

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Richard J. Patz, ACT

I hope this message finds you preparing to join your colleagues at our NCME Annual Meeting in Washington, DC. The theme for our meeting this year—*Foundations and Frontiers: Advancing Educational Measurement for Research, Policy, and Practice*—has been manifested in a compelling program, put together with great care by program co-chairs Andrew Ho and Matt Johnson. You will find a rich representation of basic and applied research, policy and practice-relevant topics, and both familiar and emerging areas of focus for our field. A rich offering of training sessions, with a blend of old and new, is also to be found, thanks to training chair Xin Li and all of the contributors who proposed sessions.



We also join AERA in celebrating its 100th year. NCME's conference theme complements AERA's focus for its *Centennial: Public Scholarship to Educate Diverse Democracies*, which harkens back to the progressive roots of the organization in 1916 and highlights the real impact of educational research in society today. NCME members are invited to join the opening plenary event and reception, and we are encouraging our members to join AERA's awards luncheon, a celebration of the larger educational research community of which NCME is a vital part.

A tribute session honoring the life and contributions of Robert Linn is included on the AERA program, and I know this will be of interest to our NCME members. Bob was a true pioneer, serving as president of both AERA and NCME. NCME is making arrangements for the session to be recorded so it can be shared with those unable to attend.

Continuing to push forward in a year of many changes, we are piloting an online repository for conference papers and an app for navigating the program. Please give these a try, but also be patient and share your feedback so we can move toward a fully digital program publication in the future. This annual meeting will be the first managed by our new management company and its meetings team. Please be understanding as everyone involved does their very best to ensure a successful event.

Some of the other changes that NCME has experienced during the past year include: transition of our headquarters to Philadelphia, appointment of our Executive Director Joe Casey, launch of our new website, and the transition to a new program for managing conference paper submissions and program construction. We've seen the culmination of years of effort to launch our new book series, and we held the first outreach project of the NCME Mission Fund. You can now connect to [NCME on Facebook](#) and will soon be able to do so on LinkedIn. Many other innovations and initiatives are afoot across our many committees. The combined efforts and dedication of our membership and central office team have been remarkable to behold.

Wishing you all safe travels and a productive and stimulating NCME Annual Meeting!

FROM THE EDITOR

Heather Buzick, Educational Testing Service

It's an exciting and busy time of year for NCME as we approach the annual meeting, held this year in Washington, DC. If you see our program co-chairs, Andrew Ho and Matthew Johnson, and our training session chair, Xin Li, thank them for their extraordinary efforts putting together this year's program. In this issue Andrew and Matthew call out some interesting sessions planned for the annual meeting that take advantage of this year's location in our nation's capital. Xin has listed the training sessions that will be offered this year and encourages you to sign up. And for graduate students, see the fund development committee's news introducing partial sponsorship of graduate students' participation in training sessions.



What a great opportunity! Further, the membership committee has introduced a new mentoring program that pairs graduate students and early career measurement professionals with seasoned NCME members. And to help in making plans to get together with colleagues old and new while at the annual meeting, DC "nearly natives" Ellen Forte and Molly Faulkner-Bond have written a piece about entertainment in DC.

This issue has the last message from our outgoing president, Rich Patz. The Spotlight column introduces NCME Vice President and President-elect Mark Wilson. I encourage you to attend the NCME Breakfast and Business Meeting, where you'll get a chance to hear Rich's Presidential Address, collectively thank all the members who have volunteered their time to serve NCME, and listen to Mark say a few words about what's coming up for NCME in the next year.

This issue also debuts our new graduate student columnist for the year, Tiago Calico. S.E. Phillips discusses the new Every Student Succeeds Act in the Legal Corner, and for our special topic, Chris Domalski describes the reinvigorated "peer review" process for evaluating state assessments.

Congratulations to Mark Reckase, this year's recipient of the Career Contributions award. The Publications Committee announces new editors for JEM, ITEMS, and the NCME book series. We also have updates from the Diversity Issues and Testing Committee, the Membership Committee, and the Fund Development Committee.

There are two quickly approaching deadlines to which I would like to direct your attention:

March 18th. The deadline for making a contribution to NCME's Mission Fund that counts toward their Year 2 goal.

March 24th. The extended deadline to sign up for the mentoring program, NCMENToring (both mentors and mentees).

I encourage you to send me articles, suggestions for content, and feedback on this or previous issues. See you in DC!

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GRADUATE STUDENT CORNER

WHAT IS THIS PROFESSION I CHOSE TO PURSUE?

Tiago Calço, University of Maryland—College Park

As a Fulbright exchange scholar, born and raised in Portugal, it is my responsibility to promote an interchange of ideas between my country of origin and the United States. In this column, I will present assessment as it is perceived in my country. I then review some of the activities, skills, knowledge, and values that in the United States we tend to associate with the job of a psychometrician. I then attempt to reconcile these different stances with an eye to what the role of someone trained as a psychometrician may become in the future.



As I approach the end of my doctoral studies and prepare to join the job market, I find myself attempting to take stock of what my profession is. This is in part an effect of trying to anticipate the expectations that different types of employers have of a recent graduate in psychometrics. However, I have always grappled with this question since the beginning of my graduate studies. In fact, I began my studies assuming I knew exactly what a psychometrician “is,” or at the very least what one does. After 5 years of training and a brief internship, I think my grasp of the concept is as hazy as ever.

As a foreign national, my personal experience with education and assessment is very distinct from that of most graduate students who have been in the United States for a long time. From my perspective, the way education professionals perceive assessment in my home country has very little in common with that of U.S. professionals. This mismatch leads me to wonder how some aspects of the profession as viewed in the United States are informed, if not even determined, by the particularities of American society.

Would Assessment By Any Other Name Be Just As Valid?

I would like to take you on a trip across the Atlantic and present you with the Portuguese educational system, a small system that serves about two million students from first grade to college. This educational system makes very specific assumptions about the nature of the population it serves and the role of a public school in society. Students are not free to change schools; they are assigned to one based on their address. Schools are perceived as a sort of social equalizer, promoting the advancement of more disenfranchised students. However, schools in poorer areas are usually staffed with inexperienced teachers and are underfunded. Syllabi and high-stakes exams are determined by the central government.

Absent from this educational system is the notion of assessment. Make no mistake, there is some sort of “evaluation,” but not assessment. In fact, in Portuguese there is no vocabulary distinction between assessment and evaluation. The

only word, and even concept, available to stakeholders is *avaliação*, with the closest counterpart in the English language being *evaluation*.

Beyond lack of the word assessment, there is no notion of assessment being used to make inferences or support evidentiary reasoning. Rather, assessment is viewed as something used by a superior authority (i.e., the central government) to determine students' worth. Further, assessment is not seen as a tool for decision-making; indeed, there is no role for human judgment, evidentiary reasoning, or combined multiple measures. Rather, the decision is directly embedded in each test via a cut-score that defines a dichotomous outcome: pass or fail.

This perspective on the nature of assessment is partially a consequence of historical and cultural specificities, and it permeates the way all stakeholders talk about assessment. Those who create, administer, and use assessments, essentially the government, do not feel the need to document and advertise the justifications and methods for the assessments they impose (and they are perceived by all as an imposition). Paradoxically, not even the critics of standardized assessments raise issues about validity, reasonable methods for establishing cut scores, or public documentation of the test development cycle and supporting evidence.

