



## FROM THE PRESIDENT: A NATIONAL TEST – TWENTY YEARS LATER

Wayne J. Camara, *The College Board*



The current effort to develop common core standards and assessments that would be adopted across states is one of the most important and exciting events today in educational assessments. In many ways this effort resembles two previously failed attempts to establish consistent standards and measures across the country, but the current process is more innovative and likely to have a long term impact on educational assessment whether or not it attains most of its stated goals. In my first column as NCME President I will attempt to compare this effort with the previous attempts during the first Bush administration and Clinton White House to develop national assessments as a key lever for educational change.

### Twenty Years Ago!

In the early 1990's George H.W. Bush establish a common assessment as part of measuring the national education goals associated with America 2000. By the year 2000<sup>1</sup>:

1. All children in America will start school ready to learn.
2. The high school graduation rate will increase to at least 90 percent.
3. American students will leave grades four, eight, and twelve having demonstrated competency in challenging subject matter including English, mathematics, science, history, and geography; and every school in America will ensure that all students learn to use their minds well, so they may be prepared for responsible citizenship, further learning, and productive employment in our modern economy.
4. U.S. students will be first in the world in science and mathematics achievement.
5. Every adult American will be literate and will possess the knowledge and skills necessary to compete in a global economy and exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
6. Every school in America will be free of drugs and violence and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning.

The nation's governors, led by Bill Clinton and Richard Riley (later to serve as Clinton's secretary of education), initiated this effort to establish national goals and subsequently, a voluntary national test, but in close coordination with the Bush administration. Part of the strategy to achieve these goals (America 2000) included establishing "American Achievement Tests," a series of voluntary assessments aimed at measuring student growth in "world class" academic standards in core academic subjects: English, math, science, history, and geography.

During this time, NCME joined the American Educational Research Association and the American Psychological Association in cautioning against many of the proposed uses for voluntary national tests (VNT) and many of the political assumptions about how a new federal panel could certify different standards and assessments across states and arrive at comparable measures in achieving standards. In fact, the three associations issued a press release that cited key provisions from the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (AERA, APA, and NCME, 1986) that appeared inconsistent with the stated concept for national assessments that was promoted by the National Governor's Association and even a couple of prominent educational researchers who had influence in working with the policymakers on these proposals. Of course, this legislation died in Congress during the Bush years, but was to be resurrected.

<sup>1</sup> America 2000: An Education Strategy, p. 3, U.S. Department of Education, 1991

## Fast forward to 1994 and the passage of ‘Goals 2000’

The six national educational goals from the America 2000 were supplemented by two additional goals in Goals 2000 legislation [Goals 2000: Educate America Act (P.L. 103-227)]<sup>2</sup>:

- The nation's teaching force will have access to programs for the continued improvement of their professional skills and the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to instruct and prepare all American students for the next century.
- Every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

Now the second push for VNTs occurred. In his 1997 State of the Union address, President Clinton appealed to states to "adopt high national standards, and by 1999, [to] test every 4th grader in reading and every 8th grader in math to make sure these standards are met." He further argued that "Good tests will show us who needs help, what changes in teaching to make, and which schools to improve. They can help us to end social promotion. For no child should move from grade school to junior high, or junior high to high school until he or she is ready"<sup>3</sup>. The grade four reading tests were to be linked to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) content frameworks and the grade eight math tests to The Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS) content frameworks. The stated purpose of the tests was to give parents and teachers an indicator of their children's overall proficiency compared to national and international norms, which is quite similar to the goals associated with today's common standards and assessments. Goals 2000 originally established a national panel (National Education Standards and Improvement Council - NESIC) to oversee the adoption of academic standards by states and will provide money for states to create and carry out plans for students to meet those standards. NESIC was to have a broad range of powers to enable it to implement national testing, national curriculum, and uniform material requirements for schools and uniform instruction.

The tests were originally planned to come on line in the spring of 1999 with field testing and linking done in the spring of 1998. A contract was awarded to the American Institute for Research (AIR), which led a consortium of many large scale testing organizations that carried out a substantial amount of the initial work required to develop items and test forms. Congress eventually cut off funding for the VNTs as mounting criticism and concerns from several different fronts emerged. What are some of the take-away's from these experiences of the last 25 years to establish national tests, and how does the current effort differ from these initiatives?

