

# *the Respondent*

**SIG on Survey Research in Education  
Spring 2004**

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Member's mailing label.

Your SIG expiration date should be concurrent with your AERA expiration date.  
Review the inside Membership Directory for AERA details about your SIG membership.  
Send corrections and updates of your information for the SIG & AERA to [bacharya@aera.net](mailto:bacharya@aera.net) at AERA.

*The Respondent* is published three times a year by the Special Interest Group on Survey Research in Education of the American Educational Research Association. (*The Respondent* is not an official publication of the AERA.) The purpose of the SIG is to provide a forum for educational researchers who are interested in improving survey methods, fostering communication among survey researchers, and promoting the development and dissemination of scholarly work in research methods.

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*Honors Award Chair*--Steve Siera  
*Website Manager*--Gunapala Edirisooriya  
*From Chet's Bookshelf*--Chester H. McCall  
*Membership Data at AERA*--Bidyut Acharya

## **Contribute to the Respondent**

Send news about your job, changes in your life, feedback to our officers, and news you would like to share with SIG members.

### **Deadlines for newsletter submissions**

- Mid-June for the summer 2004 issue
- Mid-October for the fall/winter 2004 issue
- Mid February for the spring 2005

Send your contributions to *the Respondent* to  
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Visit our SIG SRE web site at  
[www.as.yzu.edu/~gunapala/surveyed/index.htm](http://www.as.yzu.edu/~gunapala/surveyed/index.htm)

Production and mailing of *the Respondent* is provided by ACT, Inc.

## A FEW WORDS FROM YOUR SIG CHAIR



**Lynda Idleman**  
**Idleman & Associates**

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The AERA Annual Meeting is almost upon us; I look forward to seeing all of you at one or more of our sessions. Our sessions are clustered in two days this year—Wednesday and Thursday. We have one paper presentation session with three papers and two panel sessions.

Additionally, we have teamed with the SIG Educational Statistics to host a social hour on Monday evening. I hope you can help produce a large SIG Survey Research turnout for this new event.

Our annual business meeting is Thursday this year. Unfortunately it will not be directly after the afternoon session. I hope you will plan to attend the business meeting. It is a good way to meet your colleagues and provide direction for the SIG. We will be electing new officers and bestowing awards on several people. We will also be saying good-bye to a great friend and colleague—Chet McCall of Pepperdine.

Our Wednesday session, *Improving Survey Quality: A Taxonomy of (or Avoiding) Survey Errors*, is tapping the expertise of two of our long-time SIG members—Jack Anderson and Marsha Niebuhr. They are the principals in Anderson, Niebuhr, & Associates, a full-service corporation that has been conducting custom-designed research for more than 25 years. During this time, the firm has gained a reputation throughout the United States for excellence in a variety of research types, such as marketing, business-to-business, health care, education, non-profits, and associations.

In addition to conducting these various types of research, Anderson-Niebuhr is recognized as a leader in providing professional training nationally for people who wish to improve their marketing research skills. They are authors of *Questionnaires: Design and Use, 2nd Edition*. This book has become a standard reference and training text for people using survey research techniques. The SIG is happy to be able to host their session.

Thursday finds the SIG hosting two sessions and the business meeting. The first session at 10:35 is entitled *Construction and Treatment of Survey Responses* and will present three papers. Two of the papers deal with Likert-type scales—a topic of constant discussion.

The second session of the day (at 2:15 Thursday afternoon) speaks to a current topic in survey research—web based survey data collection. The session will present recent research findings from RTI International, an independent, nonprofit corporation with a distinguished history in scientific research and technology development. They are located in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. RTI fields teams of experts in education survey methodology and postsecondary education to conduct large-scale, national cross-sectional and longitudinal studies for the U.S. Department of Education. Current and recent surveys focus on key postsecondary issues such as institution characteristics, student access and choice, persistence, attainment, access to graduate and professional school, financial aid, and rate of return.

Their presentations are related to issues such as developing and designing web-based data collection systems, determining for whom such systems are best suited and developing sampling lists, and identifying contact conditions and system characteristics associated with respondents' participation.

Here's to a successful 2004 Annual Meeting. See you in San Diego!

