



*Division H is AERA's home for people dedicated to applied research, evaluation, assessment, and accountability in the schools.*

Volume 25(1) Summer, 2009

### A Note From Our VP

**Faith Connolly**

**Division H Vice President**



Hello H'ers,

The June Council meeting was held June 25-28 in Washington DC. Some of the interesting outcomes are listed below:

There is a lot of excitement about the new poster and roundtable sessions. Divisions that piloted them last year found them enjoyable and a great opportunity for researchers to share and discuss rather than the more traditional paper sessions which were more passive for attendees.

**Structured Posters** are presentations and discussions of no more than 10 papers on a common theme or issue. Authors will have an opportunity to make a brief presentation to the full audience. The audience is then invited to visit the posters and discuss the research one-on-one with the author. Following this, the discussant will comment to the full group on the research and invite the audience to ask questions or provide comments.

**Working Group Round Tables** will include four or five papers and a moderator. Participants will discuss a challenging or interesting issue around a common topic area. The moderator will engage the audience in discussion. This format is particularly suited to candid discussions of

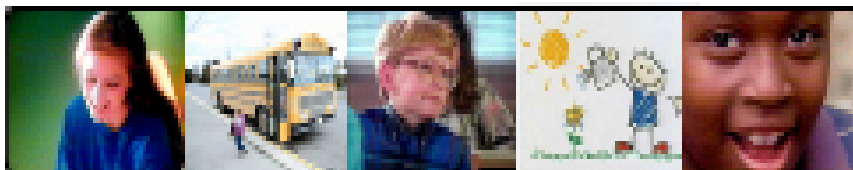
cutting edge issues/challenges and provides opportunities for researchers to share and develop new methodologies. Unlike a traditional paper presentation, this format allows for more interchange and idea development.

Additionally, Division VPs shared techniques and suggestions for establishing expert panels at the Council meeting. For our division, Winona Burt and her team are already working hard at developing panels. Panel members will be selected using criteria such as: experience in peer reviewing; service on other professional review panels; knowledge of the field; and scholarly productivity and research expertise. The Divisions also shared how they were going to honor and thank those selected to serve on panels. Division H will honor our expert panelists at our Breakfast Meeting. AERA will also be recognizing the selected Expert Panel participants for sharing their expertise with colleagues and helping the entire association improve the quality of the conference.

For the new poster and roundtables, we will need dynamic chairs and discussants. If you haven't signed up yet, please do so!

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## Scenes from AERA 2009



*Jenny Nagakoa, Eliza Moeller, and Vanessa Coca receive an Outstanding Publication Award from VP Steve Henry*



*Mary Yakimowski, Faith Connolly, and Vickie Cartwright at the Division H Breakfast Meeting*



*Outgoing VP Steve Henry and incoming VP Faith Connolly*



*Downtown San Diego*

## Program Committee Update

Dale Whittington

Shaker Heights (OH) City School District

Thank you to everyone who submitted papers. In 2007 we had a substantial increase in submissions which held in 2008: 334 total submissions. Hence, the number of sessions remained high. As you can see in the table, the acceptance rate was 53.3% for the Division, ranging from a low of 42.6% for Section 3 Assessment papers to a high of 81.8% for Section 2 Assessment symposia. Congratulations to those whose submissions were accepted. If your submission was not accepted, use the advice of the reviewers to revise and resubmit for next year.

To everyone who volunteered to review papers, thank you for your thoughtful work. Our goal was to have three reviews per submission, and that goal was attained because of our active Division H membership. Reviewers did a great job providing valuable feedback to the program committee and to authors.

Many thanks to our fantastic section chairs. Donna Snodgrass, Julie Snipes-Rea, Shahpar Modarresi, Paul Favaro, and Bruce Hislop strove to ensure appropriate reviewers were selected, that reviews were completed in a timely fashion and that the selection process was fair. Winona Burt, our program chair designee, helped set up a new feature of our program, a paper session (formerly known as roundtable) that features last year's winners from our annual publications competition.

Finally, many thanks to the Shaker Heights City School District for hosting our program planning meeting this fall. As you can see from our committee photo, we got into the Shaker spirit. They also got to see Paul Newman's year-book.



Section	Type	Submitted	Accepted	Acc. Rate
Research	Papers	85	44	51.8
	Symposia	29	16	55.2
Program Evaluation	Papers	91	51	56.0
	Symposia	29	14	48.3
Assessment	Papers	54	23	42.6
	Symposia	11	9	81.8
Accountability	Papers	26	15	57.7
	Symposia	9	6	66.7
Overall	Papers	256	133	52.0
	Symposia	78	45	57.7
<b>Total</b>		<b>334</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>53.3</b>

## AERA Proposal Update

Mary Yakimowski

University of Connecticut

A proposal was recently submitted by Division H in conjunction with others to AERA. The *Assessment of Students with Special Education Needs and English Language Learners: A Focused Look at Research and Applications on Assess, Progress, and Student Involvement in Assessment* project (SPEDED) is an exciting opportunity for a diverse group of academics and practitioners to deal a critically important topic to our nation: include roughly 12% of our students who receive special education and 11% that receive limited English language instruction in assessments at all levels from the classroom to state to nationally to internationally. This project will allow the assessment community to summarize what research has found, to indicate the practical applications of this literature, and prioritize the direction of research in the future. This project has been organized by AERA's Division D: Measurement and Research Methodology and Division H: Research, Evaluation, and Assessment in Schools in collaboration with University of Connecticut's Neag School of Education. The divisional vice presidents gave the charge to the *Proposal Planning Advisory Committee* to think of significant research problems that a new approach to an issue or area of research or show the potential to advance research or break new ground. The committee selected the areas of investigation to be access, progress, and student involvement for meaningful assessment.

