a committee to support NERA, feel free to reach out to me at [bo.bashkov@gmail.com](mailto:bo.bashkov@gmail.com). I would be happy to answer any questions you might have.

### Communication Request Procedures

As a reminder, all official NERA business that needs to be disseminated to the membership needs to follow NERA's Communication Committee guidelines as documented in the [NERA Handbook](#). That is, a [Communications Request Form](#) must be submitted to [bo.bashkov@gmail.com](mailto:bo.bashkov@gmail.com) at least a few days prior to the requestor's target date for dissemination to ensure sufficient time for the request to be reviewed/approved and information to be sent out to members or posted on social media. We hope all members, including NERA leadership, will follow these procedures.

Best,  
Bo Bashkov  
Chair, Communications Committee

## The Graduate Lounge

Henry “Hank” Johnson  
*New England Institute of Technology*

Like many people, I have become enraptured by the world of George R. R. Martin’s *Game of Thrones* series. Whenever I meet someone who has the same level of passion and zeal for the series, we usually end up talking about our favorite episodes. This usually drives the non-*Game of Thrones* people around us a little bit insane with references that no layperson could even hope to understand.

My favorite character in the show is Samwell Tarly. Samwell Tarly’s father was renowned as one of Westeros’ finest military commanders and tried to raise Samwell in his stead. Samwell’s complete lack of abilities made his father disown him. Instead, Samwell pursued his interest in scholarly pursuits and eventually ended up at the Citadel, the home of scholars who advise the lords of the Seven Kingdoms on matters scientific, medical, and historical.

In today’s climate, educational researchers sometimes live in this Citadel-type of environment. We talk to each other about methodology, approaches, and things so nuanced and specific we can sometimes lose focus on the larger issues at hand. We have so much ready access to knowledge; we can forget that sometimes this wasn’t always the case.

In one storyline, Samwell met a man who was suffering from what was considered an incurable disease. Through his research efforts, he discovered a potential cure and presented to the elders at the Citadel who forbade Samwell from attempting the cure. Having confidence in his methods, Samwell disobeyed the leaders and went on to cure the man.

While we are unlikely to face such dramatic life or death decisions, there is an important lesson we can glean from this small story. All of us, especially new practitioners and graduate students, need to present and share our research with our colleagues. We need to share what we have discovered and what we have found so others can build off our knowledge.

That’s where NERA comes in. Our conference and annual meeting give graduate students from across the country the opportunity to share their work in a collegial environment. The call for proposals is available, and I strongly urge you to submit a research paper and attend as many sessions as you can. This is the time to share what you know, and have a chance to receive guidance and support from some of the most talented researchers in the educational field. Do not miss this opportunity! Submit your paper, register for the conference, and join us in October for an amazing adventure.

### **Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) Sponsored Sessions**

The selected topics for the two GSIC-sponsored sessions at this year’s conference are *“Getting Through It: Managing the Dissertation Process”* and *“The Business of Our Business.”*

1. *“Getting Through It: Managing the Dissertation Process”* will be a panel discussion that includes doctoral students who recently finished their dissertations sharing their stories and offering tips and guidance.
2. *“The Business of Our Business”* is a small workshop that will explain how to incorporate yourself into a separate legal entity for business purposes, legal issues you may face when working on a grant or contracting, and how to plan for and limit your potential tax liability.

Though aimed towards graduate students, we hope these sessions will appeal to a wide range of NERA members. If you have questions or thoughts about either of these sessions, feel free to contact us at [neragraduatestudents@gmail.com](mailto:neragraduatestudents@gmail.com).

### **GSIC Call for Proposals for the 2019 NERA Conference**

GSIC encourages all graduate students to submit both completed and in-progress research to the 2019 NERA Conference, which will take place from October 16-18, 2019 at the Trumbull Marriott Shelton in Trumbull, CT. The online proposal submission system will be open through June 2. NERA is an exceptionally supportive environment for 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 work!

### **GSIC Call for New Members**

Serving on the GSIC is a great way to get involved with NERA and build relationships with other graduate students. Responsibilities include collaborating with students from various institutions to plan GSIC-sponsored in-conference sessions, and the GSIC student social. New members are selected each year after the NERA Conference.

### **GSIC on Social Media**

Additionally, please take a moment and 'like' us on Facebook. We will be revamping the page over the next few months to provide you with resources and materials as well as conference information and details. The web address is <https://www.facebook.com/neragsic>

## Call for Articles

### The Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (JELPS)

ISSN#: 2473-2826

[www.southernct.edu/jelps/](http://www.southernct.edu/jelps/)

The Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies (JELPS) ISSN#: 2473-2826, sponsored by Southern Connecticut State University is a peer-reviewed electronic journal dedicated to establishing a global network that will serve as a platform for researchers, policymakers, educators, and school leaders who are concerned with moving educational issues forward. More importantly, the journal will provide readers with an enhanced awareness of strategies and policies for improving educational outcomes and methods for improving school success for all students.

JELPS seeks manuscripts that address best practices and school policies in the four leadership domains: Instructional Leadership, Talent Management, Organizational Systems, School Culture and School Climate.

The journal welcomes articles based on practice and research with an explicit educational leadership focus, or components that examine the function of school leadership from a variety of well-balanced perspectives. All theoretical and methodological approaches are welcome (e.g., qualitative vs. quantitative; empirical vs. conceptual; discipline-based vs. interdisciplinary). Authors will receive initial review decision notifications within 3 to 4 weeks.

See the General Call for Manuscripts at <https://go.southernct.edu/jelps/#call-for-articles>. General issue manuscripts should be sent to Dr. Olcay Yavuz, Editor-in Chief, Journal of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies for initial review at [yavuzo1@southernct.edu](mailto:yavuzo1@southernct.edu).



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