## Nominees for AERA SIG-SRE 2003-2004 Executive Board

Gunapala Edirisooriya, Nominations Chair & Immediate Past Chair of SIG

### Chair:.....**Gunapala Edirisooriya**

Gunapala has agreed to again serve as chair, if elected. He has previously served as SIG Chair, Program Chair, and Business Secretary. Additionally, Gunapala developed the SIG on Survey Research website. He recently left the role of postsecondary administrator to become a professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Research, and Foundations, Beeghly College of Education, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, OH.

### Program Chair:.....**Jim Griffith**

Jim is the current Program Chair of our SIG, prior to which he served our SIG as Business Secretary. Jim is now a Program Director at the National Center for Education Statistics after working many years as a Senior Evaluation Specialist with the Montgomery County Public Schools in Rockville, Maryland, one of the leading public school research and evaluation programs in the country. He is active in a number of AERA SIGs and APA divisions.

### Business Secretary:.....**Rich Lambert**

Rich is the current Business Secretary of our SIG, prior to which he served our SIG as Program Co-Chair. Rich is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Research, and Technology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He also serves as the Research Director for the Research Center for Heat Start quality and is a member of the Quality Research Consortium Steering Committee of the Agency for Children, Youth and Families.

### Newsletter Editor:.....**Randy McClanahan**

Randy has been a member of the SIG for 15 years and has served as Chair, Program Chair, Business Secretary, and Newsletter Editor. She is a Senior Research Associate in ACT's Educational and Social Research Department where she works on the development and use of standardized and customized survey instruments. Following completion of many survey administrations she inturprets the results and writes reports for clients

#### RE-DO

As provided in the SIG bylaws, the election of officers will take place at the SIG Business Meeting, which will be held in San Diego on Thursday, April 15, 2004 at 6:15-7:45 pm at the Hyatt, Maggie. If you will not be attending the Annual Meeting in San Diego or will not be able to attend the SIG Business Meeting, you may vote by absentee ballot by requesting one from the current Chair, Dr. Lynda Idleman. The ballot must be completed and returned to Lynda on or before April 8, 2004. To obtain an absentee ballot, please contact: Dr. Lynda Idleman, 171 6<sup>th</sup> Street, NE Suite 8, Atlanta, GA 30308; voice: 404 815 7280; Fax: 404 815 4690; E-mail: [knowledge@ldleman.com](mailto:knowledge@ldleman.com)

## Questionnaire Design & Use Workshop

April 29-30, 2004 -- Orlanda, FL  
Rosen Centre Hotel

May 13-14, 2004 - Minneapolis, MN  
Holiday Inn Select—International Airport Hotel

*This is a "nuts and bolts" practical workshop that teaches participants to design and manage market research project; utilize correct sampling techniques; obtain high response rates in excess of 90% to mail or telephone surveys; construct high-quality mail, telephone, and web questionnaires; write questions that provide accurate data for decision making; choose appropriate data collection methods; and use resources wisely.*

## Analyzing & Reporting Questionnaire Data

October 7-8, 2004 - Orlando, FL  
Rosen Centre Hotel

October 28-29, 2004 - Minneapolis, MN  
Holiday Inn Select—International Airport Hotel

*This is a "down-to-earth," practical workshop using a case study approach that teaches participants to understand statistics, develop a data analysis plan, write effective research reports, select appropriate computer software, understand the application of multivariate statistics, and present oral reports of research results.*

For more information or registration materials, contact Anderson, Niebuhr & Associates at:

(651) 486-8712 or (800) 678-5577 Email: [seminar@ana-inc.com](mailto:seminar@ana-inc.com) Register on-line! [www.ana-inc.com](http://www.ana-inc.com)

**SIG - SRE 2004 Agenda  
Business Meeting and Social Hour**

**SIG Session 3132-11962  
Thursday, April 15, 2004; 6:15-7:45 pm  
Hyatt, Maggie**

**Minutes of the 2003 Business Meeting**

**Reports from the Officers**

**Program Chair, *James Griffith***

**Business Secretary, *Richard G. Lambert***

**Newsletter Editor, *Gail McLure (retiring), Randy McClanahan (new)***

**Committee Reports**

**Officer Nominations, *Gunapala Edirisooriya***

**Election of Officers**

**Old Business**

**Membership Issues**

**New Business**

**Honors Awards**

**Report from Chair, *Steve Siera***

**Social Hour**

**Keep your AERA & SIG records up-to-date.**

Send corrections/updates of your information to AERA, Attn: Bidyut Acharya, [Bacharya@aera.net](mailto:Bacharya@aera.net).

