

**American Educational Research Association**

***SIG Handbook***

***AERA's Handbook of  
Policies and Procedures  
For Special Interest Groups***

**Approved by AERA Council  
January 2009**

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## I. Introduction

### A. Origin of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in the AERA

In 1967 the AERA Council approved the formation of Special Interest Groups:

*That special units within the Association be created and called “interest groups.” The purpose of these groups is to promote a wide range of interests related to educational research if they are consistent with the purpose of the Association. Special interest groups will be established when 30 active members of the Association sign a petition pledging to pay the minimum fee that has been established by the Executive Board. Each is authorized to elect a chairman and a secretary; the chairman may appoint other committees to assist him in whatever assignments the groups vote to undertake. The chairman or a person designated by him may attend meetings of the Association Council as an official observer to hear items of interest to his special interest group. He may request to be heard at these meetings but will not have an official vote.<sup>1</sup>*

### B. Philosophy Underlying SIGs in AERA

Special Interest Groups (SIG) are established to facilitate the formation of research specialties of an intra- or cross-divisional nature and to increase the exchange of knowledge within research arenas of special interest, and for other reasons in keeping with achieving the purposes of the Association.<sup>2</sup>

Because SIGs have broadened and deepened AERA’s research foci and because SIGs bring new energy and membership growth to the organization, SIGs are an integral part of AERA.<sup>3</sup> SIGs provide a forum within the Association for the involvement of individuals drawn together by common interests in education research. SIGs provide opportunities for members to participate actively in the Association both through SIG activities and in leadership positions. All current AERA members may join SIGs by paying the appropriate dues.

The Association is committed to furthering strong and dynamic SIGs that reflect the various substantive areas and sub-field specialties of education research. The Association encourages each SIG to develop programs and activities to further their stated mission.

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<sup>1</sup> Minutes of the AERA Council, October 26-27, 1967.

<sup>2</sup> AERA Bylaws, Article X, Section 1.

<sup>3</sup> SIG Task Force Report (December 2005).

## II. SIGs and the Association

### A. AERA Council

The Association Council, hereafter Council, is the legislative and policy-determining body for the Association.<sup>4</sup> Council has the power to direct and review the general affairs of the Association within the limits set forth in the By-Laws. It is composed of the President, the President-Elect, the Immediate Past President, the Vice-Presidents of Divisions, two At-Large Members, a Graduate Student Representative, a Special Interest Group Representative, and the Executive Director (ex officio).

Consequently, Council is responsible for ensuring that SIGs are and remain a healthy and vibrant part of the Association. Council also has ultimate authority over the SIG component of AERA. For example, Council approves the creation of new SIGs, or the dissolution of existing SIGs, approves proposed SIG Bylaws, and determines the number of program slots provided to SIGs at each year's Annual Meeting. Also, Council has authority over, and must approve this *Handbook* and subsequent changes made to it.

### B. SIG Executive Committee

#### i. Composition

The SIG Executive Committee (EC) is comprised of six members who serve staggered three-year terms. One of these six individuals serves as Chair of the SIG EC.

#### ii. Responsibilities

The responsibilities of the SIG EC are delineated in Article X, Section 2, of the Association's Bylaws:

*The Special Interest Groups Executive Committee provides general oversight for the operations of Special Interest Groups and makes recommendations to the Association Council regarding their establishment or dissolution. The Special Interest Groups Executive Committee also recommends policies and procedures for the formation, operations, and dissolution of SIGs for Council review and approval. Upon approval of these policies and procedures by Council, the SIG Executive Committee shall have responsibility for their implementation.*

In addition to providing oversight and being concerned with policies and procedures, the SIG EC functions to promote the welfare of SIGs within the Association. This is done by (a) representing SIGs in discussions with Council and AERA's Central Office, and (b) assisting SIG officers and members.

#### iii. Committee Meetings

The SIG Executive Committee has a minimum of two face-to-face meetings during the

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<sup>4</sup> AERA Bylaws, Article V, Section 2

year. One takes place during the spring at AERA's Annual Meeting and a second meeting at another predetermined time and location. Additional meetings may be conducted by telephone conference call or in person as needed.

#### **iv. Election of Committee Members and the Committee's Chair**

SIG Executive Committee Chair and members are elected by voting SIG members as part of the AERA general election each Spring. For detailed information on the nominating and election process, please refer to Appendix A.

#### **C. AERA Central Office**

The Central Office has day-to-day responsibility for the operations of the Association and the implementation of the policies of the Association and AERA Council. The Executive Office maintains communications across all parts of the Association. SIG officers are encouraged to contact the Central Office with questions regarding SIG activities. If further guidance is required, Central Office staff will consult with the SIG Executive Committee or other AERA officers. The Central Office communicates pertinent information to all SIGs through regular correspondence to SIG officers.

### **III. SIG Formation, Continuation, and Discontinuation**

#### **A. SIG Formation**

Any group of 45 or more active AERA members may petition to establish a new SIG related to a specific topic or area of research that is not a primary focus of any existing SIG or Division of AERA. Please refer to Appendix B for detailed information on the petition process.



#### **B. Continuation of SIGs**

The continuation of SIGs depends on quantitative and qualitative assessments of their vitality. The quantitative criterion is SIG membership of at least 45 members. SIGs that were established prior to July 2008 have until June 30, 2010 to reach 45 members. SIGs can demonstrate strong vitality by meeting the following qualitative criteria:

- i. Meaningful activities as reflected in Annual Meeting sessions, newsletters, or other initiatives.
- ii. An annual business meeting held in conjunction with the AERA Annual Meeting.
- iii. A democratic nominations and election process.
- iv. Timely submission of officers' information (Form A and Form B) and annual report (Form C) by the designated deadlines.