Assessments are almost exclusively a high-stakes affair. In 12th grade, students take up to six 2-hour exams, each of which has a weight of 25% for their final grade in that particular course. The tests, we are told, are objective, fair, and safe. They are made of American items (that is, multiple-choice items that are viewed by Portuguese educators as useless), constructed response and short-answer items. There is only one form per exam, which is delivered by armed police on the day of the exam. They are "corrected" by trained teachers, a term that reflects the engrained idea that assessment is a form of quality control, not an instrument for gathering evidence that can guide decision-making.

Best practices in assessment and psychometrics are rarely followed. For example, there is no double scoring of open-ended responses, published statistics ignore item difficulty and discrimination, and estimates of test reliability or some argument for validity are not documented. Scores are reported in a raw format, from 0 to 200. Anything above 100 is a pass, although no documentation is available describing the process of deriving the cut score. These practices warranted the epithet of "psychometric pre-history" from one of my graduate advisors. I would qualify it in a different way: as an epistemological frame¹ that is the opposite of what in the United States is understood to be good practice in assessment.

What Assessment and the Role of a Psychometrician "Really" Are

What I have described is a Portuguese educational system that seems to have no role for a psychometrician. If no one asks for properly set standards and cut scores, of what good is someone trained in the bookmark method? If no one clamors for standard errors of measurement and prediction, why bother hiring someone who understands the implications of not quantifying the uncertainty that is inevitably associated with any educational assessment? Or from a different perspective, if no one is suing in court for damages caused by having life-changing decisions be informed by psychometrically unsound practices, why even bother in acknowledging the importance of such methods at all?

Most readers of this newsletter would agree that the answer to these questions is one and the same: because these things matter. Because what is at stake is too important to leave too much space for uncertainty. Because we value principled methods, clarity, falsifiability and the opportunity to communicate and improve our practices. Because an assessment has to have an argument to what is and is not included beyond "because the experts say so."

Alas, what is valued is culturally and historically informed, rather than an impartial choice. Societies that have a history of centralized government tend to value authority over public discussion and criticism. Societies with a history of public debate value methods that foster and bound such debates.

So beyond the research and statistical skills developed in graduate school, what should a psychometrician be? To what values and principles should a psychometrician adhere to? More importantly, how should a psychometrician engage with other stakeholders in education, licensure, and certification? It is all the more imperative to ask these questions as the practice of assessment extends to modes such as games and simulations, which raise novel and very challenging

¹ See Schaffer, W. (2006). Epistemic frames for epistemic game. *Computers and Education*, 46, 223-234.

methodological questions. One obvious source of answers to these questions are professional standards, such as those issued by institutions like the American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association, and the National Council on Measurement in Education (<http://teststandards.org/>) in the context of the United States. I would point out, however, that such standards are the result of a continuing conversation, over decades, by professionals that share similar cultural and social experiences. They are a guide because those coming into the profession acknowledge the judicious way in which they have been developed and revised over time. Even in the international stage there are professional standards, such as the International Testing Commission's Guidelines on Test Use (https://www.intestcom.org/files/guideline_test_use.pdf). One of the goals of these guidelines is to bridge the cultural and linguistic gap between practitioners by establishing a shared core of principles and practices that can promote fair and quality assessment across cultures. The challenge for every new generation is to find a way to continue that conversation while bringing novel experiences, perspectives, goals, and even values that reflect the ever-changing social and educational landscape, of which psychometricians are an important part.

I would hope that a psychometrician is not only someone who strives for small standard errors and high reliability coefficients, but someone who can bring to experts in different subject matter the conceptual and intellectual tools necessary to approach the challenge of designing and deploying an assessment in a principled way. In my experience as a graduate student, consulting with different companies on very diverse projects, the most intellectually challenging and gratifying task is to bridge the gap between the intuitive goals and practices of assessment developers and the methods and principles of psychometrics.

I believe that a psychometrician should be, more and more, the individual in a multidisciplinary who that strives to bridge linguistic, conceptual, and methodological gaps between team members. Psychometricians should not just be good methodologists and statisticians, they should use those skills as a leverage to maximize the utility of the different skills in an assessment team. The people I most admire in this profession are those who engage with practitioners in specific projects and advance the projects with their sound methods training, while advancing the field of psychometrics by deeply understanding the problem at hand and extracting generalizable lessons.

I would like to invite my fellow graduate students to consider what type of professional they want to become and how they can use their professional experiences to add to and advance the field's best-practices and standards. Starting psychometricians can aim to become another conscious and effective professional who will support well-established practices at their institutions of employment. Or one can aim to become a professional who is aware of and engaged with the ever-evolving challenges of the profession and the way in which it interacts and influences education and broad societal goals. This is the type of professional who is not only part of a community of practice, but also adds to and transform it. Broadly, be curious about how analogous problems are approached in other fields and question how and why obvious solutions and practices came to be accepted. Above all, be engaged with the broadest possible types of experiences. Only in this way can practices and practitioners evolve and make meaningful contributions.

Author note: Tiago Caliço is a Ph.D. candidate at the Department of Human Development and Quantitative Methodology at the University of Maryland—College Park. His interests include games-based assessment, simulations, psychometric modeling of process data, evidence-centered design, and Bayesian networks.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PEOPLE WHO MAKE OUR ORGANIZATION GREAT

Mark Wilson, University of California Berkeley, and incoming NCME president



How did you get into the field?

At one point, not too long after completing college, I was trying to figure out what to do with an undergraduate degree in mathematics plus several years' experience of teaching elementary students (and the interest in students and learning that led me to school teaching). At that point, I was hijacked from my teaching job by two researchers from the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER—John Izard and Ken Ross) to work on developing tests and test items, and I never really looked back.

If you weren't in this field, what would you do?

If I had studied chemistry in the final year of high school rather than English literature, then I would probably have ended up somewhere using mathematical modeling in the biological sciences. Of course, I always wanted to be a movie director . . .

What advice would you have for graduate students who want to get into this field?

1. Find people who have good ideas, listen to them, and work with them whenever you can.
2. Respect your own ideas.
3. Respect your own doubts.
4. Go for it.

What do you like to do for fun outside of work?

I love reading and snorkeling, walking and exploring. I am a bit of a movie buff, although I am only now again getting the time to indulge, with my children grown.

What would you say has been one of the biggest innovations in psychometrics in the last decade or two?

I think that we now have available to us in psychometrics a large toolbox of statistical models that we can adapt to be useful for substantive cognitive and affective models—we can now model many structures and characteristics that were way beyond our talents in the classical (testing) past. But I see the development of those substantive models as lagging behind our available statistical tools—we need to jump into that gap, and engage as both statistical *and* scientific modelers.

When you go to conferences, how do you pick what sessions to attend?

The most unique thing I get out of the sorts of sessions that we have at our NCME conference (and others similar) is that I actually get to hear the voices of people whose work I might otherwise only read. I find this can make a great deal of difference to my understanding of themselves and what they have to say. Hence, I like to go along to hear the “new voices” of the young researchers in our field, and also the “old voices” of people whose work I have read, but haven't had the benefit of being present when they speak.

Who has been a significant influence in your professional life?