Check your information in the back of each newsletter.

# **SIG-SRE 2004 PROGRAM - San Diego**

**James Griffith - Program Chair**

## **AERA 2004 CONVENTION PROGRAM SPECIAL INTEREST GROUP (SIG): SURVEY RESEARCH IN EDUCATION**

### **Monday, April 12, 2004**

**6:15 – 7:45 pm, SDCC, Meeting Room 11B  
JOINT SOCIAL HOUR (in addition to our own)**

Cosponsored event with SIG Educational Statistics, Dr. Richard Lomax, University of Alabama, Program Chair (205-348-1184; [rlomax@bamaed.ua.edu](mailto:rlomax@bamaed.ua.edu))

### **Wednesday, April 14, 2004**

**8:05 am – 10:15 am, Hyatt, Emma C Room**

**SESSION 1: Improving Survey Quality: A Taxonomy of (or Avoiding) Survey Errors (AERA-sess-3132-12518).**

Chair: *Lynda Idleman, Idleman & Associates*

Presenters:

*John Anderson, Anderson, Niebuhr, & Associates*

*Marsha Niebuhr, Anderson, Niebuhr, & Associates*

### **Thursday, April 15, 2004**

**10:35 am -12:05 pm, Marriott, Torrey 3 Room**

**SESSION 2. Construction and Treatment of Survey Responses (AERA-sess-3132-11961).**

Chair: *Randy McClanahan, ACT, Inc.*

**Paper 1: "A Classification of Human Errors in Data Collection" (AERA-3132-17225).**

*Tony C. M. Lam, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

*Wendy Yen, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

*Francine Jacques, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education*

Researchers in the social sciences have identified a multitude of human errors in the process of collecting data in research and evaluation. Confusion surrounds the naming, interpretation and use of these errors, resulting in miscommunication and hindering the search for solution strategies. We conducted a comprehensive review of the social science and service literature and consolidated and developed a classification scheme for and definition of these human errors in data collection. The first level of classification divides response biases into three categories from which biases can originate: from the respondent, the evaluator or the evaluate. In the second level, errors belonging to each of the above categories are grouped into subcategories based on the purposes these errors are intended to serve or how these errors are caused. The third level of the classification system includes specific errors that fall into each subcategory of error in the second level. In some cases, we identified synonymous, subsets, and related errors, and when possible, included a summary of strategies to avoid these errors as reported in the literature.

**Paper 2: "Are the Units of Measurements on Likert-Type Scales Equal Interval or Ordinal?: A Preliminary Investigation of Respondent Decision-Making Process" (AERA-3132-13728).**

*Gunapala Edirisooriya, Youngstown State University*

The following is a familiar statement: "Respondents A and B who strongly agree or disagree with a statement do not necessarily do so for the same reasons." Therefore, some argue that it is inappropriate to infer that responses on a Likert-type survey are measured on an interval scale. One approach to answer this question is to examine the nature of respondents' decision-making behavior. Through a preliminary investigation into respondents' decision-making behavior this paper attempts to derive some rationale for

the appropriate scale of measurement to be used with Likert-type scales. This analysis also provides a sound framework for further research on this issue.

**Paper 3: "The Impact of Misresponding to Likert Scales on the Correlation Coefficient and Coefficient Alpha Given Correlated Measurement Errors" (AERA-3132-17593).**

*Richard G Lambert, University of North Carolina at Charlotte*

*Christophe J McCarthy, University Of Texas At Austin*

The influence of a particular type of mis-responding (Zumbo & Ochieng, 2003) to Likert scales, the presence of a response process variable that functions as a correlated error term and influences category selection, on the correlation coefficient and coefficient alpha was examined through the use of Monte Carlo simulation. Results indicate that as the number of Likert scale points increases the impact of mis-responding decreases, with diminishing effects after five scale points. As the percentage of the population that is influenced by mis-responding increases, so does the distortion in the estimate of both the correlation coefficient and the coefficient alpha reliability estimate.