First, it would be incorrect to label these attempts as failures. The efforts to establish national standards and assessments sustained and fueled the "standards based reform movement," which had started in the 1980s and ultimately reshaped the educational assessment industry. Criterion-referenced tests (CRTs) have taken on a much larger role in local and state assessment. Today, the large norm-referenced achievement testing that once dominated school testing programs has largely been replaced by CRTs designed and developed for the state. This transformation in assessment changed the industry, and some of the largest testing organizations were unable to make this shift.

Second, there is now a consensus that specific and measurable content standards are required for schools and students. Not only are content standards that specify the skills and knowledge required for success incorporated across all states and public schools, we have made tremendous strides in defining the performance levels (and descriptors) associated with content, and are paying increased attention to the importance of learning trajectories that specify the cognitive and developmental progression associated with content mastery. The demand has also stimulated many advances in our field, such as standard setting, growth modeling, score reporting, and evidence centered design.

Third, the increased focus on performance assessments has occurred because we are focusing more on the specific skills required for success. That is, the focus with NRTs has been on student performance in relation to other students (or school performance in relation to other schools). The standards-based movement has forced educators and assessment professionals to specify the content and the type of skills associated with different performance outcomes. In turn, this has required us to examine the types of assessment items and tasks we develop and ensure they are measuring the appropriate construct and provide meaningful information.

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<sup>2</sup> For anyone who would like to review many of the news clips and original legislation from Goals 2000 go to <http://www.bc.edu/research/csteep/CTESTWEB/voluntary/vnt.html>

<sup>3</sup> Clinton, W. J. State of the Union address, February 5, 1997

Fourth, the previous efforts to develop common assessments highlighted many technical issues that can impact the success of such efforts. Several important studies were completed by the National Research Council (NRC) that addressed the difficulties in linking scores across different tests, or pointed out the risks of high stakes testing on student decisions. NCME members were instrumental in all these reports, which ultimately influenced the direction of the VNTs. A 1999 report by NRC entitled “High stakes, testing for tracking, promotion and graduation” lists several cautions with the VNTs of the past that are equally relevant to measurement professionals that are advising states and consortium on the current effort:

- Common assessment frameworks without common curriculum and instructional experiences raise the same “opportunity to learn” issues that were the concern of the VNT in the late 1990s. If states agree on common assessments, but schools continue to implement curriculum or instructional progressions in different ways, it will impact the validity of interpretations and comparisons. For example, at the high school level, some schools will continue to implement a physics first model or integrated math curriculum while other schools adopt more traditional course sequences in these areas. Can a common assessment be designed that is equally fair and accessible to students in these two different conditions and still provide the level of standardization needed to make valid decisions about schools and students? Can we compare student growth in algebra across schools that differ dramatically in instructional time for that course and teacher quality and experience in math?
- In 1999 the concern was with the public release of items, but today similar concerns exist if test items are part of an open-licensed or open-source structure that would allow access to items that will be used for accountability. That is, if districts and schools can gain access to items (for instruction or interim assessments) that will later be used for accountability purposes, the fairness and validity of resulting scores would be threatened. In addition, the types of extended-testing windows that is often required in order to test all 5th graders on a computer-based assessment often means that students in the same school have differential access to items and tasks. Fairness, validity and reliability are threatened when items become available to students and teachers in advance of administration.
- Finally, the NRC report noted that VNTs were unlikely to serve multiple purposes well. The report stated that tests used to communicate higher academic standards should not be used by schools for tracking, promotion or graduation, and that placement uses would largely be restricted to within-school decisions. The Committee cited the need to make more explicit statements about the purposes of the tests that could guide research on intended and unintended educational consequences.

## **Common Standards and Common Assessments Today**

The above recommendations from the NRC report seem as relevant today as they were over a decade ago. However, there are numerous ways that the current effort to develop common assessments has benefited from past experience. Today it appears that only two consortiums of states will be funded to develop common assessments. This approach certainly makes comparability within a consortium less of an issue, but there are two major threats to comparability that need to be addressed.

First, when multiple states are coerced to come to agreement on a common assessment design, there is a tendency to want to offer state choice or multiple pathways within that consortium. For example, some states want the common assessments to be delivered exclusively on computer, while other states are likely to rely primarily on paper and pencil administrations for the initial years. Some states prefer end-of-course tests in high school (e.g., Algebra I) while others ask for end-of-domain tests (e.g., a common high school math test). States may also differ in terms of augmenting a common core, administration windows, and scoring of complex performance assessments. These are just a few of the many design issues that can impact comparability within a consortium if states are unwilling to develop a common rigorous solution. In addition, developing an assessment framework from common standards is simply not adequate to ensure scores can be compared across assessments. If two consortium are funded it will be difficult to make reliable comparisons about students, schools and states across different assessments. If one consortium decides to measure specific skills through constructed response tasks while a second consortium measures the same standards via objective items, these comparisons become even more strained. The extent that the resulting assessments differ in terms of delivery mode, testing windows, content coverage, item formats, accommodations, and overall design will impact efforts to make sense out of assessment results on a national level.