Although I had the sort of background that would seem likely to lead me down the measurement path, I was a doubter for many years, until I began my doctoral program at the University of Chicago. There I got to see two great measurement researchers at their trade: Ben Wright, combining the conceptualization behind the Rasch model, with his own ideas about developing variables, to create a design science in measurement based on Wright maps. And Darrel Bock, whose deep understanding of statistical modeling laid foundations for much of the toolbox of statistical models we use in psychometrics.

I have had the benefit of working with some wonderful collaborators in measurement, who have made my professional and scientific career much richer and rewarding than it would otherwise be: Geoff Masters and Ray Adams from the ACER, Bob Mislevy from ETS, Paul De Boeck from Ohio State University (and K. Leuven University in Belgium), and Karen Draney from UC Berkeley. And I have been privileged to have had wonderful students at Berkeley, unfortunately too many to mention here—seeing them flourish is a reward that cannot be overestimated.

I have also had the immeasurable (and I use that word advisedly) benefit of working with a series of wonderful collaborators from outside measurement—Paul Black from King’s College in London, Rich Lehrer from Vanderbilt University, Andy Anderson from Michigan State University, Joe Krajcik also from MSU, Angy Stacey from UC Berkeley, Herb Thier from UC Berkeley, and Brian Reiser from Northwestern University—they have taught me more about measurement by asking me difficult questions about it than is contained in many a textbook.

PEER REVIEW OF STATE ASSESSMENT SYSTEMS: TESTING THE TESTS

Chris Domaleski, National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment

It turns out that even testing programs get tested. That process, which is usually referenced in shorthand as simply “peer review,” is being revived this spring. More formally, peer review refers to both the requirements and the process the United States Department of Education (USDE) uses to evaluate the technical quality of the state assessment systems under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).



As a former state assessment director and in my current role with an organization that provides technical support to multiple state departments of education, I understand how these two benign words can quicken the pulse of state assessment staff. Added to the already formidable workload of state departments, the scope and stakes of peer review make for a substantial undertaking to say the least. This article is written to provide an overview of the new guidance and to provide some tips for success.

Background

On September 25, 2015, USDE released updated peer review guidance, reopening a process that was temporarily suspended in December 2012 in preparation for a time of transition in many states. The guidance addresses the statutory requirement that states implement a high-quality assessment system in support of challenging academic standards in reading/language arts and mathematics in each of grades 3–8 and at least once in high school grades 10–12 as well as science once in each grade span 3–5, 6–9, and 10–12. The assessments that are required to be peer reviewed are the assessments that are required by ESEA, including the state’s summative reading/language arts assessments, mathematics assessments, science assessments, and the corresponding alternate assessments based on alternate academic achievement standards for each of these categories.

What’s New?

The new peer review guidance does not roll back as much as it updates and builds upon previous versions. As expected, the technical elements generally correspond with the *Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing* released in 2014. Additionally, the guidance has been reorganized to make this connection more prominent. Some new areas found in the evaluation criteria include:

- Increased emphasis on measuring the depth and breadth of the academic content standards used in developing the assessments, especially higher order thinking skills.
- Focus on computer-based testing in general and specific guidance for computer adaptive testing (CAT) in particular. For example, evidence must be provided to support interpretations when tests are administered on paper and/or among various computer devices. Specific implications for states using CAT include

evidence in support of the size and characteristics of the item pool and adequacy of the range of forms produced.

- Guidance specific to alternate assessments, such as evidence that items are accessible and that the range and complexity of content are appropriate.
- Attention to preventing, detecting, remediating, and investigating breaches of test and/or data security.
- Changes meant to improve the efficiency of the submission and review process to include identifying elements that are not reviewed by the peers (i.e., “check for completeness” only) and identifying elements that may be covered by a coordinated submission for states participating in an assessment consortium.

The Process

All states are required to participate in the updated peer review process and review windows will begin this spring for assessments operationalized in 2014–2015 or previous. States administering new tests in 2015–2016 are given some flexibility to schedule a later submission window. Following the initial peer review, any state that makes “significant changes” to previously reviewed assessments is required to submit again approximately 6 months after the first operational administration.

To date, USDE has not specified decision categories or labels (e.g., fully approved, approved with recommendations). Rather, two types of feedback are described in guidance released to date. First, states will receive peer notes, which are to be regarded as technical assistance and do not constitute formal feedback or direction to make changes. Next, the assistant secretary will provide formal feedback indicating whether the state has provided sufficient evidence to demonstrate the assessment meets ESEA requirements. If a state has not provided sufficient evidence, USDE will work with the state to develop a plan and timeline to respond.

Strategies for Success

In general, assessment professionals would do well to follow the advice we often give students for succeeding on achievement tests: Ongoing and diligent preparation is always better than a last-minute cram session. The need to plan well in advance cannot be overstated. Some tips to consider include:

- *Coordinate.* There are multiple parties that might play a role in preparing for a peer review submission: state staff, consortium leaders, service providers, and others. Alert all parties who will play a role as early as possible. Coordinate with these parties to assign and document specific responsibilities, establish timelines for tasks, and schedule meetings.
- *Communicate.* Naturally, communication must occur straightaway with the state official who will provide final sign-off of the submission and the appropriate USDE representative to reach a mutually agreeable understanding regarding the timing, scope, and process for the submission. Apart from the parties noted above who will work directly with the submission preparation, states may benefit from ongoing communication with leaders from other offices or states and with external technical advisors, such as members of the state technical advisory committee (TAC).
- *Organize and streamline.* The core of a peer review submission involves assembling all the relevant evidence and preparing text to address key points. The totality of the evidence can be massive. For this reason, it is imperative to organize the evidence very clearly and provide very succinct, straightforward text in the index to quickly point reviewers to the applicable information. Quality and clarity trump quantity when it comes to a successful peer review.
- *Review.* Many states have found it helpful to have a dress rehearsal before they submit. Consider building into the process an examination of the submission for each critical element by an appropriate person who was not the primary author of the section being reviewed.

While the preparation for and participation in peer review is a substantial task, it does provide assessment professionals an important opportunity to ensure programs are technically and operationally sound. It also signals that our field is committed to ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and improvement. The stakeholders we serve deserve nothing less.

LEGAL CORNER: ACCOUNTABILITY FOR LOW-PERFORMING SUBGROUPS

S.E. Phillips, Assessment Law Consultant

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act (2001), a federal K-12 education law originally due to be reauthorized in 2007 but stalled by partisan politics, has finally been reauthorized. With bipartisan support, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA, 2015) was passed by Congress in December 2015 and becomes effective in the 2017–2018 school year. The ESSA shifts the responsibility for many testing and accountability policies previously mandated by the federal government to state control with U.S. Department of Education (USDE) oversight. In particular, the ESSA has given states more responsibility for policy decisions that may impact schools' accountability for low-performing subgroups.

Depending on the decisions made by individual states, the impact of subgroup performance on school accountability scores may increase or decrease. Moreover, comparative state effectiveness in improving outcomes for low-performing subgroups will become more difficult to gauge with states using different indicators and accountability formulas.

Prior Federal Testing and Accountability Requirements

Under NCLB, states were required to test all students in reading and mathematics in grades 3 through 8 and once in high school. Results were required to be disaggregated for statistically reliable subgroups based on ethnicity, gender, economic disadvantage, special education, and English language learner status in order to create school accountability for low-performing subgroups that were historically or economically disadvantaged, previously excluded from accountability determinations or not tested. In addition, participation rates by subgroup were required to meet a 95% threshold, and a maximum of 1% of student results from alternate assessments could be included in proficiency calculations. The purpose of these requirements was to incentivize states to improve the rate of proficiency in reading and mathematics for low-performing subgroups of students and narrow the achievement gaps between these subgroups and higher performing majority subgroups. Schools that missed their proficiency targets for one or more subgroups across multiple years could be targeted for increasingly intrusive interventions.