**Discussant:** *Edward Wolfe, Michigan State University*

## Thursday, April 15, 2004

2:15 pm - 3:45 pm, SDCC, Meeting Room 11B

**SESSION 3. Methodological Issues in the Design and Implementation of Large-scale Web-based Survey Data Collection (AERA-sess-3132-10945).**

**Chair:** *James Griffith, National Center For Education Statistics*

Presenters:

*Tim Gabel, RTI International*

*Jennifer S Wine, RTI International*

*Marorie Hinsdale, RTI International*

*Melissa Cominole - RTI International*

**Discussant:** *Michael Link, Centers for Disease Control*

Over the last decade, research use and interest in web-based data collection systems have increased exponentially, likely due to the efficiencies in time and effort of such systems. Despite the widespread interest and growth of web-based data collection systems, little is known about how best to develop, design, and implement them, in particular, in relation to different kinds of respondent populations. Symposium participants represent several cross-sectional and longitudinal national studies of postsecondary students and faculty. Drawing on their experiences in developing and implementing web-based data collections, symposium participants present findings and results relating to issues such as developing and designing web-based data collection systems, determining for whom such systems are best suited and developing sampling lists, and identifying contact conditions and system characteristics associated with respondents' participation.

## Thursday, April 15, 2004

6:15 pm – 7:45 pm, Hyatt, Maggie Room

**SESSION 4: Business Meeting: SIG Survey Research in Education (AERA-sess-3132-11962).**

**Chair:** *Lynda Idleman, Idleman & Associates*

Business Secretary:

*Richard Lambert, University of North Carolina, Charlotte*

# SIG HONORS AWARD

From time to time, we take a few minutes to reflect on those whose sharing with the profession through publication and other means has made a significant contribution to survey research in education. To date, we have honored several deserving individuals by bestowing on them the Honors Award of the SIG on Survey Research in Education.

## BACKGROUND FOR THE HONORS AWARD

In 1988, the AERA sanctioned an award to be sponsored by the SIG on Survey Research in Education. The purpose of this annual award is to recognize a contribution to or an advance in survey research methodology as it relates to the field of education.

## ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- At least one author of the material must be an AERA member.
- The project must have been completed since June 30, 2001.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

- The material must be written and accessible (i.e. it can be found and is intelligible, not esoteric).
- The material must be useful to the practitioner.
- The project must be a completed piece (i.e., either a published book or article, a presented paper, or a defended dissertation).
- The project must be methodologically sound.

## NOMINATION PROCEDURES & REVIEW GUIDELINES

- The research must be presented as a completed project (e.g., a book, a paper, or a dissertation).
- The nomination may be no longer than 25 pages. If the contribution for which the individual(s) is being nominated comprises more than 25 pages, then a summary of the contribution must be used in the nomination and an original of the contribution must accompany the nomination.
- A member of the Survey Research in Education SIG must make nominations.
- Nominations for cumulative contributions must include documentation from a specific work exemplifying that continuing contribution.

## WINNER TO BE ANNOUNCED FOR 2004

The 2004 Honors Award winner will be announced at the SIG Business Meeting in San Diego, Thursday; April 15, 2004; 6:15-7:45 pm; Hyatt-Maggie.

## PAST HONORS AWARD WINNERS

**2003 Randy McClanahan** The award was made to Randy McClanahan, Senior Research Associate, Educational and Social Research, ACT, Inc. Randy was honored for her contribution to the dissemination of information in survey research. As a long-term member, she has written and presented research papers on survey research in education.

**2002 Chet McCall** The award was made to Chet McCall, Professor of Research Methods at Pepperdine University. Chet was honored for his ongoing contribution, *From Chet's Bookshelf*—a series of book reviews, syntheses, and critical reflections on literature related to survey research—that he has contributed to the SIG newsletter, *the Respondent*.

**2001 Kathy Green** The award was given to Kathy Green, Professor of Education at the University of Denver. Her chapter "Survey Data Quality," in the *Advances in Survey Research* volume of the Jossey-Bass series *New Directions in Program Evaluation* was honored as exemplifying her contributions, totaling more than 20 publications and presentations on survey research topics.