Unlike the 1990s, many more NCME members seem to be substantively involved in the initial attempts to shape and improve the design of these common assessments. Unlike the 1990s, the US Department of Education held a series of hearings and issued calls for public comment, and consortium managers have actively involved measurement experts in many of the most complex design issues that are arising. No group has been more instrumental than the National Center for Improvement of Educational Assessment (NCIEA), which, along with many other measurement experts from academia, research centers, and assessment organizations, has provided input and advice to key stakeholders. There are many more NCME members engaged at the state level who serve on technical advisory committees, or have been involved in reviewing and developing the common

standards for college and career readiness<sup>4</sup>. This has been a more inclusive process than efforts in the 1990s, and there has been more engagement by states and groups such as Achieve, CCSSO and NGA with measurement experts.

There are also some ways that the current effort may be more challenging than previous efforts. For example, despite the decade or so since the last attempt to create common assessments, many of the same names are still the most prominent figures in driving these assessment design models. At a recent invitational conference that highlighted the leading thinkers on assessment design issues, there were few new faces and most of the innovations and reactions were provided by the same names that were present in the VNT efforts from 1990 – 1999. The “big ideas” that define many of the assessment models proposed by this group appear to go well beyond typical purposes for assessments and propose fundamental changes in teaching and learning in America through assessment. Whether you agree or disagree with those directions, assessments alone are unlikely to achieve such outcomes. When assessments are burdened by such expectations, measurement professionals worry about the potential for corruption, misuse, and the ultimate failure of assessments. Measurement and assessment experts need to be more involved in the design of assessments not just the construction and implementation of tests, and we need to embrace additional experts if we are to broaden our thinking about assessments that can be implemented today and be relevant to the future. We need to articulate the types of purposes assessments can serve and caution advocates to the limitations of any assessment.

Another challenge may be the increased role of major foundations that have the resources to influence and shape assessment designs. Will these foundations unduly influence and support specific designs and impair assessment concepts that are inconsistent with their vision? Will the prospect of millions of dollars of foundation support unduly influence the US DOE and state consortiums in ways that are counterproductive? What is the proper role of foundations in shaping policy and programs through financial support? Whether common standards are adopted by five states or fifty states, and whether common assessments are eventually developed and implemented or not, educational assessment will change in significant ways from the common core standards effort. We must be cautious that all ideas and solutions are evaluated fairly and rigorously and avoid a rush to designs simply because they might carry the prospect of external funding.

At the end of the day, what can NCME do and what should NCME do to inform discussion and thinking about the technical and policy issues related to common core standards and assessments? As noted above, our individual members and measurement organizations have been engaged and involved in much of this work already. NCME is not a political organization, yet we are comprised of scientists and practitioners who are knowledgeable about issues of assessment, measurement and accountability. We also have standards and best practices that should guide our response. Among the common ground we can find concerning common assessments would be:

- To reinforce the importance of specifying the intended purpose of the assessment and reminding policymakers that assessments rarely serve more than two purposes well. In the US DOE’s call for comments, they identified nine potential uses for common assessments. I don’t believe that there would be much disagreement among experts that such an assumption is untenable.
- To insist that assessments adhere to the Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing. The Standards specify the relevant technical requirements for the development, use, and validation of assessments, and they should play a much more prominent role during the design and conception of the assessment and accountability systems envisioned under the common core standards and not simply introduced at the end of the process to evaluate the assessment.
- To emphasize the role of validity in the design and development of assessments. This begins with clearly specifying the intended purpose(s) of any assessment and includes multiple lines of evidence to support claims. For example, what methods are proposed to benchmark common standards with international assessments? Is there adequate evidence available to do this? The common core standards claim to be evidence-based, but there is often a huge gap between this claim and the actual evidence cited. How will we actually ensure that there is evidence that the skills, knowledge and rigor proposed in the standards translate to college and career readiness? Finally, what are the consequences of the assessment system and are there sufficient validity, reliability and fairness in their design to support decisions about student placement, student growth, school quality, etc.? And clearly, the amount of error or uncertainty surrounding any decisions that are to be made with such assessments should be specified.