## Publication Competition Update

*David Holdzkom, Wake County (NC) Public Schools*

*Vicki Cartwright, Orange County (FL) Public Schools*

Prior to 2008-2009, Division H made awards for outstanding publications in several categories. Although the number was somewhat fluid, there were 12 or 13 of these. In addition in some years, there were multiple winners in each category. AERA required that we trim the number of categories to 6 and limit the number of awards to one per category. This required that we re-define the categories and that we create new rubrics for these. It is not an exaggeration to say that these tasks would not have been possible without the support, help and leadership provided by our Division H Vice-President, Steven Henry. As with so many things, Steve's quiet determination helped us get through the work.

The Publications competition also benefited from the willingness of a number of people willing to serve as reviewers for each of the six publication category panels and especially those who served as lead rater for each category. Without their service, the publications competition could not be conducted.

Below, you will find a description of each competition category, the name(s) of the lead rater(s) and the names and institutional affiliation of the winners.

### Category 1: Dissertation

The first of our new categories (which was a hold-over from the old competition) was in dissertation or thesis. The raters in this category were Bonita Williams, of Virginia Tech and Sid Vaughn. Bonita was the winner of the dissertation award in 2008.

This year's plaque for the winner and a \$1000 check is awarded to Steven Urdegar of Miami-Dade County Schools. The dissertation is titled *Beyond Fidelity: Relating Educational Practices and Their Determinants to Student Learning Outcomes*. Reviewers noted that "this very complex, thorough study was richly executed. The methodology is very rigorous and Dr. Urdegar's work will be a benefit to the field".

### Category 2: Advances in methodology.

Studies were invited into this category when they used innovative methodologies and techniques. Outstanding reports will advance the state of the art in program evaluation, assessment, accountability or planning. The lead rater for this category was Ban Yo, Blue Valley School District.

The winner in this category was Marshall Garland, Austin Independent School District for his study *The Determinants of Postsecondary Enrollment: Evidence from the AISD Class of 2007*. The reviewers noted that the study was "comprehensive and detailed and that the methodological advantages of HGLM over traditional logistic regression were clearly and succinctly set forth. Findings were well summarized and presented".

### Category 3: Education Program Evaluations

Category 3 focuses on studies developed to inform decision-making. This is a flexible area, accepting formative and summative evaluations, studies using a variety of methodologies, and studies focused on any curricular area, project or program in a school system. The lead rater for this category was Sid Vaughn, assisted by Linda Frazer, Wilmington University, and Rebecca Bock of Mississippi State University.

The winners in this category were Susan Voelkel and Kimberly S. Cowley, both of Edvantia, Inc., Charleston, West Virginia, for their study *People/Moments in Time*. The raters noted that the study was "a well-conceived blend of quantitative and qualitative data sources to address the evaluation questions. The recommendations were clearly lined to the findings and the use of Program Standards to self monitor and to serve as quality control is commendable and a practice that needs wider use in program evaluation."

### Category 4: Planning, Policy, or Management

#### Research

Category 4 is a kind of portmanteau that welcomes studies from a wide variety of arenas. Research might include strategic plans, school improvement plans, building-level action plans and so on. Policy studies help focus on policy impacts and might include cost analyses, feasibility studies, and policy evaluations.

Continued on next page.

## Publication Competition Update (cont.)

### Category 5: Instructional Research or Alternative Reports

Category 5 considers research related to instructional practice and/or a presentation of alternative methods of reporting information. This research may be broad in scope and it may include demonstrations or examples of alternative techniques for reporting planning, research, evaluation, and assessment activities. The lead rater for this category this year was Elaine Allensworth of the Consortium on Chicago School Reform of the University of Chicago, assisted by Peter Henrickson, Everett Public Schools, Everett, Washington. After a complex round of re-judging, it was determined that the winner of the category was Nicholas Montgomery of the Consortium on Chicago School Reform of the University of Chicago for his studies Making The Transition: Individual School Reports. The reports are attractive, comprehensive, easy to understand, and likely to help school and district leaders make important decisions about the work they are undertaking.

### Category 6: Assessment Training or Statistical Summaries

This category evaluates training materials designed for teachers, administrators, staff in areas such as assessment literacy, understanding and developing high quality assessments. Entries include materials such as trainers' outlines, presentation materials and scripts. The reviewers in this category were Kim Cowley, of Edvantia, and Ted Kaniuka of Fayetteville State University, Fayetteville, North Carolina.

