

The NERA Researcher

The President's Message



In 2014, I was fortunate enough to serve as Conference Co-Chair alongside my two esteemed friends, Pamela Kaliski and Javarro Russell. I can't remember who started it or when it happened, but at some point, we all decided that "our" conference was going to be the biggest and best ever. This is likely a belief to which all co-chairs adhere, but I have never actually conducted a survey. Nevertheless, we looked at every aspect of the way conferences had been organized in the past and continually asked ourselves if that could be improved in either an incremental or revolutionary way. After months of work, more than 400 professional and graduate student members had registered for the conference in October –

the highest number we could find on record. It seemed like our efforts had been a success.

As you may have noticed, in recent years, there has been a decline in NERA membership and conference attendance. During discussions at Board or Business meetings, I have often heard people pose hypotheses about this, ranging from budget issues at regional universities to conflicts with other events to failing to appeal to certain sectors of the educational research community. Others, who may have been learning about NERA for the first time, have suggested actions of inquiry, such as a survey of former or potential members to determine what could be done to improve engagement.

Having served on the Board shortly after my term on the Conference Committee, I have been intimately aware of the challenges faced and efforts put forth each year. Before going any further, I want to say that this message is in no way meant to question the intentions or efforts of anyone who has come before me. What's more, I am not ignorant of the issues mentioned before, such as limited travel budgets, or those yet to be discovered, and I am eager to hear of any issues our members face and ways in which NERA can work to address them.

Instead, I wish to discuss how I have internalized all of the information of the last several years in order to develop a plan for how we can move forward, building an organization and conference experience that continues to thrive. In the short time since taking on the Presidency, I have articulated this in two key ways.

First, we must build an experience that appeals to all of our members.

The lifecycle of a long-time NERA member is quite common. Most people enter as graduate students, existing in this larval stage for several years, and attending NERA for the incredible learning experiences, social connections,

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The NERA Researcher

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

Message from the Editors

Happy New Year, NERA Members!

We hope everyone had a restful holiday season. As you will see in this issue, the 50th Anniversary NERA Conference was a great success. Please join us in thanking our past president, Rochelle Michel, and our 2019 Conference Co-Chairs, Alejandra Garcia, Paolo Heincke, and Bridget Thomas. We look forward to hearing more about the 2020 conference under the new leadership of President Ross Markle and 2020 Conference Co-Chairs, Jonathan Rubright, Thai Ong, Madison Holzman, and Andrew Jones.

This issue contains highlights from the 2019 conference, including the 2019 presidential address, a report from the co-chairs, conference photos, and information about the Donlon Memorial Award recipient. You will also find some notes from the October Board Meeting and information on how to submit papers to the NERA Conference Proceedings. There are updates from various committees and from our current NERA members.

As always, a special thank you to Barbara J. Helms for her continued assistance in editing *The NERA Researcher*. Barbara will be transitioning into the content editor role for the Spring issue as Katrina Roohr finishes out her 3-year term.

Katrina Roohr and Kate Nolan
The Editors

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DIA Higher Education Collaborators

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Educational Records Bureau

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Appointed Positions

2020 Conference Co-Chairs:

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American Board of Surgery

Jonathan Rubright
National Board of Medical Examiners

Madison Holzman
Curriculum Associates

Thai Ong
American Board of Internal Medicine

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Educational Testing Service

Kate Nolan
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NERA Webmaster:

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American Board of Internal Medicine

NERA Conference Proceedings Co-Editor for Digital Commons:

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University of Massachusetts Amherst

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Katrina Roohr
Educational Testing Service

Tanesia Beverly
Law School Admissions Council

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Nominations Chair:

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Educational Records Bureau

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Beth Ann Perkins
James Madison University

AWARDS COMMITTEES

Teacher-as-Researcher Chair:

Open position

Thomas Donlon Mentoring Award Chair:

Jody Piro
Western CT State University

Leo D. Doherty Memorial Award Chair:

April Zenisky
University of Massachusetts Amherst

Lorne H. Woollatt
Distinguished Paper Chair:

Open Position

AD HOC COMMITTEES

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Educational Testing Service

Conference Ambassadors Chair:

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Rowan University

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Strategic Planning Chair:

April Zenisky
University of Massachusetts Amherst

and opportunities for growth. Once entering the field, a secondary stage of life emerges. As young professionals, we may be less likely to attend as geography prohibits our travel, autonomy inhibits our ability to develop research, or budgets dictate we attend other conferences. After several years, however, we emerge as fully seasoned professionals. Now with control over when and where we travel, we remember NERA fondly and take the time, effort, and resources necessary to come back to NERA. We serve as discussants, mentors, or panelists on the most fun and interesting symposia. We enjoy the social aspects as an opportunity to give back, mentor new graduate students, and begin the cycle all over again.