#### **C. Discontinuation of SIGs**

- i. Voluntary Dissolution

The membership of a SIG may decide to temporarily or permanently withdraw

from active SIG status. Notification of withdrawal should be made in writing to the Central Office and to all SIG members.

#### ii. Merger with Another Existing SIG or an Existing Division

The membership of a SIG may decide to merge with another SIG or an existing Division. (Such mergers are encouraged). Notification of merger should be made in writing to the Central Office and to all concerned members.

#### iii. Insufficient Number of Members

##### 1. Needed Number of Members

A minimum of 45 AERA members are needed to create and maintain a SIG.

##### 2. Procedure for Dealing with Any SIG Having a Membership Less Than 45

If a SIG has a membership that is below 45 at the end of any membership year, that SIG will be notified and informed that it will have until the end of the following membership year to recruit a sufficient number of new members to meet the minimum membership requirement to continue to exist. During this interval, the SIG EC will provide the SIG with various suggestions as to how it might go about its recruiting effort. Moreover, members of the SIG EC will gladly consult with the SIG's officers regarding its membership size problem. It should be noted, however, that it ultimately is the responsibility of the SIG to get its membership up to a sufficient level. If this cannot be accomplished, then, as a last resort, the SIG EC will help the SIG try to identify a different SIG with which it might merge.

The SIG EC is an advocate for SIGs. This Committee will work vigorously with and on behalf of all SIGs. However, the SIG component of AERA must operate in accordance with the Association's rules and regulations. Accordingly, SIGs which have fewer than 45 members following a one-year's grace period will be recommended to Council for discontinuation.

#### iv. Failure to Pay the SIG Maintenance Fee

As indicated in Section V-A, each SIG must pay an annual management fee to help defray the direct and indirect costs associated with the services provided to the SIG by the Central Office. The formal recognition of any SIG will be withdrawn if it fails to pay this fee.

#### v. Other Good and Sufficient Reasons

SIGs are expected to operate according to policy and guidelines set forth in the AERA Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws, and the SIG Handbook. In reviewing the vitality and operation of SIGs, the SIG Executive Committee may determine that a SIG should be terminated. The SIG Executive Committee will report this

recommendation to the AERA Council. The Council will make the final determination regarding the continuation of the SIG. Only the AERA Council has the authority to terminate SIGs. A SIG may be dissolved by the Council for good and sufficient reasons. Action to dissolve a Special Interest Group shall require a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Council present.<sup>5</sup>

#### **IV. Guidelines for SIG Activities**

##### **A. Activities Involving Legal and Financial Commitments**

SIGs may not enter into legally binding relationships or make commitments to other groups, or in other ways affect the constituent relationship between SIGs and the Association without approval of the AERA Council or its delegated representatives. Such approval is necessary for activities that require a legal commitment or a financial obligation beyond the SIG's resources. The AERA Executive Director, in consultation with the AERA President and the AERA Executive Board, may take action or refer the request to AERA Council. SIGs are encouraged to consult with the Central Office if such approval is sought or where there may be ambiguity or uncertainty.

##### **B. Activities Involving External Funds**

SIGs wishing to pursue external funding for research, training, and/or other projects that support SIG activities should consult with the Central Office. The Central Office, in consultation with the SIG Executive Committee, the President, and the Executive Board, is authorized to take action on such proposals or, when necessary, refer the request to the AERA Council. If approved, the Central Office will provide assistance in such matters as budget preparation, negotiations with funding agencies, administration of funds, and the sharing of responsibilities with a SIG representative on a SIG-initiated project.

##### **C. Journals and Other Publications**

The Association encourages innovation by SIGs consonant with the Association's publication policies and procedures as outlined in the *AERA Publications Manual* [approved by AERA Council in April 2005 and available for member access in the Member Portal area on the AERA website] and the Association's overall publication objectives. Publication ideas from SIGs for journals, annuals, or other periodicals (whether print or electronic) should be brought to the AERA Publications Committee for review and recommendation to AERA Council. Based on the recommendation from the AERA Publications Committee, the AERA Council may determine to pursue the idea as an AERA publication or will advise the SIG whether it may pursue a publication prospect and, if so, under what conditions.

##### **D. Public Policy Positions**

Only the AERA Council can take public policy positions on behalf of the Association.

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<sup>5</sup> AERA's Bylaws, Article X, Section 6.

The AERA Position Taking and Policymaking Processes Guidelines may be found online at <http://www.aera.net/aboutaera/?id=1517>. SIGs are encouraged to make recommendations to AERA Council or to bring to the attention of the Association issues for consideration, especially in areas relating to the expertise, competence, or interests of SIGs.

## **V. SIG Communication**

Each SIG must keep its members informed as to the SIG's activities, upcoming elections, and other important information aligned with the SIG's mission and objectives. Such information can be distributed via a newsletter, e-mail messages, a website, and/or the SIG Business Meeting at the AERA Annual Meeting. AERA's Central Office should be placed on the mailing list for all SIG communications.

## **VI. Guidelines on SIG Administration**

### **A. SIG Membership Dues**

The SIG membership dues apply to individuals who join or renew membership in a SIG. The dues are set by each SIG. The money generated by these dues stays with each SIG and is used to cover its operating expenses (e.g., newsletter, social event at the Annual Meeting, etc.). A SIG's membership dues must be at least \$5 per year, but they can be set at a higher level if the SIG so desires. Each SIG's membership dues are listed on the SIG Membership Form that is available online (<https://www.aera.net/Default.aspx?id=274>). Request for a change in SIG membership dues must be submitted to the AERA Central Office at [governance@aera.net](mailto:governance@aera.net) no later than May 15 of each year. The new dues rate will go into effect on July 1; no mid-year changes can be made.