**1997 Sheldon Clark** The award was given posthumously to Sheldon Clark, Senior Research Scientist at the Oak Ridge Institute for Science and Education. He was honored for his many contributions to survey research, including publications—65 in all. Many of these focused on survey research. His service was exemplified by his term as Chair of the SIG and by his human contributions, such as his humorous infusions into his presentations and writings.

**1990 Jack Anderson, Doug Berdie, & Marsha Niebuhr** The award was given in recognition of the contribution made by their book *Questionnaires: Design and Use*. Doug is Vice President of Total Research Corporation. Jack is President and Marsha is Vice President of Anderson, Niebuhr and Associates, Inc. All three of these honorees have made many contributions to the SIG including being leaders in its founding.

**1989 Judy Boser** Judy is a Research Associate in the College of Education at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville. For years she maintained an archive of papers presented in SIG sessions. She served as Secretary/Treasurer, Program Chair and Chair of the SIG and has presented numerous papers at SIG sessions.



Steve Siera, Chair, SIG Honors Awards Committee  
Education Division, St. Martin's College  
Phone: 360-438-4589 – E-mail [ssiera@stmartin.edu](mailto:ssiera@stmartin.edu)

# THE SPOTLIGHT PERSON



## Bruce Rogers

Our spotlight person is Bruce Rogers. Bruce is Professor of Educational Psychology and Foundations at the University of Northern Iowa in Cedar Falls. His teaching assignment includes teaching courses in research methods and in educational measurement and statistics.

His academic career has taken him from high school in suburban Phoenix, through Arizona State University, where he earned his BA in Mathematics (with teaching certification) as well as an MA in Physical Science Education. From that point, he headed westward where he taught high school mathematics in the Bay Area for two years. He took advantage of an opportunity to further his education in the Educational Research program at Michigan State University, where he completed his Ph.D. in 1968.

He then taught at Arizona State University for two years before moving to the University of Maryland, College Park, where he taught for six years. In 1975, he went to the University of Northern Iowa as an associate professor, where he remains, having been promoted to full professor in 1988.

While he was at Maryland, he was involved in providing assistance on a number of survey research projects. Wanting to have a venue for sharing and gaining ideas about survey research, he became active in the SIG virtually from its inception. Since then, he has regularly attended paper sessions and the business meeting, being a frequent contributor to the discussion in the business meeting. He has shared his insights with us, helping us to make better choices in a variety of areas. Bruce comments on the SIG meeting as being helpful with a variety of issues as well as providing an opportunity to mingle with others who have similar interests. During the many years he has been involved with the SIG, Bruce has frequently served as a reviewer for the SIG's proposals, and has been invited to serve as a chair/discussant for the sessions, and presented on a mathematical model for estimating return rates.

One of Bruce's continuing interests has been in ensuring that students and colleagues who use survey approaches have a solid foundation for doing their research. He encourages them to be meticulous in their development of their instrument and their procedures, often guiding them through the process. He attends to details, in varied areas such as coming up with creative ways to analyze quantitative data, determining when it is appropriate to use purposive sampling, or whether to include a neutral or no opinion option on items, tailoring the advice to the situation. He makes his point by saying that upon being selected for a jury, you want prospective jurors to have no opinion, but it is difficult to expect that a parent would have no opinion about the quality of their child's education.

He is also an advocate for the researcher. His advocacy is revealed in a number of ways, whether it is in establishing collaborative relationships with the State Department of Education or individual school districts to build access for researchers, or in taking a position that we really need more outlets for publishing papers on survey methodology in education.

Although he acknowledges that much of today's research is qualitative in nature, Bruce is committed to making sure that the survey research he is associated with is of the highest quality. Take some time to visit with him in San Diego, you will come away pleased that you did.