One of the major guiding principles of this year will be to reconsider the NERA experience for each of these three stages: (1) the graduate student, (2) the new professional, and (3) the seasoned professional. We will be continually asking how belonging to NERA and attending the conference enriches the professional lives of these sectors. As I say this, you probably are beginning to see how NERA has always served the graduate student population well but has somewhat neglected the perspectives of these other two populations. One example of action in this umbrella will be to identify more invited speakers and workshops very early in the year. This will allow us to promote the conference to newer professionals better so that they can justify their attendance amid competing priorities. However, this leads to a second challenge that we must face as an organization.

Once we have built a great NERA experience, how will people know? For many of us who work as researchers, we often focus on the research project. Literature review, study design, sampling, analysis... these are the issues on which we concentrate our efforts. When it comes to dissemination, we certainly care about the visibility of the journal to which we submit, or the prestige of the conference at which we present, but these are questions that usually come second to those about the research itself.

Similarly, marketing the NERA experience has generally received less attention than focusing on the quality of the experience itself. Certainly, it is critical to focus on quality, but if no one knows about that quality, how can it help us improve attendance? They are efforts that must work hand-in-hand.

This has led to an intentional and strategic focus on membership and outreach. Throughout the year, the Conference Committee will be working actively with Membership and other committees to ensure that we have a strategic plan for outreach to each of the three sectors of NERA membership mentioned above.

To address these two issues, I am thankful to have a distinguished and capable Conference Committee in place: Andrew Jones from the American Board of Surgery, John Rubright from the National Board of Medical Examiners, Madison Holzman from Curriculum Associates, and Thai Ong from the American Board of Internal Medicine. They have all been on board for over a year now, and our efforts are in full swing. I am grateful for their willingness to give their time and energy and am confident in their ability to succeed.

In the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me with thoughts, ideas, or, most importantly, a willingness to get involved. I wish you a happy and fruitful 2020 and look forward to seeing you back in Trumbull, CT, later this year.

Sincerely,
Ross Markle

Member News

Casey T. Jakubowski (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) has successfully defended his Ph.D. in rural education leadership and policy at SUNY Albany. Using a qualitative approach to examine three sources of information generated from four communities during attempts at consolidating rural schools, the dissertation found that school- and newspaper-generated narratives are closer in alignment than online discussion narratives. Casey has also been named a national Sigma Phi Epsilon university partner for his efforts with the New York Delta chapter, the Eastern Region, and as an example of a faculty fellow for national volunteers.

Additionally, Casey has written and published a book, titled *Thinking about Teaching* (2020) from Edumatch Publishers, where he reflects upon and examines his personal experiences as a rural social studies teacher during the height of the reform movements. The chapters, written for students, and beginning and experienced teachers, include thought-provoking questions for each section, which can be used in PLCs, book circles, and introductory education classes.

Jess L. Gregory (Southern Connecticut State University) published the book entitled: *School Leadership for Learning: Learning Theory to Improve Professional Practice* (ISBN 978-1-77330-932-3). The book is available in an online, interactive text. You can preview the book at <https://app.tophat.com/e/036998>. A paperback version is also available through Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/dp/1773309323>

Mary E. Yakimowski has flown south. She is now employed by Samford University in Birmingham, AL, where she serves as a professor, director of the doctoral program, and chair of the Department of Educational Leadership, which serves approximately 250 students. Her first seven doctoral candidates, whom she chaired through their dissertation process, graduated December 2019.

Please consider submitting your professional accomplishments to The NERA Researcher for recognition! Submissions may be sent to theneraresearcher@nera-education.org.



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2019 Presidential Address

Lived Experiences Influence Who You Are: Here's a Peek Into Mine...

