



SIG Handbook  
AERA's Handbook of Policies and Procedures for  
Special Interest Groups

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## **I. Introduction**

### **a. Origin of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in 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.

### **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>1</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>2</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.

## **II. AERA Governance Structure**

### **a. AERA Council**

The Association Council, hereafter Council, is the legislative and policy-determining body for the Association. 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, six 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

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

<sup>2</sup> SIG Task Force Report (December 2005).

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 three face-to-face meetings during the 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*

The SIG Executive Committee Chair and members are elected by voting SIG members as part of the AERA general election each winter. 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.

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

#### a. SIG Formation - Steps to Form a New SIG

There are four major steps in the formation of a new SIG. These steps include:

**Step 1:** Any group of 75 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. If the petition is approved by the AERA SIG Executive Committee (SIG EC) and AERA Council, this new group will be designated as a SIG-in-Formation. The proposal to form a SIG-in-Formation must contain the signatures, either hard copy or electronic, of a minimum of 75 AERA members and must be accompanied by a \$100 application fee.

**Step 2:** In signing the petition in support of the formation of the new SIG-in-Formation, AERA members are committed to joining this SIG-in-Formation and paying membership dues for a three-year period.

**Step 3:** The petition must also contain a well-crafted statement of the purpose, plans to build the SIG-in-Formation and its membership, and a listing of the group of organizers who are willing to serve as the interim officers during the in-formation period.

**Step 4:** The petition to form a SIG-in-Formation will be sent to AERA Central Office. AERA governance staff will review the petition for completeness, verify the membership status of petition signers, and forward the petition to the AERA SIG Executive Committee. The SIG EC will review the petition and make a recommendation to the AERA Council regarding approval for initial formation (See below for explanation of SIG-in-Formation status). Both the SIG Executive Committee and AERA Council will assess how well the petition makes a strong and persuasive case, and identifies a strong research focus that is not currently addressed by existing divisions or SIGs. The petition must include evidence of consultation with Divisions and/or other SIGs to identify and address potential overlap.

SIG-in-Formation status lasts for three-years during which time the SIG-in-Formation must establish that it can meet the criteria of a fully functioning healthy and vital unit within AERA. A “healthy and vital” unit is defined as:

Healthy and vital SIGS are those with Annual Meeting sessions that are research-based, content-driven, well attended, and inclusive of the entire membership. In addition, these SIGS are viable conduits of information nationally and internationally that engage members throughout the year by various means (e.g., updating websites, dissemination of e-newsletters, calls for proposals, research collaboration, announcements of specialized conferences, holding specialized mid-year meetings, including webinars). These SIGs engage in membership recruitment, offer mentoring of graduate students and emergent scholars, and engage members in advancing and disseminating knowledge in their field.

During the three-year “in-formation” period, the SIG-in-Formation will be evaluated through a process in which the SIG-in-Formation submits annual reports, which will be carefully reviewed by the AERA SIG Executive Committee.

The application for a SIG-in-Formation must be received by the AERA Central office by September 1 of each year.

#### **b. SIG-in-Formation Benefits**

During the three-year time period, the SIG-in-Formation has the following benefits:

The SIG-in-Formation will be listed on AERA’s membership application and renewal forms. Communication tools, including websites, listservs, and other SIG-related tools, will be provided by the AERA Central Office.

During the first year the SIG-in-Formation will be allotted a business meeting at the Annual Meeting.

During year two, the SIG-in-Formation will be granted one business meeting and one substantive session. The SIG-in-Formation will participate in the open call for submissions for the following year’s Annual Meeting.

In the third year, the SIG-in-Formation will receive an allocation for substantive sessions and roundtable/poster presentations based on the formula for session allocation as well as an allocation for a business meeting.

#### **c. SIG-in-Formation Responsibilities**

All of the rules for established SIGs that pertain to elections, SIG dues and finances, SIG management fees, publications and journals, and public policy positions must be followed. SIGs-in-Formation may not establish awards until full SIG status is obtained.

Following the annual meeting of AERA at which the SIG-in-Formation holds its first business meeting, a SIG-in-Formation shall be reviewed by the SIG Executive Committee to assess its: (1) membership count, (2) draft bylaws, and (3) activities undertaken during the first year.