In recent years, in addition to releasing states from certain intervention requirements and the target of 100% of students proficient by 2014, the USDE waiver program allowed states some additional flexibility to focus on the lowest performing schools, factor in growth scores, and combine results from nonstatistically reliable subgroups into super minority groups for accountability calculations.

Key ESSA Changes Affecting Subgroup Accountability

The ESSA was enacted under mounting pressures for decreased testing, more local control, and greater flexibility for choosing and weighting accountability variables. Under the ESSA, NCLB subject and grade level testing requirements and disaggregated subgroup reporting have been retained, but states are allowed to develop their own accountability systems focused on the goal of closing achievement and graduation gaps between low-performing and majority subgroups. However, states will no longer be permitted to combine statistically unreliable subgroups into a larger super subgroup.

For elementary and middle schools, the accountability system must include three academic indicators and one nonacademic indicator such as school safety or student engagement. The academic indicators must include proficiency on state reading and mathematics tests, English language proficiency, and an additional academic indicator, such as growth, that can be disaggregated by subgroup. At the high school level, graduation rates must also be included. However, state choices of an additional academic indicator and the nonacademic indicator together with the weights assigned to each accountability component could significantly affect which low-performing schools and struggling subgroups are identified for intervention. The extent of diversity of policies across states may also depend in part on ESSA regulations yet to be developed and the oversight procedures and criteria adopted by the USDE.

For example, suppose State A chose growth improvements while State B chose career and college readiness as the third academic indicator. It might be easier for a school to show subgroup improvement and avoid intervention in State A than in State B. Or suppose State A chose the percentage of subgroup students administered a voluntary college admissions test paid for by the state and offered during school hours while State B chose the percentage of subgroup students achieving a score of 4 or higher (the criteria for receiving college credit at some postsecondary institutions) on at least one Advanced Placement exam. Again, schools in State A might have an easier time demonstrating subgroup improvement than schools in State B. A key question for either scenario is whether the choices made by the states will actually improve the education of subgroup students or will be designed to allow nearly all schools to avoid intervention. A wild card in the mix may be USDE preferences for certain indicators over others and how those preferences are translated into approval/nonapproval decisions for submitted state accountability plans.

States will also be challenged to develop appropriate school accountability measures for statistically unreliable subgroups that can no longer be combined into a super subgroup. Although super subgroups may have masked low performance by some of its constituent subgroups, disallowing this option may result in no separate school accountability measures for students in statistically unreliable subgroups. These students will, of course, continue to be included in total group test results.

Additional factors affecting the number of schools identified for intervention based on low-performing subgroup(s) are the success criteria and weights assigned to subgroup indicators in a state's accountability formula. For example, a state adopting subgroup growth as an academic indicator could identify different numbers and types of low-performing schools depending on the growth criteria selected (for example, percentage of students with a growth trajectory at proficiency within 2 years versus the percentage of students whose performance improved from the previous year), the stringency of the initial proficiency target value (e.g., 25% per subgroup versus 50%) and the rate of increase expected in subsequent years (e.g., 1% versus 10%). Alternatively, if a composite accountability score is calculated, subgroup factors could be weighted differentially more or less than overall school achievement or nonacademic school factors such as safety, attendance, or student engagement. For example, less than average subgroup achievement growth could be outweighed by high attendance rates or excellent safety records. Moreover, large numbers of parent opt-out decisions in some states could produce misleading results if opt-outs occur disproportionately in the majority subgroup, lowering majority group performance and artificially narrowing achievement gaps. Unlike NCLB, where missing the 95% participation rate for any subgroup counted against the school, ESSA leaves decisions about opt-out policies and consequences for low participation rates up to the states. New funding formulas and block grants under ESSA may also alter the way struggling schools and students are served.

At the high school level, ESSA permits states to use college entrance exam scores for accountability. However, it is unlikely that required state high school content standards will align well with these exams because college admissions tests are designed to predict college success while state standards-based tests are designed to measure achievement of state content standards. Some states that have assessed alignment of college admissions tests with their high school content standards have found insufficient overlap to avoid augmenting the college admissions test with state specific content for accountability purposes. Key questions here include: Will substitution of college entrance exam scores improve the education of low-performing subgroups and encourage more such students to attend college? Or will such students' lack of achievement of state content standards fall through the cracks unnoticed and result in adverse impacts on their post high school job prospects? And assuming the alignment issue is solved, is it cost effective and supportive of achievement gains in low-performing subgroups to use a college admissions test for school accountability? Also, are there security and fairness issues implicated by differential testing accommodations policies adopted for state tests and required for secure, college admissions tests? Alternatively, might the state set college and career ready performance standards on state end-of-course tests that its public institutions would accept for admissions and/or placement purposes?

Finally, procedures for defining and measuring the indicators that states choose for their accountability systems under the ESSA could impact the results for schools with large numbers of struggling students. For example, if school safety is measured by the numbers of students referred to the juvenile justice system for violent offenses, teachers and administrators may refer only the worst offenders, reclassify some offenses to a lower category, or seek to balance referrals by subgroup in proportion to their representation in the school population. Such unintended consequences could create the appearance of improvement when conditions at a low-performing school have actually remained the same or deteriorated. In addition, some worthy indicators may be difficult to measure consistently and fairly. For example, what does student engagement mean operationally? Is a classroom where all the students are talking at once

one of high or low engagement? What about a classroom full of students seated at their desks with a math worksheet in front of them? Should student engagement be operationalized differently for low-performing subgroup students than for high-performing subgroup students in order to adjust for cultural differences?

Advocates' Concerns

Advocates from a variety of low-performing subgroups have voiced reservations about some aspects of the ESSA. Each is seeking to maintain or expand benefits available to its constituents and has questioned whether states will be able to meaningfully differentiate performance on school quality indicators in ways that improve instruction for low-performing subgroups when the school's accountability status is at stake. In particular, many nonacademic factors are difficult to define and measure objectively and reliably and it may be difficult to disaggregate factors such as teacher engagement by subgroup. Some factors involve the collection of survey data which can be affected by inaccurate student perceptions, manipulated by coaching and subject to pressures for desired responses associated with high-stakes accountability. There are also concerns about unfunded mandates that require schools to teach new personal skills, such as grit, without adequate professional development or increased resources. On the other hand, some advocates are encouraged about the possibility of reviving instruction in previously overlooked subjects such as art, music, and social studies. Educators of English language learners (ELLs) are pleased with the inclusion of English language testing as an academic indicator but wary of accountability targets set by the states rather than the federal government. They are also unsure whether allowing the inclusion of former ELLs for up to 4 years will mask the performance of current ELLs. Disability groups are glad the 1% cap on alternate assessments was retained but concerned about how students with disabilities will be factored into graduation data.