Rochelle S. Michel, Educational Records Bureau

The theme for the 50th Annual Northeastern Educational Research Association Conference was "Transformation by Design." I delivered a presidential address that was crafted to align with the conference theme. While my own area of specialization is educational measurement and psychometrics, I wanted to select a topic that would be relevant to the diverse group of individuals who make-up the NERA membership. We all have lived experiences and engage in some way with educational research, either as a producer of the research or as a consumer of the results.

The title for my presidential address was "Lived Experiences Influence Who You Are: Here's a peek into mine..." As defined by Wikipedia, lived experience refers to a "...representation of the experiences and choices of a given person, and the knowledge that they gain from these experiences and choices." Some of these experiences are based on another's design, while other experiences may be by your own design. My own experiences are no different.

How often have you thought about the students, parents, educators, and environments that serve as participants in the educational research in which we engage or share similar characteristics? Whether you conduct primary research, theoretical work, work with archival data, conduct statistical simulations, or use the results of research to inform your day-to-day work, we all need to remember that there are real experiences and individuals who have influenced the research questions that we see reflected within the articles we read and the work that we do. When I sat down to write my presidential address, this is what came to mind. As a result, I thought that it was important to share and provide a peek into my own lived experiences, as an example of the diversity of our membership, but also the many experiences that we share and bring us together as members of NERA.

My presidential address was partly storytelling, supported by the use of pictures. In this piece, I share a few specific lived experiences that occurred along my journey to where I am today. Seeing one's life through the lens of research can be quite illuminating, while at the same time a little unnerving to think of your life as the subject of a research study. At times, it can be a little shocking to find that the experiences that make up your life guide the research questions posed by researchers across a broad range of fields within educational research.

I have often reflected on my lived experiences and the related research. Factors related to being a child of immigrant parents, understanding the influence of teachers on students, being a first-generation college student, being a first-year teacher in an urban district, teaching developmental mathematics at the community college level, the role of placement tests in placing students into developmental mathematics classes, and the impact of computerized adaptive testing on a student's testing experience, were all part of my lived experiences.

I shared these experiences as part of my presidential address because, for many of us, our professional lives are filled with models, assumptions, generalizations based on average performance, and we do not get the deep insight into the research participants who provide the data from which our statistical and psychometric models, assumptions, and generalizations are made. As we move forward as individuals, as professionals, and educational researchers, I hope that you will take some time to share your story, hear someone else's story, as we constantly remind ourselves that there are people behind the data.

It was a pleasure and an honor serving as NERA's president and now joining the illustrious group of past-presidents!

2019 Conference Report & Highlights

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

We had a great time planning and executing the 2019 NERA Annual Conference, but it would not have happened without all our volunteers, members, and attendees. This year's program included 7 conference workshops, 5 symposia, 3 invited sessions, 3 poster sessions, 3 roundtable sessions, and 25 individual paper sessions. We were fortunate to have such an innovative president, Rochelle Michel, who introduced the idea of including time for unconference sessions and hosting Three-Minute Thesis (3MT) competitions at the yearly NERA conference. For the first time ever, time was set aside for the unconference, which yielded 3 active discussion sessions. NERA's inaugural 3MT competition was also a great success. We had eight engaging presentations across the two rounds (graduate students and professionals), and a packed house to cheer them on. Congratulations again to the winners: Thomas Hartka, Amanda Gorham, Elizabeth Carter, and Tabitha McKinley! In honor of Sesame Street's 50th anniversary, we closed out the conference with a viewing of the very first episode. It was fascinating to see the show's origins, as well as how much it has changed over the decades.

A special thank you to our wonderful speakers and panelists, Dr. Alina von Davier, Dr. Ezekiel Dixon-Román, and Dr. Ellen Forte. Thank you for sharing your views on educational measurement and the thoughtful and intentional way in which you have structured your programs, careers, and visions. Thank you also to our conference workshop facilitators for volunteering your time and expertise to enrich the experience of our NERA members. Thank you, Cassy Thime, Bozhidar "Bo" Bashkov, Elizabeth Patton, Nicole Alioto, Yong Luo, Briana Craig, Beth Perkins, Jeanne Horst, Heather Harris, Brent Elder, and Sarah Ferguson. We would also like to thank Hank Johnson for facilitating a session on managing the dissertation process. This session is quite helpful to our graduate school members, and we hope it becomes a standard yearly session at NERA.