There are many lessons we have learned from previous efforts to design national standards and assessments. It is important for educational measurement and assessment professionals to support the current efforts once again, but we can only do so by reminding stakeholders of the limitations to any assessment as well as reminding ourselves of the failures of past efforts.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.corestandards.org/>

# A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

*Thanos Patelis, The College Board*

In this issue we welcome our current president's, Wayne Camara from the College Board, first column discussing a major current initiative that's sweeping the country now and reminding us of the importance of both fundamental measurement principles and learning from the past. Additionally, we have the graduate student column by Dubravka Svetina from Arizona State University, who has worked with other graduate students to comment on their experiences at our annual meeting in Denver. We also have some post-mortem comments by our program co-chairs, Bob Henson and John Wilse, both from UNC-Greensboro. Per our past-president's recommendation, Terry Ackerman, the member spotlight in this issue is on the central office staff members who make the operations of NCME possible. Finally, we have a number of important announcements both related to NCME business and other interesting things. As always, please drop me an email with suggestions. Sincerely and at your service, Thanos.

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## THE ANNUAL MEETING OF NCME: COMMENTS ABOUT THE EXPERIENCE

*Dubravka Svetina, Arizona State University*

Greetings grad students,

It is hard to believe that it's been over a month since our annual meeting. In this article, my goal is to introduce several fellow graduate students (some of whom are members of the Graduate Student Issues Committee – GSIC) and offer their experiences at the annual meeting in Denver. I posed several questions to each of them regarding their experiences at the annual meeting and their involvement with the organization in general. Please meet my fellow graduate students and below are their responses to my questions. We hope you find them informative!



**Aminah F. Perkins** is a Doctoral Student in the Division of Educational Studies at Emory University



**Robert J. Zwisser**, MSc works as a Research Scientist at the Psychometric Research Center in the Netherlands



**Lietta "Lee" Scott** is a Doctoral Student in Educational Psychology at Arizona State University and is also an Assessment Research Scientist at Arizona Department of Education



**Chad Gotch** is a Doctoral Student in Educational Psychology at Washington State University

### What are some ways that you have been involved with NCME?

**Aminah:** Currently I am a GSIC member (2009-2011). The main projects I have assisted with are: (a) Reviewed poster proposals for graduate student poster session; (b) Assisted with organizing the graduate student poster session 2010, particularly through matching proposals with reviewers, and corresponding with graduate students; and (c) Analyzed survey data along with another member of the committee undertaken by the GSIC in an effort to assess the current process of reviewing proposals for the graduate student poster session.

**Robert:** This was my first conference experience. I didn't hear about NCME prior to reading a call for new members to the Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC) of NCME. This interested me in reading up on the organization and prompted me to attend the Denver annual meeting. In addition, I attended a couple of preconference workshops.

**Lee:** I have made a point to try to be involved with NCME in various capacities. In the five years I've been a member, I have attended four conferences. At each conference I've take the opportunity to attend multiple pre-conference training sessions and found them always valuable in expanding my understanding of the material presented. I've acted as a reviewer for both regular and graduate sessions and found that the process made me grow as a researcher. Finally, because I approached a representative of NCME during the 2008 conference and asked if there was any way I could become involved and help out, I was selected as

a member of the Membership Committee. I was then nominated for and confirmed as co-chair for this committee for 2009 - 2011 and am currently serving in that capacity.

**Chad:** My primary involvement with NCME has been through the Graduate Student Issues Committee (GSIC). I am now in my second year of service on that committee, and hold the chair position for the current school year. I also served as a reviewer last year for the Graduate Student Poster Session held at the annual meeting. The 2010 annual meeting in Denver was the first one I was able to attend, and I very much enjoyed the experience.

### **Did your involvement enrich your graduate school experience? If so, how?**

**Aminah:** Absolutely. My participation with NCME primarily through the GSIC has afforded me the opportunity to network with other graduate students in my research area. Additionally, my involvement has presented me with opportunities to provide service to the measurement community.