At the end of the second year, each SIG-in-Formation will be reviewed by the SIG Executive Committee to assess its: (1) membership count, (2) business meeting attendance, (3) substantive session planning for the Annual Meeting, (4) membership recruitment initiatives, (5) leadership capacity development, and (6) advancement of the knowledge base and dissemination of educational research in the related field/area of focus. At that time, the data used to make the final recommendation to AERA Council will include, but not be limited to the two Annual Reports; data generated by AERA headquarters related to the number of proposal submissions and acceptance rates for the following year’s Annual Meeting, election of interim officers,



SIG draft Bylaws, SIG financial records, and any other supporting evidence of SIG activities. A SIG-in-Formation may submit any additional materials to support its case for final approval as a SIG.

At this point in time, the final recommendation of the SIG Executive Committee will be forwarded to the AERA Council for its review and decision. The SIG-in-Formation leadership will receive a letter outlining the SIG Executive Committee decision along with any areas of praise or concern and recommendations.

#### **d. Unsuccessful SIG-in-Formation Applications**

An application to establish a SIG-in-Formation that is not approved by the SIG Executive Committee may be resubmitted one time for reconsideration. The decision to reconsider a petition to form a new SIG is at the sole discretion of the SIG Executive Committee. The new petition must address all of the areas of concerns that were included in the original communication denying approval. The SIG EC will only forward approved and recommended petitions to the AERA Council. Should AERA Council deny the SIG EC recommendation, the petition may again be submitted once for reconsideration.

#### **e. Continuation and Evaluation of SIGs**

##### *i. Continuation of SIGS*

The continuation of SIGs depends on quantitative and qualitative assessments of their health and vitality, as outlined in the Healthy and Vital SIG Metric:

Healthy and vital SIGS are those with Annual Meeting sessions that are research-based, content-driven, well attended, and inclusive of the entire membership. In addition, these SIGS are viable conduits of information nationally and internationally that engage members throughout the year by various means (e.g., updating websites, dissemination of e-newsletters, calls for proposals, research collaboration, announcements of specialized conferences, holding specialized mid-year meetings including webinars). These SIGs engage in membership recruitment, offer mentoring of graduate students and emergent scholars, and engage members in advancing and disseminating knowledge in their field.

The Healthy and Vital SIG Metric consists of:

- A target membership count of 75
- Proposal submissions and acceptance rates from the Annual Meeting
- Initiatives for mentoring of graduate students and emerging scholars
- Membership recruitment initiatives
- Leadership capacity development
- Advancement of knowledge base and dissemination of educational research in the related field

The quantitative criterion is SIG membership of at least 75 members. During the initial transition period to the new policy, SIGs that were established prior to July 2012 have until September 30, 2014 to reach 75 members. After the transition period, SIGs that do not have 75 members at the close of the membership year on September 30th will be given until the following September 30th to increase their membership to the required threshold.

SIGs can demonstrate strong health and vitality by meeting the following qualitative criteria:

- Meaningful activities as outlined in the Healthy and Vital SIG Metric as reflected in Annual Meeting sessions, newsletters, or other initiatives, such as mentoring graduate students and new faculty and communications initiatives.
- An annual business meeting held in conjunction with the AERA Annual Meeting.
- An inclusive nominations and election process in accordance with AERA's bylaws.
- Timely submission of officers' information form and annual report form by the designated deadlines.

#### *ii. Evaluation of SIGS*

The following steps outline the evaluation process for SIGs:

**Step 1:** AERA central office staff prepares and provides to the SIG EC summary documents drawn from SIG chairs' annual reports and other data gathered by AERA central office, including data on membership; financial operation; by-laws, annual meeting submission, review, acceptance; web site/newsletter; and election. Members of the SIG EC will use these summary documents to evaluate SIGs, make judgments about their health and vitality as well as monitor compliance with AERA policies and procedures. The evaluation process will not require that SIGs produce additional documentation of performance beyond the regular yearly reports SIG officers are required to provide for AERA. Central Office staff will identify areas of concerns and of interest and provide summary information to the SIG EC for consideration at the coordinated committee meeting.