In addition to acknowledging contributors to the program, we would like to thank the many volunteers who shared their valuable time and insight into making this year's conference a success. From reviewing proposals to discussing and chairing sessions, to those who helped at the registration desk, we appreciated your help. In particular, we would like to call out the unwavering support from Steven Holtzman, Jason Kopp, Tia Fetcher, Jonathan Steinberg, and Whitney Smiley, who helped answer questions, troubleshoot issues, and provide guidance throughout the year. Thank you, April Zenisky, for always being available to provide assistance and identify additional resources (people and equipment) when we needed them. We were lucky to have a core group of volunteers helping with the conference planning. Thank you to Francis O'Donnell, Daniel Fishtein, and Cathy Manly on the NERA 2019 program sub-committee, and to Fred Cline and Barbara Helms on the events sub-committee. To the institutional and personal conference sponsors, thank you! The NERA Annual Conference would not be possible without their support.

Finally, we would like to thank each and every one of the participants for their contributions to the 2019 conference and to NERA as an organization. Your personal and professional insight during the conference will have a long-lasting impact on the students and professionals at different stages of their careers. We hope you will think about "Transformation by Design," and, to quote our 2019 NERA President, "make intentional decisions that will enable them to enact meaningful change."

We look forward to the 2020 NERA Conference in October and wish all the success to the Co-Chairs, Madison Holzman, Andrew Jones, Thai Ong, and Jonathan Rubright, as well as to the 2020 NERA President, Ross Markle.



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2019 Conference Proceedings Submission Instructions

Alejandra Garcia, Editor

Any paper presented at the NERA 2019 conference is eligible for inclusion in the NERA Conference Proceedings, including full papers presented in the poster session. The Proceedings are hosted and archived on DigitalCommons@UConn (<http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/nera/>) and linked to the NERA website (<http://www.nera-education.org/>). Each paper has a dedicated, permanent URL. The 2019 Conference Proceedings editor is Alejandra Amador Garcia.

E-mail: NERA.Proceedings@gmail.com

DUE DATE: Papers must be submitted electronically by February 15, 2020. The 2019 Conference Proceedings will be available on-line in April 2020.

To submit your article for inclusion in the NERA Conference Proceedings, please follow these instructions:

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You must sign the Article Submission Agreement form indicating that you hold the copyright to your paper. The Article Submission Agreement form is available on the NERA website under downloadables (<https://www.nera-education.org/downloadables.php>). Original signed forms must be signed, scanned, and emailed to Alejandra Amador Garcia, NERA 2019 Conference Proceedings Editor, NERA.Proceedings@gmail.com

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2020 NERA Conference Announcement

October 14-16, 2020

Trumbull, CT

Dear NERA members,

We, the Conference Co-Chairs and President, have been working hard since last October to plan a fruitful program for the upcoming 51st Annual NERA Conference. We are excited to announce this year's conference theme, "Say it Loud, Say it Clear: Communicating Results and Driving Change," which focuses on the importance of effective communication in educational settings. Quality research is often our focus, but without considering effective ways to develop, communicate, and disseminate our findings, we may miss an opportunity to drive important decisions in education. It is thus critical for researchers to summarize and communicate results in meaningful ways to better inform such decisions and to reach a broader audience.

At the 2020 NERA conference, the program will cover a diverse array of educational topics, with the primary focus on effective communication in education settings. As such, we are excited to announce Dr. Nathan Kuncel as our keynote speaker. Dr. Kuncel is the Marvin D. Dunnette Distinguished Professor of Psychology and a McKnight Presidential Fellow at the University of Minnesota. His research is focused on the measurement of human cognitive and non-cognitive characteristics and their relationship to important life outcomes, including academic and job performance.

Additionally, we are working on finalizing invited featured sessions and workshops aligned with the following nine areas:

Measurement and Psychometrics

Research Methods

Education and Psychology

Policy and Politics

Teaching and Teacher Education

The Professions

Social Context in Education

Technology in Education

Graduate Student Issues

Our goal is to have at least one featured session and workshop aligning with each area. We hope this diverse set of featured sessions and workshops will stimulate the interest of all NERA members, including graduate students, educators, and researchers. We plan to announce the program outline with all confirmed featured sessions and workshops along with invited speakers and facilitators by early Spring.

Be on the look-out for more details in the upcoming months!