**Robert:** Since this was my first experience, I enjoyed learning that many researchers from all over the world attended and presented at the conference. The number of specialists in many areas of our field attending showed me that the network is really large. I attended two workshops: Test Equating Methods and Practices and Bayesian Networks in Educational Assessment. I chose equating because I work for the testing company, and this was an efficient way to get an overview of the different methods used in equating. I chose the Bayesian nets workshop because it is not something typically used in the testing industry in the Netherlands, and I was interested in the ideas behind the Bayesian approach to perhaps use it in my own research. I think that conference workshops might be of interest to graduate students because they are an efficient way to gain an overview of a particular topic in our field.

**Lee:** Being involved with NCME has been one of the highlights of my graduate experience. Nowhere else could I gain so much knowledge in so short a time. (Every conference I come home with my brain on overload.) Everyone I have met has been wonderful. They are always willing to help out if asked and ready with words of wisdom to ease the path from student to professional.

**Chad:** My involvement with NCME both at the annual meeting and through my work on the GSIC has greatly enriched my graduate program. I come from a program with small enrollment that is starting to re-build a measurement track after a number of dormant years. My involvement with NCME has put me in touch with a greater variety of fellow students and provided me several potential mentors to supplement the resources of my academic program.

### **What did you like/enjoy/appreciate the most about attending the 2010 Annual meeting?**

**Aminah:** I enjoyed being able to meet with other graduate students. I also enjoyed attending various sessions where I was able to hear about the new ideas being forged by top researchers.

**Robert:** There were some presentations that I enjoyed, especially those related to reporting sub-scores on subscales. I didn't gain a lot from some of the talks, especially because not every researcher has good presentation skills, which made some presentations a bit boring and more difficult to follow. In the future, I would like to see more of a social side of the conference, especially events related to graduate students. Something along the lines of a low budget dinner for grad students and events where grad students interact more closely with senior scholars in the field would certainly be beneficial given the size of the conference. As a member of GSIC, I plan to discuss these ideas with the rest of the committee.

**Lee:** I was very excited about a couple of workshops I attended at the conference this spring. Joe Ryan's A practitioner's introduction to equating was a good introduction to many equating topics but especially focused on equating large-scale state assessments. The Tips for Graduate Students presented by Deborah Harris, Julio Sanclemente, Andrew Ho, and Brenda Jacobs was particularly lively and informative. Since the conference, I've been impressed that Dr. Harris continues to contact the attendees with updates of ideas for future jobs and resources. All four presenters seem to truly care about the students who attended. Aside from the workshops, this year I have finally started feeling at home at the conference. I've started making friends among the people I see year after year and, I believe, am starting to be recognized as a member of the measurement community.

**Chad:** At the annual meeting I most enjoyed the chance to connect with people. I met people face-to-face that I had only communicated via email previously. I met people whose articles I had read. And I met people—graduate students and faculty/professionals alike—with whom I had no familiarity prior to the meeting. I appreciated the opportunity to further/forge relationships with all of them. I also would like to mention the NCME fun run/walk. Yes, it's early in the morning, but it's a wonderful opportunity to meet people in a different context.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE OUR ORGANIZATION GREAT – PLUMER, DREW, NATE & DIANNE

*Thanos Patelis, The College Board*

Why do people continue to come to our annual conference? Why do we have so many members that once they become members and come to the conference continue to do so every year for decades? Well, it's not only the quality, innovation, and utility of the content, but the people themselves. So, in an effort to get us to know the people, each issue will offer excerpts from interviews of the people who make our organization great.

This interview is with central office staff members from the Rees Group working for NCME (pictures shown in same order as names listed here): **Plumer Lovelace, III**, Executive Director, **Drew E. Nelesen**, Meeting Planner, and **Nate Ehresman**, Membership Coordinator. Also playing a significant role as part of NCME's association management team is **Dianne Benson**. Dianne serves as NCME's Finance Liaison and is responsible for helping to create the annual budget and providing the monthly financials. Dianne was out of the office during the production of this issue and, therefore, regrettably unable to participate in the interview. The central office staff members are responsible for supporting and managing the infrastructure and day-to-day operations of NCME. In an effort for us to get to know them, we asked them a number of questions and the excerpts of their responses are provided below.



### Who are the central office staff members from the Rees Group working with NCME? What are their names and backgrounds?

**Drew Nelesen:** I was born in Camanche, Iowa and graduated from Drake University in Des Moines. After college I worked with an association management company in the Twin Cities before moving to Madison in March of 2008. I've been working for The Rees Group, Inc. and NCME ever since!

**Nate Ehresman:** Originally from the Chicagoland area, I received my degree from Crossroads College in Rochester, MN. I am in my fifth year of working alongside NCME at TRG.