**Step 2:** Each year at the coordinated committee meetings, SIG EC members will use the information provided by AERA central office to identify SIGs who need support, determined on the basis of evident difficulty in meeting one or more of the requirements from AERA policy and/or "red flags" in other areas of the reports supplied by AERA central office.

**Step 3:** Each year at the coordinated committee meeting, the Chair of the SIG EC will facilitate the assignment of teams of two SIG EC members to evaluate the identified SIGs.

**Step 4:** The SIG EC members will complete the evaluation form for each SIG they are assigned to evaluate, interact with the other SIG EC member assigned to evaluate the same SIG and submit the evaluation form to the SIG EC chair. The Report on the SIGs assigned for evaluation will be completed by January 5 of each year. The chair of the SIG EC shall ensure that no SIG EC member will have a conflict of interest in evaluating the SIGs they are assigned to evaluate. It is the responsibility of the SIG EC chair to make certain that the evaluation task is equally distributed across the members of SIG EC.

**Step 5:** The SIG EC chair will notify SIG chairs of the outcomes of the evaluation, which will be reported to SIG members at the next annual business meeting. SIGs can respond to the evaluation as part of their regular business meeting at the annual AERA meeting. SIG chairs will respond in writing to any recommendations in the report as part of their yearly SIG report.

**f. Discontinuation of SIGs.**

SIGs may be discontinued for the following reasons:

*i. Insufficient Number of Members*

**Minimum Membership Requirement:** The minimum membership requirement to create and maintain a SIG is 75 AERA members.

**Procedure for Dealing with Any SIG with Membership Less Than 75:**

a) If a SIG's membership falls below 75 by September 30 of the membership year, that SIG will be notified and informed that it will have until September 30 of the following membership year to recruit a sufficient number of new members to meet the minimum membership requirement to continue to exist. (Note: During the initial transition period to this new policy, SIGs that were established prior to July 2012 have until September 30, 2014 to reach 75 members.)

b) During this interval, the SIG EC will offer the SIG 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. The SIG EC will work vigorously with and on behalf of all SIGs. However, SIGs must operate in accordance with the Association's rules and regulations. Accordingly, SIG EC will recommend to Council the discontinuation of SIGs that have fewer than 75 members following a one-year's grace period.

c) It is ultimately the responsibility of the SIG to meet the minimum membership requirement.

*ii. Failure to Pay the SIG Maintenance Fee*

- a) As indicated in Section V-A of the SIG Handbook, 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.
- b) The formal recognition of any SIG will be withdrawn if there are insufficient funds to pay the membership fees.

*iii. Voluntary Dissolution*

The officers of a SIG may decide to withdraw from active SIG status. Notification of intention to dissolve a SIG should be made in writing to the Central Office and to all SIG members after consultation with the SIG membership.

*iv. Merger with an Existing SIG*

The membership of a SIG may decide to merge with another SIG or an existing Division. SIGS considering mergers should consult with the SIG EC.

- a) A merger consists of the joining together of two or more previously separate SIGs.
- b) A true merger in the legal sense occurs when both involved special interest groups dissolve and fold their assets and memberships into a newly-created third entity (see formation of SIGs). A second merger option would be one in which one or more SIGs decide to discontinue and become absorbed into a healthy and vital SIG that would be of interest to the membership (see discontinuation of SIGs). In addition, the assets of the discontinued SIG(s) will be transferred to the SIG that absorbs the discontinued SIG(s).

*v. Other Good and Sufficient Reasons for SIG Discontinuation*

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 evaluated and recommendations up to and including dissolution may be made. 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 discontinued 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 (See AERA bylaws, Article X, Section 6).

## **IV. SIG Operations**

### **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, Webmaster) who provide leadership for their SIGs. Each SIG's Chair and Secretary-Treasurer (or a Secretary and a Treasurer), and one other officer must be elected by that SIG's members. The SIG's other officers may be appointed or elected, as determined by the SIG's bylaws. No SIG officer can serve more than three years in succession in the same office.