The winner in this category was Bradley J. McMillen, Wake County Public Schools, Raleigh, North Carolina, for his presentation Introduction to QuickPlace, a training video aimed at helping principals understand how to access and use school level data. The reviewers noted that the guide "provides a solid overview of a comprehensive data management system and allows for self-paced learning and exploration while illustrating how to access the most common data summaries."



### Web Committee Seeks Input

*Raymond Moy,*  
City University of New York

The Web Committee needs your input for an improved Division H website. Whether you are an avid blogger or dyed-in-the-wool Luddite, long time veteran of Division H breakfast meetings or brand-new member, this is an opportunity to share your educational research experience and to get to know your fellow H'ers better. The Web Committee will be surveying the membership to gauge its information needs and depth of experience with Division H activities, and encourages all members to respond. Our website functions as an online reference manual and newsletter combined into one and its value to the Division H membership depends on the Web Committee being able to keep the information relevant to membership needs, that is, authoritative, accurate and up to date.

To focus its efforts, the Committee has identified four core functionalities whose development will drive the Committee's work: 1) providing information to both new and current membership on what Division H does, 2) keeping the membership up to date on Division H issues, 3) helping the membership to know who's who in the Division and who is doing what, and 4) documenting the work of the Division committees and serving as a central repository for the Division's "institutional memory." Based on the membership survey, priority areas within each functionality will be identified for the Web Committee to devote its resources.

The Web Committee is adopting a wiki approach to the development of the website, which is one of incremental improvement and dependent on the combined input of the reader audience. To support this, the discussion feature of the Division H Listserv will be activated to allow interaction and feedback from the

Continued on next page.

## Web Committee Seeks Input (cont)

membership. Work on the website therefore will be an on-going process and focused on the interests of the membership.

Leading up to the Annual Meeting in Denver, we will also feature other information and communication tools that the membership and the Division leadership can use to support their work, including social networking applications such as LinkedIn, and online communications such as WebEx or Twitter. We welcome other suggestions, especially if you are an experienced user.

Take some time to look around the current website, [http://aera.net/divisions/Default.aspx?menu\\_id=94&id=73](http://aera.net/divisions/Default.aspx?menu_id=94&id=73) to see what is there and to come up with suggestions for improvements. If you are interested in getting more involved with the work of Division H, joining the Committee in our various projects, and learning practical skills in web content management and editing, contact me at (212) 541-0325 or moyr2@netscape.net.

## Graduate Students of Division H

*Whitney Wall, Queens University (Belfast)*

*Burcu Kaniskan, University of Connecticut*

Last year during the annual conference, we had a very engaging discussion in our fireside chat. Our panelists shared how life may look after graduate school. Dr. Sue Lasky from University of Louisville and Dr. Kim Schildkamp from University of Twente discussed their successes, pitfalls, and the lessons they have learned in their first years after graduating. Tied to AERA's theme, this open discussion addressed the transition from being students to academics in applied settings. Also, our panelists talked about how they have translated their knowledge into their new work environments and the challenges they have faced. The chat covered advice for graduate students such as but not limited to having at least 2 publications per year, presenting at conferences (preferably international ones), seeking

post-doctoral research opportunities, doing cross disciplinary research, volunteering, being proactive with faculty and let them know what kind of experience you're seeking and networking through conferences. Our conversation was very relaxed and candid. Participants asked many questions. Overall, the students who attended the fireside chat gained a greater understanding about how to equip themselves with necessary professional skills during or after their graduate education.

For the first time next year Division H will launch a Mini-coffee hour mentorship. We will offer students the opportunity to connect with experienced members of division H during AERA 2010 through informal conversation over coffee. Interested students should contact us for information on how to apply. If selected, they will receive a Starbucks gift card to use with a division member who shares research interests.

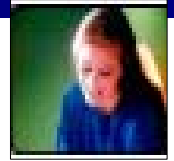
Division H has Mentorship program- graduating PhD students can apply for our mentorship program. Funding is available for them to spend time on-the-job with a division H member who is experienced in the field of research, assessment and/or evaluation.

Next year, we will also be holding our first graduate student poster session. Students can showcase their research, and discussants from division H will be present to provide insight and advice for students.

Our fireside chat topic for the 2010 annual conference is "A triangular relationship? International perspectives on the links and tensions amongst accountability, summative testing and ongoing classroom assessments."

We have a google group/listserv. Students should email us ([studentsofdivh@googlegroups.com](mailto:studentsofdivh@googlegroups.com)) if interested in joining and learning more about our programs as well as opportunities for graduate students.

Please contact Whitney ([whitneyelaine8@gmail.com](mailto:whitneyelaine8@gmail.com)) or Burcu ([burcukaniskan@gmail.com](mailto:burcukaniskan@gmail.com)) if you would like more information about how you can get involved.



## **Division H Leadership Team — Contact Information**

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