### **B. SIG Membership Assessment Fee**

Every individual who joins or renews membership in one or more SIGs pays a membership assessment fee of \$7 per year. Every SIG member pays this \$7 assessment just once per year, regardless how many SIG affiliations s/he has. This assessment, like the SIG management fee, goes to AERA's Central Office to help pay for the many services provided to SIGs.

### **C. Operating Budget**

The AERA Central Office is responsible for managing the operating account for each SIG. The SIG Chair and Secretary-Treasurer or Treasurer are responsible for managing the operating budget for the SIG. Monthly financial information is posted online for restricted use by SIG officers.

### **D. Annual SIG Management Fee**

Each SIG pays an annual management fee to help defray the direct and indirect costs associated with the services provided to SIGs by the AERA Central Office. The assessment is graduated based on SIG size: SIGs with 128 or fewer members have an annual management fee of \$150; SIGs with between 129 and 200 members have an

annual management fee of \$225; SIGs with more than 200 members have an annual management fee of \$300.

## **VII. Guidelines on SIG Operation**

### **A. SIG Officers**

Each SIG must have a Chairperson and a Secretary/Treasurer (or a Secretary and a Treasurer), all of whom must be AERA members. In addition, some SIGs have additional officers (e.g., a Program Chair, Historian, Parliamentarian, Nominating Chair, Awards Chair) who provide leadership for their SIGs. Each SIG's Chair and Secretary-Treasurer (or a Secretary and a Treasurer) must be elected by that SIG's members. The SIG's other officers may be appointed or elected, as determined by the SIG. No SIG officer can serve more than three years in succession in the same office.

The procedures for conducting nominations for elections are outlined in the SIG's bylaws; the elections shall follow the AERA election procedures (See Appendix C). Failure to comply with these election requirements may result in the Association Council considering withdrawal of AERA recognition of a SIG. Information concerning SIG Officers should be submitted electronically to AERA's Central Office using SIG Form A no later than May 1 each year. This Form is available on the AERA website under SIG – Resources for SIG Officers.

### **B. SIG Bylaws**

Each SIG is required to have a set of bylaws. These bylaws must be submitted electronically to AERA's Central Office and approved by the Council. In addition, such bylaws should be posted on the SIG's website or otherwise made available to anyone who requests to see them.

Each SIG is responsible for ensuring that its bylaws and policies do not conflict with the Articles of Incorporation or the Bylaws of the Association, or the *SIG Handbook*. Please refer to the SIG Bylaws Template approved by the Council in July 2008 (available at Resources for SIG officers at the AERA website).

A SIG can modify its bylaws, in accordance to the bylaws modification process specified in the bylaws, by vote and approval of its SIG membership, as long as they are not in opposition to already specified SIG or AERA policies and procedures.

### **C. SIG Fiscal Responsibilities**

It is important that SIGs maintain financial accountability for their own membership and for AERA. AERA, including its SIGs, is audited annually. Because of this, each SIG must have its operating account located at and managed by AERA's Central Office in Washington, DC (See Appendix D, AERA SIG Financial Management Service).

It is essential that each SIG inform AERA as to which of its officers has the authority to request distribution of money from the SIG's operating account. This information should

be submitted electronically by using SIG Form A no later than May 1 each year. This Form is available on the AERA website under SIG – Resources for SIG Officers.

#### **D. SIG Awards Sanctioned by AERA**

The Council has set the following guidelines for all Association awards:

Currently there are three levels of awards (1) AERA-sponsored awards for overall excellence in research, development, and service; (2) divisional-sponsored awards for the quality of research in areas of specific interest to the division; and (3) SIG-sponsored awards for the quality of research in areas of specific interest to SIGs.

SIGs conferring AERA-sanctioned awards must have a set of guidelines specifying the selection procedures, scope, and criteria for each award, with procedures/criteria approved in advance. The AERA Executive Board must review and approve all proposals for AERA-sanctioned awards (See Appendix E, Petition for AERA Sanctioned Award). Each SIG is limited to three AERA-sanctioned awards. All awards must be related to research and scholarship. Awards sanctioned by the Association will have a certificate printed by AERA Central Office. Thus, SIGs wishing to present an AERA-sanctioned award must complete the Petition for an AERA-sanctioned award (available at Resources for SIG officers at the AERA website).

SIGs are responsible for the cost of award plaques and any cash award where applicable. The AERA Central Office coordinates the production of official award plaques for AERA-sanctioned awards to be presented at the AERA Annual Meeting. The per plaque fee will be communicated to SIG officers each year. The deadline for notifying the Central Office of the award recipient and ordering award plaques is February 1<sup>st</sup>.

In addition to the AERA-sanctioned awards, SIGs may also give certificates (recognizing a SIG member's contribution to the SIG). These will not go through an approval process, but must be reviewed by the Executive Director in advance.

### **VIII. SIG Nominations and Elections**

#### **A. Nominations**

SIGs are strongly encouraged to constitute a nominating committee each year. The nominating committee is responsible for proposing nominations (not less than two names for each office) and ascertain the availability of nominees for each elected office as well as for offices which may have become vacant since the last election.

#### **B. SIG Elections**

Effective in 2010, all SIGs will conduct the annual election as part of the Association General Election. Guidelines for the AERA election are specified in Article VII of the AERA Bylaws.