Jonathan D. Rubright
National Board of Medical Examiners

Madison Holzman
Curriculum Associates

Thai Ong
American Board of Internal Medicine

Andrew Jones
American Board of Surgery

2020 Conference Co-Chairs



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Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award for Distinguished Mentoring **Dr. Frank Daniello, Lesley University**



The Northeastern Educational Research Association (NERA) presented its Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award for Distinguished Mentoring on October 17, 2019, at the organization's 50th Anniversary Conference in Trumbull, CT. This award was established in 2000 to recognize Tom Donlon'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, who have guided both colleagues and students toward productive paths in their careers and as educational researchers.

The recipient for this year's award is Dr. Frank Daniello from Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Dr. Daniello was unanimously selected for this prestigious NERA award by a three-member committee chaired by Dr. Marcia Delcourt from Western Connecticut State University (WCSU) in Danbury, CT. Co-members of the committee were Dr. Jody Piro also from WCSU and Dr. Craig Wells from the University of Massachusetts. A letter of nomination accompanied by four letters of support provided ample details for the committee members to make their decision.

Frank, as he prefers to be called, is a professor of undergraduate students in a teacher certification program and is also the Coordinator of Educational Assessment. He has served as a mentor to both his colleagues and students throughout his career. One of his students commented, "As a former classroom teacher, Frank not only talks about differentiating lesson plans and creating positive student-teacher relationships, but enacts these beliefs in his own teaching, advising, and interactions with his colleagues. One area of his ongoing research is to observe and analyze the effects of student-faculty partnerships." Frank's students believe he exemplifies the most favorable characteristics found in these partnerships and provided evidence that both his demeanor and interactions corroborate research results about mentors. For example, to be considered as a mentor, there are a few ground rules.

First, a mentor should have a passion for the topic related to the mentorship. A mentor needs to have a deep and rich understanding of a field of study and want to share this information, whether the mentor is assigned a mentee or the person chooses the mentor.

As one student commented, "As an aspiring teacher myself, I see my love for education reflected in the effort and passion that Frank puts into every class and every meeting with students. Not only does he provide tangible tools his students can use in their own teaching practice, but he challenges his students to make these tools their own. My peers and I leave his classes feeling more prepared, but also excited and proud to enter the teaching profession."

The second characteristic of a mentor is that this individual should have a genuine interest in supporting the goals of those who are being advised or mentored and have a genuine interest in expanding the horizons of these individuals.

Frank encourages his students to make presentations at professional conferences such as NERA. As one student explained, "My research endeavors with Frank are not unique, as he pushes all of his students to research their

passions within the world of education then share their findings with the greater education community. To ensure his students have this unique opportunity, Frank developed a program called the "Genius Hour" at Lesley University. In his introductory course for aspiring teachers, Frank encourages his freshmen to investigate research topics within education. This past year, his students who engaged in the "Genius Hour" presented their findings at the New England League of Middle Schools' annual conference in Providence, RI. Frank not only encouraged them while they crafted their presentations, but shared their findings with the Lesley University community and encouraged others to celebrate their efforts."

Thirdly, a mentor must be viewed as a positive role model. You are only a mentor if the other person sees you as one. Just being assigned to an advisee or being given the role of mentor doesn't necessarily make you one.

This is the way one student described Frank as a role model, "I was lucky enough to have him as my advisor, creating a four-year plan with me and helping me create the college career I wanted. He was mindful of all aspects of my education, including my second major, study abroad plans, and licensure process. He was not only knowledgeable about the education program but also the college experience altogether. On multiple occasions, he has proven he cares about his students and the journey they want to take. I am incredibly grateful to have had someone support my visions."

Finally, a mentor should want to learn from the mentee and from the mentoring process. People grow into the role of mentor, and the relationship should strengthen over time.

As one student indicated, "Not only does he give feedback and guidance to his students, but he often asks his students to give him feedback. He also asked his teaching assistant to film one of his courses and critique him each week. It was very encouraging to know that he was practicing what he was teaching and that he was making sure that he was maximizing our learning experience."

While reflecting on her undergraduate experience, this coed stated, "As my peers and I enter our senior year of college, we feel more confident and prepared to teach as a result of Frank's support, encouragement, and examples of best practice[s] throughout the years. It only seems fitting to nominate Frank for this particular award considering his commitment to mentorship that resulted in a student-faculty presentation at NERA's 2018 annual conference, and I have the utmost confidence that Frank lives up to the requirements and honor that are the Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award for Distinguished Mentoring."