Conclusion

In sum, it is difficult at this time to predict the effects the ESSA will have on testing and school accountability for low-performing subgroups. Some state officials have explicitly stated that there will be no backpedaling on equity goals. But while states have more policymaking flexibility under ESSA, they may also face challenges in choosing indicators, performance standards, and weighting schemes that most accurately identify those schools where the need is greatest and the most benefit can be obtained with limited available staff and resources. Although USDE can no longer require certain elements such as the Common Core State Standards or inclusion of student test scores in teacher evaluations, states still must get their accountability plans approved and must begin ESSA testing in the 2017–2018 school year. That leaves states less than 2 years to create, submit, and implement their new accountability plans, including the development of valid and reliable measures for their selected academic and nonacademic indicators and promulgation of rules for factoring in subgroup performance.

References

Every Child Succeeds Act, Pub. L. 114-95 (Dec. 10, 2015).

NCLB Regulations, 34 C.F.R. § 200.1 *et seq.* (2006).

No Child Left Behind Act, 20 U.S.C. § 6301 *et seq.* (2001).

MARK RECKASE: RECIPIENT OF THE 2016 NCME AWARD FOR CAREER CONTRIBUTIONS TO EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT

Committee for the NCME Award for Career Contributions to Educational Measurement

Congratulations to Mark Reckase, who has been awarded the 2016 NCME Award for Career Contributions to Educational Measurement. The award honors outstanding scholars whose publications and professional activities over a career have had a widespread positive impact on the field of educational measurement. Dr. Reckase will be recognized at the 2016 NCME Annual Meeting at a featured session that consists of an award ceremony followed by his presentation titled *Do Educational Assessments Yield Achievement Measurements?* He will also be honored at the 2016 NCME Annual Breakfast and Business Meeting.

Dr. Reckase is a distinguished professor emeritus at Michigan State University. He is recognized for his contributions in multidimensional item response theory, standard setting, computer adaptive testing, and models for evaluation of educators. He served as president of NCME, vice president of AERA Division D, editor of *Applied Psychological Measurement* and the *Journal of Educational Measurement*, and as a member of the National Assessment Governing Board, as well as various scientific and technical panels.

Luz Bay's interview with Mark can be viewed via the [NCME Facebook group page](#).



PUBLICATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Rose C. McCallin, Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies

ITEMS Editor Appointed



The NCME Board of Directors is pleased to announce that André A. Rupp has been named editor of *Instructional Topics in Educational Measurement Series (ITEMS)* for the editorial term effective November 2016 through October 2019. Dr. Rupp is a research director in the Innovations in the Design of Evaluations for Automated Systems (IDEAS) Group in the Research and Development division of Educational Testing Service (ETS) in Princeton, New Jersey. Dr. Rupp currently leads a research team whose work focuses on evidentiary reasoning for digitally delivered performance-based assessments and, in particular, evaluations of automated scoring systems for written, spoken, and multimodal performances. He has published widely on a variety of educational measurement topics, including applications of evidence-centered design, cognitive diagnostic measurement modeling, and automated scoring, often with a didactic and conceptual synthesis approach. In addition to his previous contributions to NCME—for instance, he was program co-chair for the 2012 annual meeting in Vancouver—Dr. Rupp recently served as chair of the AERA Cognition and Assessment Special Interest Group, is a reviewer for several measurement journals, and has extensive teaching experience. Prior to his position at ETS, Dr. Rupp was an associate professor with tenure in the Quantitative Methodology Program in the Department of Human Development and Quantitative Methodology at the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland. We look forward to his editorship and thank him for this service to NCME and to the field of educational measurement!

Engelhard and Templin Named JEM Editors

NCME has appointed Dr. George Engelhard, Jr. and Dr. Jonathan Templin as editors for the *Journal of Educational Measurement* for issues to be published from 2017–2019 (Volumes 54–56). Dr. Engelhard and Dr. Templin will be following current *JEM* Editor Dr. Jimmy de la Torre, who completes his term in December 2016.



Dr. George Engelhard, Jr. is a professor of educational measurement and policy at The University of Georgia. He is co-editor of four books and the author or co-author of more than 175 journal articles, book chapters, and monographs. He currently serves on several editorial boards including *Applied Measurement in Education*, *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, *Journal of Applied Measurement*, and *Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspectives*. Professor Engelhard is a fellow of the American Educational Research Association and a recipient of several fellowships—a National Academy of Education Spencer Foundation Fellowship Award and a Lilly Post-Doctoral Teaching Award. In 2015, he received the first Qiyas Award for Excellence in International Educational Assessment, recognizing his contributions to the improvement of educational measurement at the local, national, and international levels. He serves on several national technical advisory committees on educational measurement and policy including Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Washington. His latest book was published in 2013: *Invariant Measurement: Using Rasch Models in the Social, Behavioral, and Health Sciences* (New York: Routledge).



Dr. Jonathan Templin is an associate professor at the University of Kansas with appointments in the Department of Educational Psychology and the Achievement and Assessment Institute. He is a leader in the development of diagnostic classification models (DCMs)—and an author of *Diagnostic Measurement: Theory, Methods, and Applications*, which won the 2012 American Educational Research Association Division D Award for Significant Contribution to Educational Measurement and Research Methodology. Dr. Templin received the 2015 AERA Cognition and Assessment SIG Award for Outstanding Contributions to Research in Cognition and Assessment. He has published extensively in the field's highest quality journals; is involved on the Dynamic Learning Maps™ (DLM®) project; and has served as

an editor, an associate editor, and on editorial boards for *Applied Psychological Measurement*, *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, *International Journal of Testing*, *Psychometrika*, and *School Psychology Quarterly*. Dr. Templin currently is an elected member of the Editorial Council for the official journal of the Psychometric Society (*Psychometrika*), an elected member of the Society of Multivariate Experimental Psychology, and chair of the NCME Awards Committee.

We look forward to their editorship of our flagship journal and thank both for their service to NCME and to the field of educational measurement.

Clauser Named NCME Book Series Editorial Board Chair



Dr. Brian E. Clauser has been appointed as chair of the editorial board for the *NCME Applications of Educational Measurement and Assessment* book series. Dr. Clauser begins his term in April 2016, following Dr. Michael J. Kolen, who has served in this capacity since April 2011.

Dr. Clauser currently is vice president of measurement consulting services for the National Board of Medical Examiners. With more than two decades of applied experience in psychometrics and with editorial experience as a former editor of the *Journal of Educational Measurement (JEM)*, Dr. Clauser brings to the position expertise that is essential to the ongoing success of the book series. He has published extensively, including a chapter in the recently published first volume in the NCME book series, *Technology and Testing—Improving Educational and Psychological Measurement*. Dr. Clauser also has served as a reviewer for numerous refereed journals, including *Applied Measurement in Education*, *Applied Psychological Measurement*, *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice*, *International Journal of Testing*, *JEM*, *Journal of Educational and Behavioral Statistics*, and *Measurement: Interdisciplinary Research and Perspectives*. His editorial experience, psychometric and measurement expertise, and years of collaboration with internationally recognized experts in measurement, will be essential to steering the Book Series as it continues to make important contributions to the field.

We look forward to Dr. Clauser's service as chair of the editorial board for the *NCME Applications of Educational Measurement and Assessment* book series, and we thank him for his continued service to NCME.

2016 NCME PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

FOUNDATIONS AND FRONTIERS: ADVANCING EDUCATIONAL MEASUREMENT FOR RESEARCH, POLICY, AND PRACTICE

Andrew Ho, Harvard, and Matt Johnson, Columbia

As we race toward the NCME annual meeting this April 9–11, we are pleased to highlight a few of the many excellent sessions that our members have contributed, as well as congratulate our partners at AERA on their centennial celebration.