## **IX. SIG Activities at the AERA Annual Meeting**

### **A. SIGs and the Annual Meeting**

The AERA Annual Meeting is an important Association-wide event attracting members and other education researchers to share and advance important and timely topics in education research. SIGs contribute importantly to the vitality of the Annual Meeting Program each year

### **B. Responsibilities of SIG Chair and Program Chairs**

The SIG Chair is responsible for submitting to the AERA Central Office the name and contact information for the SIG's next Program Chair by the last day of the Annual Meeting. The Program Chair information is submitted by completing SIG Form B which is available at the AERA website under SIG – Resources for SIG Officers. Timely submission of SIG Program Chair information is critical for the SIG to be included in the Call for Proposals process for the following Annual Meeting.

The SIG Chair is responsible for ensuring that the SIG Program Chair fulfills his/her responsibility as Program Chair.

Each SIG's Program Chair is responsible for executing the various tasks necessary to plan for his/her SIG's portion of the Annual Meeting (See Appendix F, SIG Milestones for Annual Planning). These tasks are delineated more specifically in the *Annual Meeting Procedures Handbook* provided to SIG Program Chairs during the summer prior to the Annual Meeting for which they are preparing. Among other things, it is the Program Chair's responsibility to:

- i. Promote, if appropriate, the Annual Meeting's "theme" established by the AERA President when encouraging his/her SIG members to submit proposals.
- ii. Become adept at using AERA's on-line system for proposal submission/review by attending the web-based training session for Program Chairs.
- iii. Ensure that each submitted proposal receives a fair and unbiased review (by a minimum of two reviewers) by the deadline established by AERA.
- iv. Make a final accept/reject decision for each proposal by the deadline established by AERA.
- v. Encourage members of his/her SIG to volunteer and serve as Chairs and Discussants.
- vi. Make sure that sessions are created by the deadline established by AERA.
- vii. Oversee all aspects of the program preparation process such that his/her SIG's portion of the Annual Meeting is of the highest quality possible. For example, SIG Program Chairs should remind all presenters that they must submit electronically their final papers to the AERA online system for use by discussants and chairs by the deadline established by AERA.

### **C. Open Call for Proposals**

All SIGs must solicit all of their proposals through AERA's open proposal submission

process. This solicitation is done through the Call for Proposals that appears in the May issue of *Educational Researcher* and is posted on AERA's Annual Meeting website. In this process, each SIG reviews proposals that come from people who may or may not be members of that particular SIG.

#### **D. Session Allocation for SIGs**

The allocation of substantive sessions (i.e., Symposia and Paper Presentation Sessions) to each SIG for the Annual Meeting is based on a joint consideration of *two* things: (a) the number of proposals submitted to the SIG and (b) the number of members who belong to the SIG. The allocation procedure is detailed in the *AERA Annual Meeting Policies and Procedures Manual*, posted on the AERA Annual Meeting website.

##### **i. Review/Selection Procedures**

It is important to both the Association and to SIGs that fair, objective, and professional procedures be followed in the selection of papers, speakers, symposia and other presentations for the Annual Meeting. The SIG Program Chair and/or the SIG Program Committee is responsible for developing and assuring the quality of the SIG program. The SIG must follow the rules set forth in the AERA Call for Proposals and the *AERA Annual Meeting Procedures Handbook*.

##### **ii. Use of Program Time**

Sessions will be allocated according to the procedures listed in Annual Meeting Policies and Procedures Handbook (LINK).

##### **iii. Creating Sessions**

It is the responsibility of SIG Program Chairs to accept or reject submitted proposals and create sessions using the session(s) allotted. Accepted paper proposals are grouped into one or more session(s) while each accepted symposium proposal is used to create individual session(s). SIG Program Chairs may, in consultation with the SIG Chair and leadership, create invited sessions.

Some SIGs may choose to take advantage of co-sponsoring or co-listing sessions with other SIGs or Divisions, and/or by using poster sessions. SIGs are encouraged to explore non-traditional session formats that may reflect more closely SIG objectives. Questions should be directed to AERA's Meetings Department.

#### **E. SIG Business Meeting and Reception**

Business Meetings are scheduled during "off-hour" evening time slots to avoid scheduling conflicts, and social hours may be held at these times or following the Business Meetings. The business meeting should be used to conduct SIG business and, if desired, to feature a special invited speaker (or have a discussion); however, it must not be used for presentations of papers. Substantive sessions are typically not scheduled during evening time slots.

## **F. Activities for SIG Officers**

### **i. SIG Leadership Seminars/Orientation**

At each Annual Meeting, the SIG EC hosts “SIG Leadership Seminars.” These sessions are designed for SIG officers who are newly elected and who are continuing in their leadership positions. At each session, important information is distributed; the working “connections” between SIGs, the SIG EC, and AERA’s Central Office is described; and each SIG officer is given ample opportunity to ask questions. Every SIG officer is highly encouraged to attend one of these Leadership Seminars so as to learn, to share, and to see that relationships across SIGs benefit everyone.

### **ii. SIG Open Meeting and Reception**

In addition to conducting the SIG Leadership Seminars, the SIG EC also hosts the “SIG Open Meeting/Reception” at each Annual Meeting. This session features a reception to honor all SIG officers who volunteer their time and energy on behalf of their SIGs’ members. In addition to the reception, the SIG Open Meeting involves a brief report by the SIG EC, comments from the Central Office Staff Liaison for SIGs, and an opportunity for SIG officers to pass along suggestions as to how the SIG component of AERA can be strengthened.

### **iii. Training for Online Annual Meeting Management System**

At each Annual Meeting, SIG Program Chairs and SIG Chairs are encouraged to attend demonstration and training sessions focused on the online proposal submission and session creation system. Several of these sessions are offered each year.