### **b. Officer Tools**

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. To download the SIG membership lists and the SIG Financial reports, SIG officers will need to:

- Go to [www.aera.net](http://www.aera.net).
- Select "login" from the upper right corner of the screen and login with your new user name and password (you must activate your account if you have not done so).
- On the "My AERA" webpage, select "Member Resources" from the navigation panel on the left of the screen.
- On the "Member Resources" webpage, select "Special Interest Groups."

### **c. 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.

A SIG can modify its bylaws as long as they are not in opposition to already specified SIG or AERA policies and procedures. Amendments to SIG Bylaws should be discussed with the SIG membership (at the SIG Business Meeting or via the listserv), must be approved by the AERA Council and then must be officially voted on by the SIG membership.

### **d. 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.

#### **e. 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 (on the Resources for SIG Officer's webpage).

Request for a change in SIG membership dues must be submitted to the AERA Central Office when the SIG submits the SIG Officers Form. The new dues rate will go into effect on October 1; no mid-year changes can be made.

#### **f. SIG Membership Assessment Fee and Annual SIG Management 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. SIGs also pay 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. All fees go to AERA's Central Office to help pay for the many services provided to SIGs such as financial management services, SIG membership tools, website hosting, listerv services, and meeting space at the Annual Meeting.

#### **g. 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.

#### **h. 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 B, 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 the SIG Officer's Form no later than May 1 each year. This Form is available on the AERA website under SIG – Resources for SIG Officers.

#### **i. AERA Policies**

All SIG officers are encouraged to review AERA Bylaws, Code of Ethics, and Policy statements. They can be found on the AERA website under "AERA Rules and Policies."

#### **j. 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.

#### **k. 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.

#### **l. Public Policy Positions**

Only the AERA Council can take public policy positions on behalf of the Association. The AERA Position Taking and Policymaking Processes Guidelines may be found online. 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. Communications**

#### **a. SIG Website**

AERA provides web hosting for all SIGs. SIGs are encouraged to use the website to post SIG officer rosters, newsletters, announcements and such to communicate with the

membership. Webmasters can find the Content Management System training guide on the “Resources for SIG Officers” webpage.

**b. SIG Listserv**

AERA provides two types of listserv for SIGs; an announcement listserv and a discussion listserv. Announcement listserv are updated on a daily basis with current SIG members and is an effective tool for SIGs to communicate SIG-related information to SIG members throughout the year. The Discussion listserv provides a forum for SIG members. The listserv allows members to communicate with one another, discuss ideas, make announcements and generally keep in touch. Subscription to a discussion list is voluntary and the SIG chair would be authorized to monitor who is accepted to the listserv.



## **VI. Publications**

### **a. 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 March 2011 and available for member access 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.

## **VII. AERA Approved Awards**

### **a. Guidelines for Association Awards**

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

SIGs may not confer awards that have not been reviewed by the SIG Executive Committee and approved by the AERA Executive Board. 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-approved 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>. Any requests submitted after February 1 will potentially need to be mailed after the conclusion of the annual meeting.

In addition to the AERA-approved 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 ascertaining the availability of nominees for each elected office as well as for offices which may have become vacant since the last election. There must be at least two candidates for each office to constitute an election.

### **b. SIG Elections**

Effective in 2010, all SIGs will conduct the annual election as part of AERA's General Election. Guidelines for the AERA election are specified in Article VII of the AERA Bylaws. SIGs are required to conduct elections using the AERA electronic balloting system. Elections are administered by an independent election vendor to insure that each election has the highest level of security and integrity. Elections may not be handled directly by a SIG. Elections may not be conducted at a SIG's business meeting, via email, a survey, or by any other means other than working with the AERA Central Office and the electronic balloting system.

Election guidelines can be found on the "Resources for SIG Officers" webpage. Per AERA bylaws, all offices must have two candidates and the AERA General Election is open for 30 days (from mid-January to mid-February.)