**Plumer Lovelace:** I grew up Milwaukee, Wisconsin. I came to Madison, Wisconsin in 1982 to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison. After graduating I was hired first by UW-Madison, then by the Credit Union National Association [CUNA]. The latter is where my association management career began. It is also where I first met the owner of The Rees Group, Susan Rees. We worked together for several years before she left CUNA to start her own association management business. I joined The Rees Group in 2008.

### What are the roles and responsibilities of each person?

**Drew Nelesen:** I am the meeting planner for NCME. I spend most of my time working with the program chairs preparing for the annual meeting. I also handle the site selection and details for all NCME board meetings.

**Nate Ehresman:** Membership Coordinator – membership services and support.

**Plumer Lovelace:** As the Executive Director of NCME, I wear multiple hats. My primary contact point is the NCME Executive Board, and Chairs of each Committee. My range of duties include serving as project manager and association consultant for the Board President, helping each member of the Board complete their respective tasks (Examples: Award nominations and distribution, membership growth initiatives, assessment of NCME insurance needs, etc.). I also serve as an "ex officio" member of several NCME committees. When I am doing my job well, the membership of NCME are generally pleased with the association and each Board member is able to accomplish his / her tasks in a comfortable manner.

### What are the interests and avocations of each person?

**Drew Nelesen:** I enjoy spending time with my husband and working on our new home. I guess that means my favorite pastimes are yard work, painting and cleaning! I also enjoy playing volleyball and tennis, reading, and vacations at the beach!

**Nate Ehresman:** I have just recently gotten into running, and will be in my first half marathon in late August. I enjoy reading, barbeque, and all things Chicago Bears.

**Plumer Lovelace:** I generally follow the “work hard, play hard” life philosophy. My hobbies include art, photography, weight training, mentoring, travel and motorcycles. I also enjoy spending time with friends and family.

### **What’s it like working for NCME? Are there any anecdotes or experiences (hopefully pleasant) in working with the Board and NCME membership that each person would like to share?**

**Drew Nelesen:** Members of NCME are intelligent, fun, hard working and really care about the organization. Working with such great people really makes our jobs easier and much more enjoyable. My favorite time of year is at the annual meeting where I get to interact and meet many of the individuals I’ve been working with throughout the year. It brings me great joy to see the annual meeting come together and to see the membership so excited to be there.

**Nate Ehresman:** As a result of its well-defined vision, vibrant membership, and efficiently run directives, the organization is a joy to work with. My favorite time of the NCME year is during the annual conference. I love handing out candy at the information table while meeting the bright individuals I have been corresponding with all year.

**Plumer Lovelace:** As Executive Director for The Rees Group, I serve three client associations. NCME is certainly my favorite association. The governance infrastructure of the organization is solid. The policies and procedures that allow the association to function were extremely well-planned and thought out by the founding members of the association. That is a rare trait in an association and it makes my job much easier. I am also forever impressed by the quality and intelligence of NCME’s volunteers. An association is only as good as its capacity for volunteerism. As a result, I believe that NCME has the capacity to sustain itself for many, many years to come.

### **What are some new areas that each person would like to see NCME move into?**

**Drew Nelesen:** NCME made a big step forward by offering webcasts at the 2010 Annual Meeting. This is a great new offering and I am excited to see it continue and evolve in the coming years. In addition to the webcasts, I’d like to see the annual meeting have more of a presence with better signage and branding. I’d like to kick up our marketing and branding efforts to help us grow our membership and gain attendance at the annual meeting.

**Nate Ehresman:** From a membership networking perspective, I believe it may be time for NCME to upgrade its listserv system to more of a threaded discussion forum. The current listserv is an older system with many technical limitations. At times this creates some difficulty when users load their messages and can inhibit free flowing communication.

**Plumer Lovelace:** As both Drew and Nate have indicated, new technology offers NCME the ability to expand the reach of the association far beyond what was possible 5 or 10 years ago. Without much effort, the association has generated a significant international membership. Future Executive Board members will ultimately need to decide how best to address this evolution. Additionally, NCME has traditionally only marketed the conference to members and past attendees. The current Executive Board has authorized additional marketing effort to provide conference information to a larger, non-member audience. Hopefully this effort will increase the number of non-members who attend the conference and create an opportunity for NCME to gain new members.