## **X. AERA Central Office Services Provided/Available to SIGs**

### **A. Member Administration and Service**

The Central Office is responsible for administering and serving SIG members as part of AERA’s membership recruitment and renewal process. In addition, the Central Office maintains up-to-date information on members so that counts, rosters, and other pertinent information are provided to SIG officers in a timely manner through the AERA Member Portal.

### **B. Member Communication**

To facilitate the ongoing communications between SIGs and their members throughout the year, AERA provides the following services to all SIGs upon request.

#### **i. Listserv**

Each SIG will have access to two listservs to communicate with members: (1) announcement listserv (or outbound e-mail broadcast) for use by SIG Chair; and (2) an open discussion listserv available for voluntary subscription by SIG members.

ii. Website

AERA provides web-hosting service and use of an AERA-designated content management system to SIGs so that there can be a “permanent home” for SIG websites. Designated web-manager of SIGs will have restricted access to the SIG website to maintain its content. Electronic SIG newsletters can also be posted on the site for wide dissemination.

### **C. Financial Management**

AERA’s membership database and association management system is fully integrated with the accounting system to provide accurate accounting of membership dues received for each SIG. The system also manages other income received and expenses incurred by each SIG. Monthly financial reports are available to SIG Officers at the AERA website (in the Member-Only area of the AERA website).

SIGs must utilize the financial management service provided by AERA whereby the SIG’s operating account is being held and managed by AERA. Such a service offers continuity and internal control which are essential to the sound financial management of SIGs. All SIG operating accounts will be reviewed by AERA’s independent auditor as part of the annual audit.

### **D. Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting of the Association provides an important forum for the exchange of knowledge about educational research and for face-to-face interaction and networking. To facilitate SIG chairs and program chairs in their program planning process, services provided include the provision of an *AERA Annual Meeting Procedures Handbook*; special training opportunities at the Annual Meeting and via web conferencing in the summer for program chairs on the use of the All Academic online submission, review, and session planning system; and user support provided by the Central Office staff.

### **E. Repository of SIG Information**

The Central Office strives to be a permanent repository of SIG information, including the history of SIG formation, by-laws, and other pertinent information. To that end, SIG officers are strongly urged to forward copies of SIG documents to the Central Office for safe-keeping.

### **F. Online SIG Management Tools for SIG Officers**

To facilitate the work of SIG officers, AERA is providing online access to SIG Officer’s Tools through the Member-Only area of the AERA website. The SIG Officer’s Tools provide the following electronic information to SIG chairs and treasurers:

- i. Up-to-date membership count of SIG members;
- ii. An export feature whereby SIG membership rosters may be exported in text format: Current Membership Roster contains contact information of all current SIG members and Lapsed Member Roster contains contact information of SIG members who have not renewed their membership during the past year. The latter is useful in launching membership retention efforts.
- iii. Monthly SIG financial statements are made available online for use by chairs and treasurers.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **SIG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE NOMINATIONS AND ELECTION**

#### **1. Election of Committee Members**

Each year, two SIG members are elected to three-year terms on the SIG EC. This election follows the procedures outlined in Article VII, Sections 3-5, of the Association's Bylaws. However, only AERA members who belong to one or more SIGs are permitted to vote in the election of members to the SIG EC.

Each year (late in the summer or early in the fall), all SIG members shall be notified of the forthcoming election and allowed to nominate one or more current and/or past SIG officers for a position on the SIG EC. Self nominations are encouraged. Each nomination shall be sent to the SIG EC Chair, and it should include a brief biographical statement highlighting the nominee's research accomplishments, involvement with SIGs, and prior leadership experience (especially in SIGs), and a perspective statement of the role of SIGs and the SIG EC within AERA. (Further information about these two statements can be found on the AERA SIG EC website).

A minimum of three individuals on the SIG EC shall function as the nominating committee. These individuals shall review all statements submitted by nominees and select three or four to be finalists. All SIG members then vote to determine which two individuals become members of the SIG EC.

Terms of office begin at the end of AERA's Annual Meeting in the spring; terms end three years later, again at the conclusion of the Annual Meeting. Members of the SIG EC are not eligible for re-election; however, EC members may become a nominee for Chair of the EC during their second or third years in office (and if elected to the position of Chair, that individual would serve a new three-year term.)

If a position on the SIG EC becomes vacant before a member completes his/her three-year term, that vacancy shall be filled in a manner consistent with AERA's Bylaws [see Article VI (Elected Officers), Section 3 (Vacancies in Elected Officers)].

#### **2. Election of the EC Chair**

The Chair of the SIG EC is elected in the same way as are members of the Committee (see section D1). In the summer prior to the year when the position of Chair becomes vacant, each of the 3 non-Chair members of the Committee serving in their second or third year of office will be asked if s/he would like to be a nominee for the position of Chair. If at least two of these individuals respond affirmatively, then they shall become the nominees. If fewer than two of these individuals indicate a willingness to be a nominee, then each of the two individuals who rotated off the SIG EC most recently will be asked if he/she would like to be

a nominee for the position of Chair. If necessary, this process of turning to previous Committee members (two at a time going back in time) will be followed until a slate of two-three nominees is identified.

If the position of SIG EC Chair becomes vacant before a member completes his/her three-year term, that vacancy shall be filled in a manner consistent with AERA's Bylaws [see Article VI (Elected Officers), Section 3 (Vacancies in Elected Officers)].