By Marcia Delcourt
2019 Chair, Thomas F. Donlon Memorial Award for Distinguished Mentoring Committee





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Updates from the NERA Board of Directors Meeting October 2019

The topics below were discussed at the October 2019 NERA Board of Directors meeting. The official meeting minutes will be reviewed by the Board of Directors at the upcoming January meeting. Upon approval, a more detailed summary of the meeting minutes will be shared via *The NERA Researcher*.

Secretary's Report – Review/Approve the meeting minutes from the following meetings:

- January 2019 Board Meeting
- June 2019 Board Meeting
- October 2018 Business Meeting

*All meeting minutes were approved.

Treasurer's Report – Tia Fechter reviewed membership, registration, and membership sponsors for 2019 compared to 2018. The 2019 operational budget was also discussed.

Conference Program Committee Report – The Conference Co-Chairs highlighted new conference features (e.g., 3MT competition, Unconference, Oral History Project), provided an overview of the conference, identified challenges faced, and reviewed the final conference budget.

Membership Committee Report – The Membership Committee report and the Ambassadors report were presented. Both committees are working towards developing succession plans.

Nominations Committee Report – Javarro Russell presented the Election results. Also discussed was the need to identify a new co-editor for the *NERA Researcher*.

Award Committee Reports – Andrew Jones presented on behalf of the committee chairs for the following awards:

- Leo D. Doherty – No one identified for this award this year.
- Thomas F. Donlon – The committee would like to see more nominations for this award.
- Lorne H. Woollatt – The committee is looking to increase the number of paper submissions.

Mentoring Committee Report – Juliette Lyons-Thomas presented the mentoring committee report and noted that they were in the process of pairing mentors and mentees.

GSIC Committee Report – Hank Johnson presented the report. They are working to identify a new Chair for the GSIC committee.

Communications Committee Report – Rochelle Michel presented on behalf of the committee and noted that they are in need of a Social Media Coordinator.

NERA Researcher Report – Nina Deng presented on behalf of the co-editors. They need to identify a new co-editor.

Infrastructure Committee Report – Jonathan Steinberg was invited to join the meeting for this portion to discuss committee member roles and a proposal for a new Operations Officer role.

Mentoring Program Update

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

The goal of the Mentoring Program is to connect Ph.D. students, postdoctoral researchers, and new and early career NERA members with mid- and late-career NERA members for professional and academic development. The Mentoring Program is focused on improving not just the quantity, but the quality of mentoring that occurs during and outside of the annual conference. This year, the program matched 22 mentor/mentee pairs, continuing the tradition of providing direct networking connections. Most of the mentees and mentors (76%) were interested in collaborating on research.

The Co-Chairs would like to thank the mentors and mentees for their willingness to participate in this program. We would like to thank the Mentors for sharing their time, energy, and experiences with early career and student NERA members. We know that this work is time-consuming and hope that you benefitted from sharing your experience with others. We would like to thank the mentees for their willingness to step outside their comfort zone and connect with professionals in educational research. We know that this can be a daunting task. We applaud mentees for their openness to ask for help, and we are grateful to be part of a professional community that is safe and supportive enough for individuals to ask for and receive mentoring from fellow members.



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The NERA Conference Ambassadors Update

Sarah Ferguson, *Rowan University*

Since 2014, the NERA Conference Ambassadors committee has been working behind the scenes to support the annual NERA conference. The Conference Ambassadors are responsible for welcoming new and returning members to the annual NERA conference by encouraging networking between colleagues across the NERA membership, specifically those in attendance at the conference. As part of our role, we also share highlights from our own experiences as presenters, session chairs, discussants, elected officers, and meeting attendees. At this last NERA conference, we participated in the New Member Reception with the Membership Committee, reached out to new and continuing NERA members throughout the conference to support engagement and answer any questions, and generally made ourselves available to answer questions and support attendees.

If you are considering a way in which you can serve NERA, and you have attended the annual conference for at least two years, consider being a Conference Ambassador! We support both the Membership committee and the conference co-chairs, as they are integral in making each annual conference a success. Members interested in joining the NERA Conference Ambassadors committee or contributing ideas about how the Conference Ambassadors can further support the open and collegial environment found at the annual NERA conference can contact me, Sarah Ferguson, at fergusons@rowan.edu.

