



**Call for Volunteer Session Chairs and Discussants
Opportunities for the 2013 AERA Annual Meeting
Deadline: August 31, 2012**

The quality of the AERA Annual Meeting depends on education researchers with appropriate expertise who serve as chairs and discussants for paper sessions and as chairs for roundtables. Researchers are encouraged to volunteer and, when doing so, to provide sufficient information on their backgrounds and expertise to permit program chairs in divisions and SIGs to create sessions with persons appropriate to serve in these roles. The Call for Chairs and Discussants for the 2013 Annual Meeting is open and can be accessed on the [AERA website](#) (click on “My AERA” at the top of the screen, log in, then scroll down and click on “2013 AERA Annual Meeting Online Portal”).

Persons interested in serving are encouraged to volunteer early. The portal for volunteers will remain open until August 31, 2012. After that date, program chairs and committees will be constituting sessions; at that stage they will identify the chairs and discussants for their units’ paper sessions and roundtables.

In volunteering, please keep in mind that the 2013 Annual Meeting will be held from Saturday, April 27, through Wednesday, May 1, in San Francisco, California. Also, please review the roles and responsibilities of chair and discussant, as set forth below. Serving as a chair or discussant is an important substantive role. The quality of sessions is enhanced by the participation of persons with appropriate substantive backgrounds and facilitative skills.

I. Volunteer for Service

How? Individuals interested in being considered as chairs or discussants are encouraged to register as a volunteer for specific units (divisions, SIGs, or committees) through the AERA 2013 Annual Meeting Online Portal. To access the portal, click on “My AERA” at the top of the AERA home page (<http://www.aera.net>), log in, and scroll down to the “AERA Annual Meeting” section.

When? Register now to volunteer as a chair and/or discussant. The system will remain open through 11:59 p.m. Pacific time on August 31, 2012, for volunteering as chair or discussant only. (Please note: Volunteer reviewers’ registration for the 2013 Annual Meeting closed in April of this year. Only the positions of chair and discussant are currently open.)

Where? Individuals may serve as chair or discussant for more than one unit. Keep in mind the participation limits as described in the Call for Submissions: An individual may not appear as first author on more than two submissions; in addition, an individual

may not appear on the program more than four times (e.g., in the role of chair, discussant, presenter, or participant).

Who? Any attendee may volunteer for consideration as a chair or discussant. Chairs and discussants need to have substantive background and expertise appropriate to the substance of the session; thus, please answer the questions relevant to your background and experience. Graduate students may serve as chairs or discussants as long as they bring the appropriate level of expertise. All individuals selected as chairs or discussants are expected to register for and attend the Annual Meeting and be present at the scheduled sessions.

II. Paper Session and Roundtable Session Formats

Paper and roundtable session formats are used by program chairs to group accepted papers into sessions with different opportunities for discussant and audience participation.

Paper Session. Paper sessions must have a chair; discussant(s) are optional. Chairs and discussants for paper sessions are identified by unit program chairs or by chairs and program committees. In paper sessions, authors present abbreviated versions of their papers, followed by comments and/or critique, if there is a discussant, and audience discussion. A discussant or discussants are to be included as part of a paper session only if their expertise can add to the understanding of the papers. A typical structure for a session with four or five papers allots approximately 5 minutes for the chair's introduction to the session, 10 minutes per author presentation, 20 minutes of critique, and 15 minutes of discussion. Session chairs may adjust the timing based on the number of presentations and discussants (where applicable) scheduled for the session. Individuals must be attentive to the time allocation for presenting their work. In the case of multiple-authored papers, more than one person may present, but multiple presenters are urged to be attentive to the total time available to them. They should take steps to ensure that including more than one speaker does not detract from the overall presentation of the work or infringe on the time allotments for other presentations.

Roundtable Session. Roundtable sessions allow maximum interaction among presenters and with attendees. Papers accepted for roundtables are grouped by the program chair into tables of three to five authors of accepted papers, clustered around shared interests. Each roundtable at a roundtable session has a designated chair knowledgeable about the research area, to facilitate interaction and participation. Because the emphasis is on interaction among authors and attendees, there are no discussants. Each roundtable session is scheduled for a 90-minute time slot. A typical structure for a roundtable session with four or five papers allots approximately 5 minutes for the chair's introduction, 10 minutes per paper presentation, and 40 minutes of discussion. Authors wishing to display information may do so from their own laptop computer screens. A roundtable presenter who plans to use a laptop should be sure the battery is charged, as no power source is provided. Because of the physical configuration of this type of session, no additional audiovisual equipment, such as a screen or overhead projector, is provided.

III. Chair Role and Responsibilities

Chair Role. Chairs are responsible for the overall planning and execution of sessions to facilitate their success. Chairs are expected to orient the audience to the

session and raise issues that can facilitate audience engagement. In some instances, chairs may also be invited to serve as discussants. Chairs need to be attentive to time allocations, but the role of chair involves much more than keeping time.

Chair Responsibilities. The responsibilities of chairs fall into three time periods: before the session, at the session, and after the session. A session's success may depend on the chair's ability to limit the time of presentations and temper discussion from the floor to allow sufficient time for interaction.

Before the session, chairs are expected to (1) ensure that all presenters upload final papers no later than April 5, 2013, (2) read the papers and organize their thoughts to effectively introduce and guide the session, and (3) contact any discussants to begin a conversation about shaping the session.

At the session, chairs are responsible to (1) open the session at the scheduled time and orient the audience to the context with a few brief introductory remarks, (2) introduce the participants before their presentations, (3) limit time for each presenter and discussant, (4) raise issues that can facilitate audience engagement and moderate panel or floor discussions, (5) adjourn the session in time to allow the room to clear before the next session begins, and (6) be mindful of accessibility of the session and help AERA cultivate a universally accessible environment.

In addition, chairs will be asked to encourage attendees to take part in an attendee evaluation, should the session be selected for inclusion in the survey to be conducted on a sample of sessions at the 2013 Annual Meeting.

After the session, chairs are expected to complete an online information form to provide baseline information about the session.

IV. Discussant Role and Responsibilities

Discussant Role. Discussants serve as commentators on the papers and on issues or substantive points pertaining to them. They are responsible for providing professional and constructive criticism and raising issues for broader consideration that connect to the works. It is expected that a discussant may draw upon his or her expertise or views in commenting on papers or presentations. The session, however, is not the appropriate occasion for a discussant to present his or her own work.

Discussant Responsibilities. The responsibilities of discussants fall into two time periods: before the session and at the session.

Before the session, discussants are expected to (1) read the papers to organize their thoughts and prepare comments, (2) prepare appropriate analytical or critical commentaries on the significance and contributions of the papers, and (3) connect with the session chair to review the shape of the session and time constraints on the length of discussion.

At the session, discussants are responsible to (1) serve as commentators on the papers and on issues or substantive points pertaining to them, and (2) provide comments on papers that will assist authors in taking steps toward publication and minimize the time between presentation and publication. The latter kind of commentary may include remarks during the session, comments written directly on the papers, and/or discussions with the authors.