## APPENDIX B

### Petition for Establishing a New SIG: Guidelines, Requirements, and Process

#### A. The Petition Process

The four major steps in the process to construct a petition to establish a new SIG are:

1. A group of at least 45 AERA members must agree that (a) a SIG to address their research concerns is needed, (b) the research focus of this research community is unique and does not duplicate or seriously overlap the research focus/(foci) of any other SIG or Division, and (c) a leadership team will put together and edit a petition to establish a new SIG.
2. The completed petition shall first be submitted to AERA Central Office, which is charged with ensuring (a) the petition documents are complete; (b) the individuals whose names and addresses are provided in support of the establishment of the SIG are current AERA members; (c) the check to cover the initial fees is deposited and held until a final decision regarding the acceptance or non-acceptance of the proposed SIG is made; and (d) the petition is forwarded to the SIG Executive Committee.
3. The petition is reviewed by the SIG Executive Committee, which will either not approve the creation of a SIG as proposed or approve the petition, thereby recommending approval of the new SIG to AERA Council. In some instances, the SIG Executive Committee may table a decision and request additional documentation from the proposers of the SIG. This submission of additional documentation in response to this request may or may not result in the approval of the SIG petition.
4. AERA Council shall review petitions recommended by the SIG Executive Committee and make the final decision as to the approval or denial of the petition for a new SIG.

Petitions may or may not be approved, depending on the SIG Executive Committee and Council's assessments of how well the petition "makes a strong and persuasive case" and identifies a strong research focus for the creation of a new SIG.

Any questions regarding SIG formation may be sent to Phoebe Stevenson, Deputy Executive Director at AERA's Central Office, or to the Chair or any member of the SIG Executive Committee. (See the AERA web site for contact information for each of these individuals.)

#### B. Required Items and Content for a Petition to Establish a New SIG

The petition shall include all of the following documents before it will be considered. Petitions are encouraged to take the position that the members of the SIG Executive Committee and Council (a) are not experts in the field of research that is the focus of the new SIG; (b) have not been privy to conversations among supporters of the new SIG or to the value and importance of the research focus of the proposed SIG; and (c) must hear strong, clear and very convincing reasons why a SIG on the topic proposed should be established. The documents to be included in the "petition packet" are:

1. A **letter of submission** from the individual who is serving as the lead spokesperson for the group seeking the new SIG. This letter states that the person is submitting all the documents in the petition to establish a new SIG and a check to cover costs.  
One paragraph in this letter must state that the submitter and other key individuals involved in trying to establish the new SIG have read the most current version of the SIG Handbook

posted on the AERA website and all are ready to comply fully with the requirements, guidelines and procedures stated within the Handbook.

2. A **1-page cover page**, listing the name of the proposed new SIG, date of submission of the petition, and the name(s) and *full contact information*, including email address and cell phone numbers, if any, of the main proposer(s) of the new SIG. [11 point font, single space within items, double space between items]. If more than one person is listed, indicate the one person to be contacted should there be any questions or concerns about the petition.
3. A **signature page (or pages)**. This item includes the printed names, addresses, AERA membership numbers and signatures of at least 45 AERA members who have agreed to become members of the new SIG. Electronic signatures may be secured and submitted along with original signatures. [Petitions with many more than the minimum 45 AERA member signatures send a stronger message that there is a large group of researchers who want this SIG established.] [See the Signature Page in Appendix \_\_.]
4. **Petition proper**. The petitioners shall present a sound, thorough, and persuasive case for the need to create a new SIG. This case is to be made in 10 pages or less, 11 point font, 1 1/2 spacing throughout, pages numbered consecutively, and with the following sections in the order listed.
  - 4a. **Heading with name of the proposed SIG.** The heading should read “Petition to Establish a New SIG,” followed immediately on the next line by the name of the proposed new SIG.
  - 4b. **Introduction.** This section provides a brief overview of the research topic and a brief statement of the rationale for the importance and roles of the particular educational research topic within which the SIG researchers will do their work. A brief review of the literature addressing theoretical or conceptual perspectives and research studies and citing relevant authors; important publications; names of scholars and leaders in the field; and describing one or two clear examples of research and/or practitioner activities at the focus of the SIG are required.
  - 4c. **Definition of key terms.** Often a particular research community uses a term that has many definitions or has a technical definition that is critical to the research, theoretical, conceptual or practitioner focus of the proposed SIG. It is the responsibility of the proposers to make sure that all key terms that are in the title of the SIG and are central to the focus of the research of SIG members are accompanied by clear definitions. For example, if “play” is in the title or is a primary focus of the proposed SIG, then a clear definition of “play” as used by the researchers in the new SIG must be included. These definitions will help determine whether the focus of the proposed SIG overlaps the research focus of one or more existing SIGs.
  - 4d. **Research foci of the new SIG.** This statement spells out in clear language the specific historical, epistemological, theoretical and research topics, concepts, methods, education problem, etc. that are to be the primary and dominant concerns of the work of the members of the proposed SIG and the activities, sessions, networking and mentorship efforts under the auspices of the SIG.
  - 4e. **Justification for and evidence to support the new SIG not overlapping the focus of one or more sub-Divisions and SIGs.** This section must make a strong, clear, and persuasive case as why the major research foci of the proposed SIG do not substantially overlap the research foci of one or more sub-Divisions and SIGs. In other words, what are the reasons why the proposed SIG ought to be allowed to function when another SIG or a subsection of a Division have research focuses that appear to be identical to or

strongly overlap the foci of the SIG being proposed?