### **c. Election Regulations**

In 2011, AERA Council approved the *Candidate Campaigning Policy*

*The following sets forth the campaigning policy to guide candidates and the American Educational Research Association through the election process.*

*The biographical sketch accompanying each ballot shall be the primary mechanism for a candidate to provide the AERA voting membership with information regarding his/her qualifications. Biographical sketches (with or without personal statements) of candidates are limited to 350 words for officers who also serve on the AERA Council by virtue of their roles and 200 words for all other candidates.*

*AERA discourages campaigning by candidates and their supporters. Nothing in this policy precludes campaigning as long as campaigning does not include, directly or indirectly, using any of the means of communication with members made available through the Association and does not involve the material expenditure of funds by*

*candidates or their supporters. Candidates are encouraged to seek guidance from the Executive Director or her or his designee in areas of uncertainty.*

*Candidates who have access to AERA information or the tools and technology of the Association may not use them to campaign (e.g., a division vice president or SIG chair who is a candidate for another AERA position urging constituents to vote).*

*Any violation of these regulations shall be reported immediately to the Executive Director. If the allegations are substantiated to the satisfaction of the Executive Director, then the matter shall be referred to the AERA Ethics Committee for consideration in accord with the procedures of that committee. A finding of fault can lead to disciplinary action.*

## **IX. AERA 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.

### **a. SIG Activities at the AERA 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.

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.

At each Annual Meeting, the SIG EC hosts “SIG Leadership Orientations.” 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 are 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 the relationships across SIGs benefit everyone.

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.

At each Annual Meeting, SIG Program Chairs and SIG Chairs also are encouraged to attend demonstration and training sessions focused on the online submission and session creation system. Several of these sessions are offered each year. SIG Program Chairs are required to attend one web-based training session during July/August.

#### **b. Annual Meeting Responsibilities of SIG Chair and Program Chairs**

- i. The SIG Chair is responsible for submitting to the AERA Central Office the name and contact information for the SIG’s next Program Chair. This information is due by March 15<sup>th</sup> of the year preceding the meeting in order to be included in the Call for Submissions that is released in May. Timely submission of SIG Program Chair information is critical for the SIG to constitute peer review panels for the following Annual Meeting.
- ii. The SIG Chair is responsible for ensuring that the SIG Program Chair fulfills his/her responsibility as Program Chair.
- iii. 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. 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:
  - a) Promote, if appropriate, the Annual Meeting’s “theme” established by the AERA President when encouraging his/her SIG members to submit proposals.
  - b) Constitute a peer review panel by inviting expert reviewers and/or volunteer reviewers.
  - c) Become adept at using AERA’s on-line system for proposal submission/review by attending the web-based training session for Program Chairs.
  - d) Ensure that each submitted proposal receives a fair and unbiased review (by a minimum of three reviewers) by the deadline established by AERA.
  - e) Make a final accept/reject decision for each proposal by the deadline established by AERA.
  - f) Encourage members of his/her SIG to volunteer and serve as Chairs and Discussants.

- g) Make sure that sessions are created by the deadline established by AERA.
- h) 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 their final papers electronically to the AERA online system for use by discussants and chairs by the deadline established by AERA.

### **c. Open Call for Submissions**

All SIGs must solicit all of their submissions through AERA's open call for submissions process. This solicitation is done through the Call for Submissions that appears in the May issue of AERA *Highlights* and is posted on AERA's Annual Meeting website.

### **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.

### **e. Review/Selection Procedures**

It is important to the Association and to the 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.

### **f. Use of Program Time**

Sessions will be allocated according to the procedures listed in Annual Meeting Policies and Procedures Handbook posted on the AERA Member Portal.

### **g. Creating Sessions**

It is the responsibility of SIG Program Chairs to accept or reject submissions and create sessions using the session(s) allotted. Accepted paper submissions are grouped into one or more session(s) while each accepted session/symposium submission 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.

## **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. Financial Management**

AERA's membership database and association management system is 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.

## APPENDIX A

### **SIG Executive Committee Nominations and Election**

#### **I. 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 at least two candidates per vacancy. 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)].

#### **II. 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 non-Chair members of the Committee serving in their third year of office, and those who have rotated off the Committee over the past 2 years, will be asked if s/he would like to be considered by the nominating committee to be a candidate for the position of Chair.