From the very first session*, at 8:15 a.m. on Saturday, April 9, we're kicking it off with big-picture topics (**Henry Braun** leading an invited session for the recent NCME volume: *Challenges to Measurement in an Era of Accountability*) alongside technical advances (**Derek Briggs** leading off a session on *learning progressions for measuring growth*).



The momentum continues unabated through our last session, at 4:05 on Monday, April 11, where we tackle buzzphrases (**Thanos Patelis** convening a session on *fairness issues and validation of "noncognitive" skills*) and settle

scores (*The Great Subscore Debate*, with **Emily Bo**, **Howard Wainer**, **Sandip Sinharay**, and many others facing off to surely resolve the issue once and for all).

We are taking full advantage of our location in Washington, DC, with an invited session on the recently passed *Every Student Succeeds Act* over lunchtime on Monday. **Peter Oppenheim** and **Sarah Bolton**, Education Policy Directors (majority and minority, respectively) for the U.S. Senate HELP Committee will discuss key provisions and spark a discussion among researchers about *ESSA's implications and opportunities for measurement research and practice*. Earlier that Monday morning, **Kristen Huff** will convene reporters and scholars in a session with the lively title: *Hold the Presses! How Measurement Professionals Can Speak More Effectively With the Press and the Public*.

Consistent with our theme, our many sessions highlight both foundations (**Isaac Bejar** coordinates a session on *Item Response Modeling: From Theory to Practice*, while **Karla Egan** convenes a session on *Standard Setting: Beyond Process*) and frontiers (**Tracy Sweet** will lead a session on *Recent Advances in Social Network Analysis*, and **Will Lorie** takes on *Big Data in Education: From Items to Policies*).

Stay up to date at the Twitter hashtag [#NCME16](#) and our new [NCME Facebook group](#). And we'll see you in Washington, DC in April!

*Not counting our excellent training sessions on April 7 and 8.

TRAINING SESSIONS AT THE 2016 NCME ANNUAL MEETING

Xin Li, ACT, Inc.

The Training and Professional Development Committee of NCME is excited about the preconference training sessions that will be held at the Renaissance Washington, DC Downtown Hotel in Washington, DC, on Thursday, April 7 and Friday, April 8, 2016. This year 18 sessions on a variety of topics, aimed at graduate students and practitioners from beginner/refresher courses to more advanced courses, will be offered. These 18 sessions were chosen by the committee, judged on importance and relevance of the topic, experience of presenters, enrollment and reviews if previously offered, and whether or not presenters will include hands-on or engaging activities.



Some brief information about the training sessions that will be offered at the 2016 NCME annual meeting is provided below. Admission to training sessions is limited to ticket holders. Advance registration for the training sessions is strongly encouraged, which can be done as part of the conference registration through the AERA website. Onsite registration will be possible if space in the training sessions is still available.

- Computerized Multistage Adaptive Testing: Theory and Applications (book by Chapman and Hall) by Duanli Yan, Alina von Davier, and Kyung Chris Han
- Multidimensional Item Response Theory: Theory and Applications and Software by Lihua Yao, Mark Reckase, and Rich Schwarz
- Defensible Testing Accommodations Policies for Computer-Administered Assessments by S. E. Phillips
- Best Practices for Lifecycles of Automated Scoring Systems for Learning and Assessment by Peter Foltz, Claudia Leacock, André Rupp, and Mo Zhang
- IRT Parameter Linking by Wim van der Linden and Michelle Barrett
- Introduction to Standard Setting by Lee LaFond, Jennifer Dunn, Chad Buchkendahl, Karla Egan, and Lisa Keller
- Quality Control Tools in Support of Reporting Accurate and Valid Test Scores by Aster Tessema, Oliver Zhang, and Alina von Davier
- 21st Century Skills Assessment: Design, Development, Scoring, and Reporting of Character Skills by Patrick Kyllonen and Jonas Bertling
- New Weighting Methods for Causal Mediation Analysis by Guanglei Hong

- Landing Your Dream Job for Graduate Students by Deborah Harris and Xin Li
- Bayesian Analysis of IRT Models using SAS PROC MCMC by Clement Stone
- Effective Item Writing for Valid Measurement by Anthony Albano and Michael Rodriguez
- Test Equating Methods and Practices by Michael Kolen and Robert Brennan
- Diagnostic Measurement: Theory, Methods, Applications, and Software by Jonathan Templin
- flexMIRT®: Flexible Multilevel Multidimensional Item Analysis and Test Scoring by Li Cai and Carrie Houts
- Analyzing NAEP Data Using Plausible Values and Marginal Estimation With AM by Emmanuel Sikali and Young Yee Kim
- An Introduction to Computerized Adaptive Testing and Item Response Theory by Alper Sahin and David Weiss
- Aligning ALDs and Item Response Demands to Support Teacher Evaluation Systems by Steve Ferrara and Christina Schneider

WELCOME TO WONDERFUL WASHINGTON, DC!

Ellen Forte, edCount, LLC, and Molly Faulkner-Bond, UMass at Amherst

It's been many years since NCME held its annual meeting in Washington, DC, and so much has changed here that it may seem like a new place, even for those who came last time. As nearly natives (i.e., people who have lived here for more than one administration), we thought we would offer some suggestions for how to enjoy our fair city during your upcoming visit. With an eye to who our membership is, we're offering ideas that focus on food and culture for those on a shoestring budget (e.g., graduate students) as well as for those who may have a bit more to spend while here.



The Lingo

Visitors may find it helpful to understand a few terms we use in the DC area. *Beltway* refers to the interstate that rings the DC area like a belt. While at the conference, know that you are “inside the beltway.” If at all possible, avoid actually being “on the beltway” as that likely translates to “in heavy traffic on an interstate with few options to get off” or “hell.”

The *Mall* is the mostly green area between the Capitol Building on the east end and the Lincoln Memorial on the west end. No visit to DC is complete without time on the Mall and in the many memorials and museums that are on or around it. Bring your walking shoes and get out there. If you do nothing else while here, explore the Mall.

Our subway system is *the Metro*. If you're new to subways it may be a bit daunting; if you can handle the freeways of LA or the subway of New York, it will be a cakewalk.

Getting Around

No matter how you navigate the city, be aware that DC is divided into four quadrants—Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, and Southwest. The letter streets run continuously from east to west (e.g., if you walk east along K Street NW, it will turn into K Street NE) while the number streets run continuously from north to south, but are mirrored around the axis of Capitol Street (e.g., if you walk south along 4th Street NE, it will turn into 4th Street SE, but you will never reach 4th Street NW, which is on the other side of Capitol Street). When you get outside the letters, the streets often still progress alphabetically as you move north.

If that sounds confusing—or even if it doesn't—driving in DC is neither necessary nor recommended. Snarls are common and parking can be both hard to find and very expensive. We recommend using the DC Metro system, which

includes both trains and buses that cover pretty much the whole city. You can buy a SmarTrip® card for \$2 at any Metro stop (good on both Metro and city buses), and an app like Hop Stop, DC Metro and Bus, or GoogleMaps will help you navigate the city efficiently. You may also be surprised at how walkable DC is—if the trains are running late and the weather is nice, you might be able to walk to your destination faster than you think. Alternatively, if it's raining or you just can't take another step in those conference pumps or brogues, taxis are easy to find in the conference center area, and other services such as Uber and Lyft are readily available.