To this end, the petition must include a summary of the research of the SIG(s) and/or subsection(s) of one or more Divisions and state the reasons why the research focus of the new SIG does not duplicate or strongly overlap the research focus and topics in each of these. At least one paragraph should be devoted to this concern for each SIG or subsection of a Division that might be perceived as having the same or very similar research focus or that might also concern itself with that research topic. For instance, if a SIG wanted to focus on “Research on Adolescent Sports and Athletic Involvement,” then the petitioners would need to state how the research focus and topics associated with each of at least these three SIGs *Adolescence and Youth Development, Education and Student Development in Cities, and Research Focus on Education and Sport* are different and do not duplicate or seriously overlap the research focus and topics to be central to the proposed SIG.

The petition should also include a summary of the correspondence the proposer(s) of the new SIG have had with the Chair of each other SIG and Division whose research topics and focus may be perceived as duplicating or seriously overlapping those of the proposed SIG. Copies of this correspondence (which may be emails, letters or notes from phone conversations) should be clearly labeled and added within an Appendix to the petition. Comments, in the form of rejoinders from the proposers of the new SIG, may also accompany statements from SIGs that have been consulted.

Proposers of new SIGs should feel free to consult the Chair or any member of the SIG Executive Committee to seek input about existing SIGs that may address similar topics, concepts, or research foci that may appear to be redundant with or overlap with those of the proposed new SIG. The SIG portion of the AERA website is also a good resource for identifying SIGs that may have common research focuses as well as contact information for Officers of these SIGs.

- 4f. **Context/Background leading up to the submission of the petition to establish a new SIG.** This section shall include a description of the background events and context that led AERA members to concur (a) there was a critical number of individuals interested in a specific research focus that was not being met in the Divisions and other SIGs, (b) the focus of their interests was unique and distinct from research topics stressed within other SIGs such that it warranted the establishment of a new SIG, and (c) a petition to create a new SIG should be submitted.
- 4g. A statement of the **Purposes of the SIG.** The petition must include a clear statement of main purposes for the new SIG. These purposes should not address the purposes for establishing the SIG, but the *purposes* of the SIG once established and functioning. These purposes should be bulleted or lettered. These may be revised from time to time to meet the needs of the members and address issues, challenges, questions, methodologies, criticisms, etc. within the research community.
- 4h. A statement of either the **Major Goals of the SIG** The petition must include a clear statement of what the individuals desiring the new SIG perceive at the present time to be the *Major Goals of the SIG* once established and functioning. These may be revised from time to time to meet the needs of the members and address issues, challenges, questions, methodologies, criticisms, etc. within the research community.
- 4i. **Examples of important research questions that typify the major and specific research concerns, topics or focuses to be investigated by members of the proposed SIG.** These six or more questions, which obviously must be consistent with statements above regarding the research interests, and topics of the SIG members, should be stated

in clear, unambiguous language. Keep in mind that these questions will help convey the uniqueness and non-overlap of research focus of the proposed new SIG.

5. **Bibliography of important sources related to the research focus(es) and topics stressed by the SIG.** This bibliography should cite a minimum of 15 sources (e.g., books, chapters, refereed articles and research papers presented at major research conferences) that exemplify the focus, research topics and scope of the proposed new SIG. Titles should include references that highlight the theoretical, conceptual, or practitioner frameworks and questions that complement the research focus and topics for the proposed SIG. Bibliography must follow APA format.

### C. **Additional Items to Include with Petition**

1. Each petition to establish a SIG must be accompanied by a nonrefundable fee (currently \$100) to offset the additional administrative cost to the Association to process the petition and check the names, addresses and AERA membership numbers of all those signing the petition in support of the establishing the new SIG. Checks are to be made payable to the American Educational Research Association.
2. The petition must include the *Petition Checklist* (See Appendix \_\_\_) to guide the submission of the SIG proposal. Any petition that does not include this Petition Checklist will be sent back immediately upon receipt by the AERA Central Office.

*All petition materials are to be sent to Phoebe Stevenson, AERA Central Office, by email (pstevenson@aera.net)*

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While the above criteria were written to be as specific as possible, the SIG Executive Committee and Council look at the petition for each new SIG within the broader context of AERA, the focus and topics addressed within Divisions and SIGs, in general, and in light of all the existing SIGs. The perspectives of the SIG Executive Committee and Council have never been to prevent new SIGs from being formed. Rather their perspectives have been to approve or not approve a SIG based upon its meeting the criteria and whether this particular SIG is warranted given what exists within AERA at that moment.

### D. **Further Suggestions**

Contacting the Chair of the SIG Executive Committee and the AERA Staff Liaison for the SIGs prior to submitting a proposal for a new SIG is strongly suggested. Both individuals are available to serve AERA members interested in establishing a new SIG and provide suggestions and advice about the process.

### E. **Deadlines Related to Submitting Petitions for Review by the SIG Executive Committee**

With few exceptions, proposals for new SIGs are reviewed by the SIG Executive Committee twice a year. Deadlines for submitting petitions to the Central Office are September 15 and March 1. It is the responsibility of the proposer(s) to ensure that all the items required in the petition for a new SIG reach the AERA Central Office by these dates. This lead time allows the AERA Central Office to check the names of the prospective members of the new SIG and verify they are AERA members before the SIG Executive Committee will consider the petition. Ideally, petitions should arrive at AERA Central Office well before these deadline dates.

### F. **Resubmission of a Petition**

Following its review of any proposals for new SIGs, the SIG Executive Committee may make a recommendation to Council that the request for a new SIG be approved. Council will then decide at a

Summer, Winter, or Spring meeting whether the proposed SIG should become an official part of AERA.