Thank you for continuing to contribute to the NERA community!
Sarah Ferguson
Chair, Conference Ambassadors Committee

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***PARE* Has a New Home!**

April L. Zenisky, *University of Massachusetts Amherst*

Lisa A. Keller, *University of Massachusetts Amherst*

Hello NERA Colleagues! We are very pleased to announce that the Center for Educational Assessment in UMass Amherst's College of Education is now the publisher of the online journal *Practical Assessment, Research and Evaluation (PARE)*, with both of us (April and Lisa) serving as the new Co-Editors. The journal will remain open access with no fees charged to authors. All back content and future volumes will continue to be freely available, in partnership with the UMass Libraries and Scholarworks (<https://scholarworks.umass.edu/pare/>).

If you are not familiar with *PARE*, the journal was established in 1999 by Lawrence Rudner and William Schafer to provide access to refereed articles that can have a positive impact on assessment, research, evaluation, and teaching practice. *PARE* is intended to help members of the community keep up-to-date with effective methods, trends, and research developments from a variety of settings. With more than 375 published articles with a retrieval record of more than 19.5 million, *PARE* is the most widely read journal in the field.

Please note that *PARE* is also committed to promoting fairness and equity in educational and psychological measurement and evaluation. Submissions that foster and support the development and operational deployment of high quality, inclusive assessments and assessment practices are strongly encouraged.

We invite you to (virtually) come by, check out the new *PARE* website, and perhaps even consider *PARE* as an outlet for your research. If you have any questions, please send us an email at pare@educ.umass.edu!




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Membership Matters

Rory Lazowski, *College Board*

The Membership Committee has gotten off to a fast start in 2020 as preliminary discussions are already underway to help steer the work that we'll be doing early in the new year. These discussions have revolved around two primary objectives that build upon and extend the work the committee started in the previous year. Like many of you, we are passionate about what a great organization NERA is and hope to share that enthusiasm with new members.

Last year, our recruitment efforts included expanding an existing database of potential new NERA members and encouraging them to join. This endeavor proved fruitful. Therefore, our first early aim is to continue expanding the database to reach out to potential new members, including broadening the prospective academic programs and individuals to recruit beyond those we've historically targeted.

Our second early goal is to contact previous NERA members who have let their memberships lapse. The goal here is two-fold: to encourage these former members to join NERA once again but also to understand better why they let their memberships lapse in the first place. In true "research-fashion," we intend to create a survey for previous members, collect data, and use the results to inform not only what our committee does in moving forward but also to provide NERA leadership with valuable information that may guide their professional goals and work in the near future. We hope that this information will also be useful for other NERA committees with whom we'll collaborate in 2020.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank Madison Holzman for her leadership in chairing the Membership Committee last year. All of the current committee members are returning from last year, and I believe this continuity is a testament to the leadership that Madison provided and the enthusiasm she inspired. I also want to thank and extend my appreciation to the current committee members (Kathryn Thompson, Liz Spratto, and Tom Waterbury) for their continued service and commitment to NERA. I am honored to serve as the committee chair this year and hope to capitalize on the work we've started already. Let's make it a great year!

Rory Lazowski
Chair, NERA Membership Committee



Infrastructure Committee Report

Jonathan Steinberg, *Educational Testing Service*

Hello NERA Members! It was great to see so many of you at the recent annual conference, whether it was your first time attending or if you have been joining us for many years. Please do consider returning next year and beyond. The Infrastructure Committee met after the conference to begin formulating our work plans for the upcoming year. I welcome to our extended team Andrew Jones from the American Board of Surgery as our 2020 conference co-chair liaison and Bo Bashkov from the American Board of Internal Medicine, who is returning to his role as webmaster. I want to give a preview of what we hope to accomplish and share exciting news about some future changes that will benefit NERA as a whole.

Our documentation efforts for the Vieth and Box systems are almost ready for deployment. Thanks again to Daigo Blanco Murakoshi and new GSIC Chair Beth Perkins, respectively, both of James Madison University, for their leadership in these efforts. Included in these combined efforts is implementing a systematic approach to ensuring access rights for the current slate of officers and members of various committees when they need to post and review key documents. Additionally, documents on Box will be archived on a periodic basis on Google Drive to minimize the chance of information loss. Siyu Wan from the University of Massachusetts Amherst has agreed to head up a corresponding documentation effort around the CrowdCompass app used as part of annual conference activities.