DC also offers several hop-on-hop-off tour bus options that allow visitors to get a great lay of the land. Your hotel can provide information on these and you can hop on at many points in the downtown and mall areas.

Food and Drink

DC has become quite a foodie haven in the past decade, and you will have no trouble finding wonderful places to dine or partake of the cocktail culture. If you're up for a down-home breakfast or lunch, give Ben's Chili Bowl or the Florida Avenue Grill a try. The half-smoke is a must-try, DC classic at Ben's and the grits are terrific. At the Florida Avenue Grill, you can give chittlins a go for a reminder that DC is more southern than many realize.

For dinner, icons include Old Ebbitt Grill just a block from the White House and the Tabard Inn, a few blocks east of the south exit of the DuPont Circle metro stop. Newer restaurants that have helped raise DC's status in the food world include Zaytinya, which specializes in mezze and is across the street from the National Portrait Gallery, and a number of restaurants in the Logan Circle neighborhood, such as Birch & Barley and Estadio. If you choose to explore Logan Circle, remind yourself of our admonishment about driving as there is really no parking in the Logan Circle neighborhood!

For those looking to eat well on a budget, a little tech savviness can take you a long way. First, be aware and take full advantage of DC's thriving happy hour culture. Pretty much every restaurant in the city will offer food and drink specials between the hours of 5-7 p.m. on weekdays, give or take. Get in the habit of always asking about specials before ordering, or use an app like Happy Hours to find spots nearby where the hours are currently happy. Brunch specials are also common on Saturdays and Sundays. Apps can also help you locate some of the city's many great food trucks (try Roaming Hunger or search Twitter for #DCfoodtrucks), which often congregate near parks like Farragut Square or the Mall. There are also plenty of great local chains that offer yummy and affordable lunch and (sometimes) dinner food, including SweetGreen (awesome salads), Taylor Gourmet (hot and cold deli sandwiches), Five Guys or Shake Shack (BURGERS), and Amsterdam Falafel (open late, and you want peanut sauce for your fries—trust us).

Stuff to Do

Fortunately, you can entertain yourself very well without spending a penny in DC. All of the Smithsonian museums are free as are all of the national monuments. The Renwick Gallery's Wonder exhibit is highly rated for all ages and everyone learns from and enjoys the Air & Space Museum (especially the kids' section), and the Museum of Natural History (taxidermy!). The cherry blossoms should still be beautiful during annual meeting time and you'll find the best viewing around the Tidal Basin in front of the Jefferson Memorial. In addition to these more well-known places, Eastern Market, Union Market, and the Sunday afternoon drum circle in Meridian Hill Park are also wonderful and free!

If you're hoping to catch a play while in town, you'll find many excellent options. The Kennedy Center, which is President Kennedy's memorial, offers theater as well as music and dance events. You can see free live shows on the Millennium Stage in the Kennedy Center every evening at 6 p.m. and, if you're up for a fun production with audience participation, pick up tickets to see Shear Madness. Other theatre venues around town include the Studio Theatre in Logan Circle, the Arena Stage, the Shakespeare Theatre, Ford's Theatre (yes, that one) in Chinatown, and, if you enjoy theatre that really pushes some boundaries, try Woolly Mammoth.

DC offers many terrific live music venues, as well. If you like jazz, check out Bohemian Caverns on U Street (not far from Ben's Chili Bowl) or Howard Theatre on the Howard University campus. Madam's Organ in Adams Morgan, which is just fun to say, offers some funky live music options. If DJs and dancing are more your vibe, we highly

recommend the dance floor at Marvin (near U Street), 18th Street Lounge (near DuPont circle—may charge a cover on the weekend), or U Street Music Hall (on U Street—may charge a cover). In general, for nightlife, Connecticut Avenue, U Street, and Adams Morgan tend to be where the revelers congregate—listed in ascending order of potentially absurd crowd behavior.

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE UPDATE: INTRODUCING THE NEW MENTORING PROGRAM

Sonya Powers (Incoming Chair), Pearson, & Kyndra Middleton, Howard University

What is the NCMentoring Program?

The NCMentoring Program aims to support the transition of graduate student members from classrooms to careers. Early professionals (in graduate school or recently graduated) will be paired with members experienced in fields related to NCME's focus on assessment, evaluation, and other aspects of educational measurement. This experience will offer the opportunity to explore possible career paths and ask questions from an experienced NCME member.



Why should I participate?

Mentees: This is an opportunity to meet with an NCME member who can speak from experience about getting a job in the field of educational measurement. You get to pick your mentor's brain about the types of jobs you're interested in, common research interests, tips for getting the job you want, or advice for being successful in the job you've found. You also get to build your network and get a free coffee from NCME!

Mentors: *Your participation is vital!* We all started out in graduate school and dealt with the struggles of entering the field. You can promote the success of future scientists in our field by providing the insider information and encouragement you had (or wished you had!) when you were starting out. Your advice is critical to the next cohort of NCME professionals for making the right career moves to impact the field. Donate an hour of your time and get a free coffee from NCME!

What are the eligibility criteria?

Mentees: Participants must be a current member of NCME, attending the annual NCME conference in Washington, DC and currently enrolled or recently (3 years or less) graduated from an accredited Ph.D. or master's program in a measurement-related field.

Mentors: Participants must be a current member of NCME, attending the annual NCME conference in Washington, DC, and should have at least 2 years of postgraduate work experience in a measurement field.

When do the mentor-mentee pairs meet?

Once paired, the mentor will contact the mentee to arrange a time and location to meet up. The meeting should last at least an hour. This will occur during the annual NCME conference in Washington, DC. Mentees will receive a \$20 gift card to pay for the pair's drinks of choice or lunch.

What if I don't like coffee?

No problem! The \$20 gift card can be put towards any food purchased during the mentor-mentee meeting.

How do I sign up?

To sign up, you must fill out a short survey so that you can be paired up with another NCME member with similar interests. ***Special extension—new deadline is March 25th ***

Mentees: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCMenteesurvey>

Mentors: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NCMentorsurvey>

DIVERSITY ISSUES AND TESTING COMMITTEE UPDATE

Meagan Karvonen, Center for Educational Testing & Evaluation, University of Kansas

The Diversity Issues and Testing Committee identifies issues relevant to diverse test takers and NCME members. NCME defines diversity broadly, to include a variety of individual characteristics and experiences. The committee addresses issues that are relevant and important to diversity in NCME’s internal governance and all activities, doing so in collaboration with other NCME governance groups. For example, earlier this year, along with the Outreach and Partnerships Committee and the Standards and Test Use Committee, the Diversity Issues and Testing Committee reviewed proposals for the NCME Board’s initiative to develop assessment literacy materials for the general public.



One of this committee’s responsibilities is to organize a symposium for NCME’s annual meeting. The 2016 invited symposium is titled “Implications of Computer-Based Testing for Assessing Diverse Learners: Lessons Learned From the Consortia.” Representatives from all six consortia (PARCC, Smarter Balanced, DLM, NCSC, ELPA-21, WIDA) will describe research and lessons learned from the 2014–2015 administration on the design and use of computer-based tests to support valid and inclusive assessment.