### **Is there any message or comment that each person would like to share with our membership?**

**Drew Nelesen:** It is a pleasure to work with the members of NCME. I would like to thank each volunteer for your commitment to the organization. If you’re not already involved in a committee, please consider getting involved. I think you would find the experience valuable and rewarding. The NCME staff would love to work with you!

**Nate Ehresman:** I would like to thank each NCME officer, chair, volunteer, and member. Collectively, you have created an appealing, valuable, and effective organization. It is truly an honor working with you.

**Plumer Lovelace:** I would like to let each NCME member know how fortunate they are to have their industry represented by such a quality association. I have had the good fortune to work with dozens of associations, large and small. NCME is one of the best associations that I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

## 2010 NCME ANNUAL MEETING: COMMENTS FROM THE PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS



Our program co-chairs, Bob Henson and John Willse, North Carolina University-Greensboro, produced a wonderful program for our annual meeting in Denver, CO. Below please find their comments. Please also join us in extending our deepest appreciation for all of their efforts! Thank you!!

Please go to the following link to see pictures from the meeting in Denver:  
<http://www.ncme.org/meeting/2010/images.cfm>



This year's NCME program included 18 workshop training sessions, 13 invited sessions, 20 coordinated sessions, and 51 paper sessions (comprising 217 individual papers). There was an excellent turn out this year and we wanted to thank everyone for their hard work.

In addition, we felt that many of the members of NCME may not be aware of the steps used to organize these sessions. Because we are in the process of improving this procedure, we wanted to share a little insight about the process and how it is being changed.

Starting with the call for proposals, there were 20 categories listed in the call. We set up a system of selection to fill five rooms across three days (5 2-hour sessions, 9 1.5-hour sessions). Paper proposals were sent out for review to at least 3 reviewers (a member of an educational institution, a member of a testing organization, and a graduate student). Coordinated session proposals received a fourth reviewer. Most reviewers were assigned six proposals (remember to volunteer this year even if you don't submit a proposal!!)

Selections were made using the reviewer ratings and comments. Based on the volume of submissions (425 proposals; 49 coordinated sessions and 376 paper presentations) we determined that roughly a 50 percent selection rate for papers and 30 percent selection rate for coordinated sessions would fill the available session slots. During the process, NCME was able to obtain space for an extra meeting room, which required an increase in the selection rate to 58 percent for papers and 41 percent for coordinated sessions. We initially ensured that roughly 50 percent of paper proposals were selected from each of the 20 categories. Accepting by category helped ensure that the research interests of the submitting members of NCME were reflected in the final program. Additional selections above that 50 percent threshold were made among the best of the remaining proposals without regard to the category-level acceptance rates. After papers were formed into sessions, discussants and moderators were assigned to those sessions.

By early January, the program was fairly well set. However, no schedule could be released at that point. NCME waits for the release of the AERA annual program (we had access to the AERA program about one week before the general membership) to reconcile any conflicts (e.g., a presenter in an AERA and NCME session at the same time). All conflicts are resolved by changing the NCME program. Several changes were often needed to resolve a single conflict, as each move in the schedule could introduce new conflicts. After the schedule was completed, it still needed to be put into a final print-ready form. This process explains why there is usually a lag between the announcement of AERA's schedule and NCME's schedule.

Moving forward, all incoming annual meeting co-Chairs will undergo preparation in the spring before they begin planning for the next year's annual meeting. The NCME board hopes that formalizing the process used by Program co-Chairs will improve the efficiency of planning and provide more opportunity for improvement year-by-year. The role of Program co-Chair can now be thought of in terms of a three year cycle. In the year before planning the program the incoming co-Chairs learn about the process and offer suggestions for improvement. Then there is the planning year, followed by a post planning year where the now previous Program co-Chairs can be available to consult with the new current year Program co-Chairs.

Thank you for a great year of participation at the NCME 2010 annual meeting!

## **ANNOUNCEMENTS: NCME**

### **Call for Nominations: NCME Website Content Editor**

The NCME Publications Committee is soliciting nominations for the content editor for the NCME Website. This individual will be responsible for the content appearing on the website between December 2010 and November 2013. The NCME Publications Committee in collaboration with the NCME Website Management Committee will screen nominations. These committees will offer a slate to the president who, in turn, makes a recommendation for appointment to the NCME Board of Directors.

The purpose of the NCME website is to assist NCME in fulfilling its mission to advance the science and practice of measurement in education. Thus, the website is to provide support to NCME members related to their involvement in the organization, as well as to provide resources for members and non-members of NCME who have interests in technical and policy issues related to educational measurement. A general description of the Website Content Editor's position, including responsibilities and qualifications, follows this call.

