Psychologist Claude Steele to Address Issues of Stereotypes and Academic Achievement
AERA Second Annual Brown Lecture in Education Research

WASHINGTON, October 20, 2005 - Claude M. Steele, director of the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences in Palo Alto, California, and Lucie Stern Professor in the Social Sciences at Stanford University, will present the Second Annual Brown Lecture in Education Research, on October 20, 2005. Inaugurated in 2004 by the American Educational Research Association (AERA), the Lecture features significant scholarship directed toward the advancement of understanding of equality and equity in education.

The Brown Lecture will take place on Thursday, October 20, at 6:00 p.m. in the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center in Washington, DC.

In his address, "Contingencies of Identity and Schooling in a Diverse Society: Toward Reducing Inequality of Outcomes," Dr. Steele will look behind inequality in education to examine "stereotype threat," or the powerful pressure that results when an individual's abilities are judged through the lens of a group stereotype. Dr. Steele will examine reasons that differences in performance persist, even when opportunity is roughly equal, and suggest strategies to remedy academic underperformance and promote a successful and diverse society.

"The very sense of having a group identity-of being black, of being old, of being white-is significantly rooted in the perception that one is under threat because of that identity," Dr. Steele states. While often incidental, this sense arises from the perception that one's identity is undervalued in a particular setting. Supported by 15 years of research, Dr. Steele will document the powerful effects of stereotype threat on women in math, and minorities more generally. He will address how performance improves dramatically when such pressure is alleviated and outline how the approaches that counteract underperformance can also point to strategies to successfully manage a diverse society.

Michael T. Nettles chaired the 2005 Brown Lecture Selection Committee. He was joined in that effort by M. Christopher Brown II, Marilyn Cochran-Smith, Gloria J. Ladson-Billings, Felice J. Levine, Evelyn M. Reid, and Jorge Ruiz-de-Velasco.

This occasion is the second annual AERA Brown Lecture, inaugurated in 2004 to mark the 50th anniversary of Brown v. Board of Education and the decision of the U.S. Supreme Court to take scientific research into account in issuing the court's landmark ruling. Edmund W. Gordon, director of the Institute of Urban and Minority Education at Teachers College, Columbia University, delivered the inaugural address.

Note to News Reporters and Editors: To interview Professor Steele, call 650-321-2052.
To reach AERA Communications, call (202) 223-9485; Helaine Patterson (hpatterson@aera.net) or Lucy Cunningham (lcunningham@aera.net).

The American Educational Research Association (AERA) represents approximately 22,000 scholars who conduct education research and evaluation. The purposes of AERA are to advance knowledge about education, to encourage scholarly inquiry related to education, and to promote the use of research to improve education and serve the public good.