The Diversity and Testing Committee is composed of seven members, one of which is a student member. Members serve a 3-year term, with the student member appointed annually. The current members of the committee are Dorinda Gallant, Priya Kannan, Meagan Karvonen, Jake Thompson, Martha Thurlow, and Carsten Wilmes. Please consider volunteering to serve on the committee.

FUND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE

Linda Hargrove, Wayne Camara, Linda Cook, Deborah Harris, Suzanne Lane, Seohong Pak, and Cathy Wendler



Linda Hargrove (chair)



Wayne Camara



Linda Cook



Deborah Harris



Suzanne Lane



Seohong Pak



Cathy Wendler

NCME's 2016 Annual Meeting marks the beginning of Year 3 for NCME's Mission Fund. Since April 2014 through January 4th this year, generous contributions, totaling \$43,546 from NCME members, have established the Mission Fund as a new source of support for activities that advance NCME's mission in the science and practice of measurement in education. Thanks to member donors, NCME sponsored a presession workshop for more than 40 state assessment professionals at CCSSO's June 2015 National Conference on Student Assessment (NCSA). The workshop addressed the implications of the *Standards* in everyday practice and how they may be used to prepare for the peer review process. ([Click here](#) to view slides and audio from the workshop.)

Now for More Exciting News!

NCME's Board of Directors recently approved a second Mission Fund activity to be piloted at the 2016 NCME Annual Meeting in April. The fund will provide up to \$9,000 to be used in support of graduate student attendance at the 2016 NCME training sessions through partial reimbursement of the training fee. While the exact amount of the reimbursement per graduate student will not be known until the number of graduate students who register and attend a NCME training session is confirmed, the *maximum possible reimbursement* will be \$60 per student per session. Graduate students registering for a NCME training session will be given instructions when they check in at the annual meeting as to how to provide validation of their training attendance and to confirm contact information to receive a training fee rebate check. Checks will be mailed following validation of training attendance after the annual meeting.

The NCME Fund Development Committee will also survey graduate students receiving a reimbursement check regarding their training session experience to gauge the preliminary impact of this 2016 pilot initiative. Responses will be used to help refine participation criteria and procedures, assuming contributions to the Mission Fund continue to grow so that support for training session reimbursements for graduate students can be sustained in future years.

Both the 2015 NCSA workshop for state assessment professionals and reimbursements for graduate students attending training sessions are examples of activities outlined for support in the [Mission Fund brochure](#). Other types of activities in the future may include:

- Workshops or small conferences designed to improve measurement and testing theory and application or expansion of measurement knowledge into other fields, such as teacher education
- Funding for the dissemination of measurement knowledge and procedures both domestically and internationally, such as projects for promoting proper test use
- Outreach activities such as grants to encourage exchange in the science and practice of measurement
- Support for the professional development of graduate students and early career scholars

NCME is fortunate to have members who contribute tirelessly in many ways in the quest to advance its mission in measurement and testing, both monetarily and nonmonetarily, and NCME is very grateful for and would not be the professional community it is today without member support. Even with a healthy operating budget, there is more that needs to be done to advance NCME's mission than can be supported with its current budget.

If you wish to see activities continue or expanded beyond those the Mission Fund has supported thus far, **please consider making a donation to the Mission Fund by March 18th**. If you have previously donated we thank you

and invite you to consider donating again. A donation of \$120, for example, can offset training fee rebates for two graduate students attending NCME training sessions this year or be used to fund other future mission-relevant efforts. *The sooner funds are raised, the sooner further activities that reinforce NCME's mission, vision, and goals can be supported!*

NCME members can make tax-deductible cash donations to the Mission Fund by:

1. Online by going to the [NCME Sign In Page](#)

- Sign in with your member number and password *before* choosing the “Donate” link in the upper right hand corner;
- Next, choose the “Donate” link; and
- Click the “Mission Fund” button, and enter the amount you wish to donate in the Mission Fund box. While \$10.00 appears as the default, another amount can be typed in the box before moving to complete credit card payment information.

OR:

2. By using the downloadable [Mission Fund brochure](#)

- Print, complete, and detach the contribution form in the brochure and
- Mail or fax to NCME as instructed in the brochure.

As an added convenience, members also may donate to the Mission Fund when paying for membership renewal online. Click the Mission Fund button and enter the amount you wish to donate in the Mission Fund box. *While \$10.00 appears as the default, another amount can be typed in for the Mission Fund box.*

Thank YOU for being an NCME member AND for considering additional support of NCME by becoming a new or sustaining contributor to the NCME Mission Fund.



I hosted Linda Cook and Jerry Melican at the Fernley & Fernley office in February 2016. Linda and Jerry are members of NCME's Archives Committee, and they took the time to help make some determinations about the boxes shipped to Fernley & Fernley when NCME transitioned management companies. Their knowledge of the history of NCME and the materials was most helpful. –Joe Casey, NCME Executive Director

NCME FITNESS WALK/RUN CORNER

Jill van den Heuvel, Alpine Testing Solutions

Katherine Furgol Castellano, Educational Testing Service

(with Brian French, Washington State University, Pullman, advising)

The NCME 2016 Annual Meeting is fast approaching, and the details for the NCME Fitness 2.5k Walk/5k Run are all falling into place! We are excited to announce that the walk/run will be Monday, April 11, 2016 (5:45–7 a.m.) at Hains Point, the southern tip of East Potomac Park, offering beautiful views of the Potomac River, Anacostia River, and the Washington Channel as well as greenery and the famed DC cherry trees. It is only a short, 10-minute bus ride from the NCME headquarters hotel, Renaissance Washington, DC Downtown Hotel.



We are also pleased to announce that we had great participation from the NCME community in this year's Design-the-Shirt competition. We had three entries with 300 NCME members participating in the voting to select the winner. To get your own long-sleeve tech shirt with the winning design, submitted by Angela Broaddus and Emily Herrington, make sure to register for and participate in the NCME Fitness Walk/Run.

Last, but not least, we are continuing with the Team Participation Competition so encourage your colleagues to register for this event as well. You may just be able to break The University of Iowa and Pacific Metrics' winning streaks or at least give them a run for their money!

See you bright and early Monday morning, April 11, for an invigorating start to the last day of the NCME conference.

NCME SUNRISE YOGA

Kristen Huff, ACT, and Brian Patterson, Pearson

For the second year we are offering a yoga session to recharge and focus during this year's annual meeting (Saturday, April 9, 2016, 6:30 a.m.–7:30 a.m.). An instructor will join us from  flow yoga center in D.C. (<http://www.flowyogacenter.com/>) and the advance registration fee of \$10 will cover your class and mat rental. You don't have to have any experience with yoga; just arrive at the Renaissance at 6:30 a.m. and get your flow on with your fellow measurement professionals! *Om shanti shanti shanti.*





The NCME Mission Fund

Make a Difference!

Advance NCME's Mission,
Vision, & Goals

- *The Mission Fund allows NCME to carry out a variety of mission-driven activities such as workshops and small conferences, outreach, dissemination, and support of early career scholars and students.*
- *The Mission Fund first supported a workshop at the June 2015 CCSSO National Conference on Student Assessment regarding implications of the newly released AERA/APA/NCME Standards. [Click here](#) to view.*
- *Please help NCME reach its \$50,000 goal for Year 2. Make your tax-deductible donation today at: [NCME Sign In Page](#) (member login required). Click "Donate" at top right, enter amount, and proceed to checkout.*

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