# Who Are We?

## Our SIG Members Respond to Our Request for Sketches

**Ruth Ravid writes:** I have been a member of the SIG for quite some time. I am a professor of Educational Foundations and Inquiry at National-Louis University in Wheeling, IL (see the directory for contact information). I teach research and assessment courses to graduate (masters and doctorate) students in the College of Education, and many of my students create small-scale surveys on educational topics to collect data for the class research projects. I am the author of *Practical Statistics for Educators* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.) and the co-author (with Elizabeth Oyer) of *Workbook to Accompany Practical Statistics for Educators* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Both books are in press, to be published in March 2004 by University Press of America. I am also the co-editor (with Marianne Handler) of *The Many Faces of School-University Collaboration: Characteristics of Successful Partnerships* (2001, published by Teachers Ideas Press).

**David J. Bernstein writes:** I am an Evaluation Specialist with the Office of Shared Accountability, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS). I manage MCPS' survey research efforts. I have served as a Performance Measurement Research Consultant to the Governmental Accounting Standards Board and am an Adjunct Professor of Public Administration with the George Washington University. I received a Ph.D. in Public Administration from the George Washington University (2000), a Master of Public Administration degree from George Washington University (1983), and a BA from Drew University (1980). In addition to membership in AERA, I am a member of Educational Accountability Task Force of the American Evaluation Association and a member of the Board of Directors of the American Society for Public Administration's Center for Accountability and Performance.

**Laura Stapleton writes:** I have been a member of the SIG for only the last couple of years. I am an assistant professor of Quantitative Methods in the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Texas. I teach undergraduate Introduction to Statistics and, at the graduate level, Survey Research Methods and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). My specific research interest focuses on studying statistical modeling techniques used to account for characteristics of survey data. Such characteristics may be a result of the sampling design (such as dependence of observations due to cluster sampling) or the result of "reality" (such as non-response, missing data, and measurement error). I am currently working under a research grant from AERA to study six different methods of running aggregate SEM analyses on data from complex sample designs.

**Belle Brett writes:** For the past 4+ years, I have been an independent consultant in program evaluation, at all levels of education (from pre-school through training of adults) and in many different fields of education—with the Brett Consulting Group. I frequently design surveys and conduct studies using surveys for my work. In some projects I have been using web-based surveys. Previously, I did this kind of work in a variety of settings (higher education, educational consulting organization, human services organization). In addition, I am an independent scholar, currently following up on my dissertation on the lives of educated women with a colleague from the University of Liverpool. The primary instrument is a lengthy written survey.

Occasionally, SIG officers send e-mail announcements or information to members. For such mailings to reach you, we need your current e-mail addresses. In a couple of e-mail messages to the entire SIG membership on January 22 and 26, we tried to send each of you an invitation to submit a short paragraph about yourself that we can use in a future newsletter. A

few of you responded and a few of those responses appear above. But unfortunately, two or three dozen members' e-mail messages were returned UNDELIVERED. Please inform Bidyut Acharya at AERA ([bacharya@aera.net](mailto:bacharya@aera.net)) of your most current e-mail address. Send all of your updated info to AERA.

Because you are a member of the AERA SIG for Survey Research in Education, the SIG newsletter, *the Respondent*, invites you to send us a short piece (i.e., a half page or less) about yourself to include in a future issue of our newsletter. We hope to include several, as space permits, in each issue. So send yours in right away.

## Current SIG Members

(as of March 1, 2004)

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<b>Telephone: Home (    )</b>	<b>Work (    )</b>																		
<b>Fax: (    )</b>																			
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- 1) To become a member of (or renew your membership in) the AERA Special Interest Group (SIG) on Survey Research in Education, complete the form above and mail it with your check payable to *AERA*.
- 2) Dues: \$7.00/1 year, \$12.00/2 years payable with AERA dues. If you renew your AERA dues for two years, you must renew your SIG membership for two years. The SIG membership year must be concurrent with the AERA membership year.
- 3) Return the completed form, along with your check for dues, to...

**AERA**  
**Attn: Bidyut Acharya**  
**1230 17<sup>th</sup> Street, NW**  
**Washington, DC 20036**

If you have questions about SIG membership, you may contact:  
**Richard Lambert, Business Secretary**  
**Educational Administration, Research, and Technology Department**  
**UNC Charlotte**  
**Charlotte, NC 29223-0001**  
**Phone: 704-687-3735 FAX 704-687-3493**  
**Email: rglamber@email.uncc.edu**