Additionally, during the pre-conference Board Meeting, an initial proposal I submitted with the help of Board Liaison Jason Kopp from the American Board of Surgery to create a separate Operations Officer position for NERA, was accepted. Upon accepting the invitation to chair the Infrastructure Committee after the 2018 conference, I have always believed that the notion of infrastructure is tied to high-level operational activities and this new role will do precisely that, working alongside the Executive Committee, Board of Directors, those in appointed positions, and other committee chairs to make sure NERA continues to be a high performing and efficient organization for another 50 years and beyond. While the exact details are to be worked out in the coming months, I will temporarily be serving in this capacity as well until this coming October, after which time someone will be formally appointed.

As always, please feel free to reach out if the Infrastructure Committee can assist you in your work supporting NERA. Best wishes to all of you and your families for a happy, healthy, sweet, and prosperous new year.

Jonathan Steinberg
Chair, Infrastructure Committee



Communications Committee Update

Bo Bashkov, *American Board of Internal Medicine*

Happy New Year!

I hope everyone had a safe and joyous holiday season. Below are some updates from the Communications Committee.

Acknowledgments

First off, I would like to thank each and every one of our amazing members on this committee. More specifically, I'd like to give a shout-out to Mina Lee and Frank Padellaro for keeping up with communications that often need to go out on short notice. Frank has been instrumental in increasing NERA's online presence for the past couple of years, and I thank him for all his work on our social media handles. I also want to thank Chi Au for keeping our website up to date. Finally, I'd like to thank Jeanne Horst and Monica Erbacher, who have offered continued support for our committee as advisors/former chairs. Thank you all for your time and dedication this past year!

Committee Member Transitions

Mina Lee and Chi Au will continue in their roles as Email Coordinator and Webmaster, respectively. I would like to welcome our new Social Media Coordinator, Tabitha McKinley (*New Jersey State Department of Education*). Many of you know Tabitha already, as she served as Conference Co-Chair in 2018. In addition, we have three more new members: Yu Bao (*James Madison University*), Jerusha Henderik (*National Board of Medical Examiners*), and Ashley Pallarito (*Western Governors University*).

Most-Popular-Post Contests

For NERA's 50th Anniversary, we held a most-popular-post contest on each of three different social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. The most popular post (measured by likes and shares) using the hashtag #NERA50th received a \$50 Amazon gift card. Winners were Sandra Botha (UMass), Chris Patterson (JMU), and Aarti Bellara (UConn). Congratulations to all! To see the winning posts and keep up with important updates from NERA, like, follow, and join us:



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 at least two business 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.

Thank you, and best wishes in 2020!

Bo Bashkov
Chair, Communications Committee

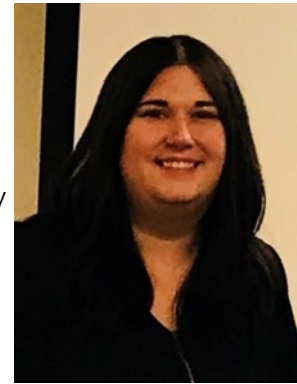
The Graduate Lounge

Beth Perkins, *James Madison University*

Our Mission: The mission of the Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) is to support the involvement and professional development of NERA graduate student members and to reach out to new graduate students in an effort to increase the diversity of institutions represented at NERA.

GSIC Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award Winner

At the October 2019 conference, Catherine A. Manly, University of Massachusetts Amherst, received the Best Paper by a Graduate Student Award for her paper titled “A panel data analysis of the use of multiple content modalities,” which was presented at the October 2018 conference. Congratulations to Catherine! Many thanks to 14 raters who volunteered their time to rate multiple papers!



GSIC Sponsored Conference Sessions

During the October 2019 conference, the GSIC sponsored two sessions geared toward graduate students: “Getting Through It: Managing the Dissertation Process” and “The Business of our Business.” Many thanks to the professionals who participated in these panels and to the GSIC members who helped in the planning and moderating of these panels!

Looking Ahead

As we begin our planning for the 2020 conference, the committee wants your input about what you’d like to see as part of the GSIC events. Is there a panel discussion on a specific topic? A change to the structure of the social? Increased networking time? Please feel free to e-mail your thoughts and suggestions to neragraduatestudents@gmail.com.



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