An application for a new SIG that is not approved by the SIG Executive Committee may be resubmitted one time either under the same name or a similar research topic. The decision to reconsider a petition at a later date is at the sole discretion of the SIG Executive Committee. The new petition must include addressing all the areas questioned by the Executive Committee or Council in its decision to deny the application. Furthermore, the second submission must be signed by at least five additional supporters for the new SIG who also state that they have participated fully in the revision of the original application. As much as is possible the SIG Executive Committee will review resubmitted petitions as original submissions.

## APPENDIX C

### AERA ELECTION REGULATIONS

The following regulations have been adopted by the Association to ensure an equal and fair opportunity for all candidates. They are consistent with the norms of a professional, scientific society, and it is expected that individuals will abide by both the spirit and the letter of the regulations to limit campaigning. The regulations are as follows:

1. The primary mechanism for candidates to present their qualifications and positions to the membership is through the biographical sketch that accompanies the election ballots. Candidates for President-Elect, Member-at-Large and Vice President have a 250-word limit. Divisional Secretaries have a 100-word limit.
2. Candidates and their supporters may communicate with friends through personal letters, conversations, and telephone calls. However, all such communication should be individually initiated and involve little expense. Mass mailings (including electronic distribution) by a candidate, or by supporters on behalf of a candidate, are prohibited. Candidates have a responsibility to discourage such activities on the part of their supporters.
3. Association resources (including newsletters) may not be used to promote, announce, or support individual candidates. In particular, AERA committees, SIGs, and Divisions are prohibited from using Association funds for such campaign activities or communications.
4. Violations of the regulations should be reported to the Executive Director. Substantiation of allegations may result in disciplinary action including a candidate's disqualification from the election, or censure of a member acting in violation of these regulations.

## APPENDIX D

### AERA SIG FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SERVICE

#### I. General Polices

1. There will be no fees assessed to SIGs for use of the services.
2. NO interest will accrue to a SIG's operating account.
3. Statements of account are available monthly to SIG officers. Financial statements are posted online for access by authorized SIG officers via the Member Portal.
4. Only one authorized signature is required for deposits and withdrawals, AERA will keep two authorization signatures on file.
5. Only SIGs in good standing may use the service.
6. Any bank fees charged by returned checks, foreign check collection, or wire transfer requested by a SIG will be charged against the SIG account.

#### II. Deposits

1. All deposits MUST be accompanied by a completed deposit form supplied by AERA. The deposit form may be accessed on the AERA website at SIG – Resources for SIG Officers.
2. Checks should be made payable to “AERA SIG” in the payable name. ONLY endorse the back of the check if these names are not on the front. Endorsement should say “PAYABLE TO AERA”.
3. There are no limits on the number of deposits.
4. Checks with stale dates (over three months old) will be returned to the SIG.
5. AERA DOES NOT accept credit card deposits.
6. Receipt forms will be kept on file at AERA Central Office for a period of two years.

#### III. Withdrawals

1. All checks requests MUST be accompanied with a completed withdrawal form supplied by AERA. Requests forms may be accessed on the AERA website at SIG – Resources for SIG Officers.  
Reimbursement requests must be accompanied by original receipts.
2. Withdrawals or check requests will not be processed without a SIG authorized signature.
3. Checks will be issued within 10 business days after the check request is received by the AERA Central Office.
4. More than one check may be requested at a time; but separate forms must be completed for each check request.
6. Check request forms will be kept on file at the AERA Central Office for the period of two years.

#### IV. Communication

All correspondence concerning SIG accounts should be addressed to:

**AERA**

**ATTN: Phoebe Stevenson, Deputy Executive Director  
1430 K Street, NW, Suite 1200 Washington, DC 20005  
(202) 238-3200; FAX: (202) 238-3250; e-mail: pstevenson@aera.net**

## APPENDIX E

### PETITION FOR AN AERA SANCTIONED AWARD

Proposals are reviewed by the AERA Executive Board at its January, June, and October meetings. Deadlines for receipt of proposals at the Central Office are December 15, May 15, and September 15. Each SIG may have three AERA-sanctioned awards; one of which is reserved for a graduate student-related award.

Name of the Award: \_\_\_\_\_

Sponsor (Division or SIG): \_\_\_\_\_

Year Award Established: \_\_\_\_\_

Selection/Eligibility Criteria: \_\_\_\_\_

Nomination Process: \_\_\_\_\_

Review/Selection Process: \_\_\_\_\_

Form of Recognition: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Cash Award, Plaque, etc.)

Contact Person for Award:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**APPENDIX F**  
**SIG Operations Milestone Chart**  
 (From Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting)

	A p r	M a y	J u n e	J u l y	A u g	S e p	O c t	N o v	D e c	J a n	F e b	M a r
AERA Annual Meeting	●											
SIG Open Meeting (at Annual Meeting)	●											
SIG Leadership Seminars (at Annual Meeting)	●											
Form B must be submitted by 10:00 a.m. on the last day of Annual Meeting	●											
Transfer SIG Records to new SIG Officer (should be done at the Annual Meeting or shortly thereafter)	●											
Form A must be submitted by May 1		●										
AERA Call for Proposals in <i>ER</i> (May issue)		●										
Forms C must be submitted in May		●										
AERA sends Annual Meeting Program Information to SIGs (Allocation of time slots, Master Schedule for Program)				●								
Completed SIG Program Information to Proposal Processing Center							●					
Annual SIG Management Fee deducted from SIG Operating Account										●		
SIG Report to SIG Membership on Annual Meeting Program Scheduling Times for SIG events (ask members to view website)										●		
Visit Website to View SIG's Annual Meeting Schedule										●		
Notification of Award Recipients (if applicable) to AERA Central Office											●	
Forms A, B, & C posted AERA website												●