If you are interested in this position or if you would like to nominate a colleague, please contact Mark Gierl, Publications Committee Chair by email, [mark.gierl@ualberta.ca](mailto:mark.gierl@ualberta.ca). If you would like more information about this position, please contact Kris Waltman, Website Management Chair by email, [kris-waltman@uiowa.edu](mailto:kris-waltman@uiowa.edu), or by phone: 319-624-6024.

Deadline for nominations is **August 31, 2010**.

### **Call for Proposals: NCME Annual Meeting**

The proposal submission system is now open for the 2011 NCME Annual Meeting! Please visit [www.ncme.org](http://www.ncme.org) to submit your proposal. The deadline for submission is **11:59 p.m. PST on August 1, 2010**.

Please note that NCME will only accept electronic proposals submitted through the NCME website and you must register in order to submit a proposal.

The registration system also enables you to volunteer to serve in your area(s) of expertise such as:

- a) Reviewer of proposals;
- b) Session moderator; and/or
- c) Session discussant

We strongly encourage all NCME members to volunteer for one or more roles, as the quality of the Annual Meeting depends upon members serving in a range of capacities. You are not required to submit a proposal in order to volunteer.

Please check "yes" at the bottom of the registration page under the "Volunteer" section if you are willing to serve as a reviewer for the 2011 Program. For those of you who have served as reviewers for past Annual Meetings, we appreciate your valued input and time served.

Please be sure to register before the August 1 deadline if you are interested in serving as a Reviewer, Moderator, and/or Discussant.

Note: If submitting a proposal, you will be able to return to the website and submit it anytime before 11:59 p.m. PST, August 1, 2010.

Detailed instructions for using the system are provided online.

For questions and concerns about the website, please contact John Hofmann, [jhofmann@ncme.org](mailto:jhofmann@ncme.org), at the NCME National Office.

For questions regarding the Training Sessions, please contact the Training and Professional Development Chair: Amy Hendrickson at [ahendrickson@collegeboard.org](mailto:ahendrickson@collegeboard.org).

For questions regarding the Annual Meeting, please contact the program co-chairs: Cara Cahalan Laitusis or Sandip Sinharay at [ncme2011@ets.org](mailto:ncme2011@ets.org).

## OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

### APA Division 5 (Evaluation, Measurement, & Statistics) Sessions at the 2010 Convention, San Diego, CA

Division 5 has an outstanding program this year in San Diego, CA and we hope that you will plan to attend. With the exception of the Executive Committee Business Meeting the night before the conference, the programming of the sessions sponsored or co-sponsored by Division 5 begins on Thursday August 12 at 8:00 a.m. and continues through Sunday, August 15, 2010 at 2:00 p.m. Information about the program is available on the Division 5 website: <http://www.apa.org/divisions/div5/homepage.html>.

Selected presentations that may be of interest:

- *Survey of Multivariate Inferential Research in Major Journals* presented by Lisa L. Harlow, University of Rhode Island
- *Empirical Program of Quasi-Experimentation* presented by William R. Shadish, University of California-Merced
- *Testing: It's Not Just Psychometrics* presented by Lawrence J. Stricker, Educational Testing Services
- *Measurement of Perceived Risk: Quantitative, Social, Cognitive, and Health Perspectives* presented by Leona S. Aiken, Arizona State University
- *Future Directions in Personality Assessment Research* (Presidential Address) presented by Irving Weiner, University of South Florida
- *Continuous Parameter Estimation and Norming Methods* symposium involving Richard L. Gorsuch, Fuller Theological Seminary, Aurelio J. Figueredo, University of Arizona and Cecil R. Reynolds, Texas A&M University
- *Recent Advances in Propensity Score Methods* symposium involving Joseph Kang, Northwestern University, Felix J. Thoemmes, Texas A&M University, Peter Steiner, Northwestern University, and Stephen G. West, Arizona State University

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### The Psychometric Society is pleased to announce that the 75th Annual Conference of the Society will take place at the University of Georgia between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of July, 2010.

The Psychometric Society will hold its 75th Annual conference at The University of Georgia in Athens, Georgia. The conference will be held July 6th through 9th, 2010, with pre-conference workshops occurring on Tuesday, July 6th and the main meeting program beginning on Wednesday, July 7<sup>th</sup>. Go to the web for details: <http://projects.coe.uga.edu/imps/>

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