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

### AERA SIG Financial Management Service

#### I. General Policies

- a. NO interest will accrue to a SIG's operating account.
- b. Statements of account are available monthly to SIG officers. Financial statements are posted online for access by authorized SIG officers via the Member Portal.
- c. Only one authorized signature from a SIG officer is required for deposits and withdrawals, AERA will keep two authorization signatures on file.
- d. Only SIGs in good standing may use the service.
- e. 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

- a. 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.
- b. Checks should be made payable to "AERA" in the payee name field. The SIG name or number should be on the check in the "Memo" section. ONLY endorse the back of the check if the check is not payable to "AERA." In that case, the endorsement should say "PAYABLE TO AERA".
- c. There are no limits on the number of deposits.
- d. Checks with stale dates (over three months old) will be returned to the SIG.
- e. Credit card deposits are accepted. The credit card payments can be sent to AERA office by phone, mail or fax. Please provide the card number, expiration date and the name on the card for all credit card payments.
- f. Receipt forms will be kept on file at AERA Central Office for a period of two years.

#### III. Withdrawals

- a. All check requests MUST be accompanied with a completed withdrawal form supplied by AERA. Request forms may be accessed on the AERA website at SIG – Resources for SIG Officers.
- b. Reimbursement requests must be accompanied by original receipts.
- c. Withdrawals or check requests will not be processed without a SIG authorized signature.
- d. Checks will be issued within 10 business days after the check request is received by the AERA Central Office.
- e. More than one check may be requested at a time; but separate forms must be completed for each check request.
- f. 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:

American Educational Research Association  
ATTN: Governance  
1430 K Street NW, Suite 1200  
Washington, DC 20005  
Phone: (202) 238-3200  
Fax: (202) 238-3250  
[governance@aera.net](mailto:governance@aera.net)

## APPENDIX C

### **Petition**

#### **AERA Approved Awards for SIGs**

Proposals for new awards 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.

#### AERA-Approved Award Guidelines:

- AERA, Divisional and SIG membership should not be used as an evaluative criterion in judging the quality of paper award submissions and nominations. Membership in AERA and the SIG is not required to be nominated or to be a recipient of an award.
- The Executive Board strongly encourages all award conferring units to confer award(s) in a given award cycle only when the nominations received are of high quality.
- The Executive Board strongly encourages small Divisions and SIGs to consider conferring awards on an alternating year in order to ensure that there is a large enough pool of nominations for consideration.
- The AERA Conflicts of Interest Policy, including specific guidelines relating to awards and the award selection process, should be observed.
- Review/Selection Process and Timeline (#10) – The names of winners must be submitted to AERA Central Office by February 15th in order to process plaques and checks. Please include that date in your timeline.
- Existing AERA-approved awards: Please check the online listing of AERA Approved Awards on the Resources for SIG Officers page to confirm that your existing awards are approved.
- Please carefully review your petition for proper grammar, typos, spelling, etc. before submitting. Petitions with errors will be returned.
- Please follow the petition format, supplying complete information for each of the 17 points.

Please return a signed and dated copy of the petition to [governance@aera.net](mailto:governance@aera.net). Please contact Sylvie Nguyen-Fawley, Manager of Governance at [snguyen@aera.net](mailto:snguyen@aera.net) or 202-238-3206, or Patti Martin, AERA Director of Membership, Constituent Relations & Governance at 202-238-3215 or [pmartin@aera.net](mailto:pmartin@aera.net) with any questions.

Please include the following information in your petition. Do not skip any of the sections.

1. Sponsor (Division or SIG):
2. Year Award Established (must be current year or later):
3. Name of the Award
4. Description of the Award
5. Rationale for Establishing the Award
6. Eligibility Criteria

7. Nomination Process and Timeline
  - date of call for nomination
  - closing date for nominations
8. Composition of the Award Committee
9. Process of Appointment of Award Committee Members
10. Review/Selection Process and Timeline
  - date when the committee will begin review
  - date when decision will be made
  - date when winners are notified
  - SIG will submit name of winner AERA Central office by February 15th.
11. Selection criteria
12. Form of Recognition (Cash Award, Plaque, etc)
13. Form of Announcement of Award Winner (Presentation at Business Meeting, Listserv Announcement, etc.)
14. Frequency of Conferral of the Award (Annual, Biennial, etc.)
15. Name of Existing AERA-approved award(s) Conferred by the Unit
16. Note when the SIG's Executive Committee discussed and gave approval to advance this petition
17. Contact Person for the Award (Name, Address, Phone, Email)