

Education in Uncertain Times: Solidarity, Responsibility, and Collective Work
The 2026 Society of Professors of Education Conference Call for Proposals

“A consciousness of the humanity of all men, of the sacred unity in all the diversity, is not merely to lay down a pious postulate, but it is the active and animate heart-to-heart knowledge of your neighbors, high and low, Black and white, employer and employed...”

— W. E. B. Du Bois

Professors of education are working in a moment of deep instability. Across the United States and globally, education has become a central site of political struggle, shaped by legislative censorship, ideological surveillance, and coordinated efforts to narrow what knowledge is deemed legitimate in schools and universities. While such struggles are not new, their current scale and intensity pose serious threats to public education, academic freedom, and the democratic purposes of schooling. These conditions compel scholars to ask what it means to practice educational work responsibly amid political instability, institutional precarity, and ongoing struggles over knowledge and power.

This call invites scholars to engage this moment through the concept of solidarity. Drawing on the work of Leah Hunt-Hendrix and Astra Taylor (2024), we approach solidarity not as agreement or symbolic alignment, but as a collective practice rooted in shared struggle and interdependence. Transformative solidarity foregrounds responsibility, shared risk, and sustained work across differences. This framing raises important questions for professors of education about how theories of solidarity might help reimagine curriculum, pedagogy, and research as collective, relational, and historically grounded pursuits rather than isolated or individualized ones.

The Society of Professors of Education (SPE) has long served as a scholarly community committed to democratic education, critical inquiry, and the understanding of education as a public good. SPE’s legacy invites reflection on what lessons from past educational movements, scholarly communities, and the Society’s own intellectual history can inform how educators respond to contemporary threats to public institutions and democratic life. In moments of uncertainty, SPE has provided space for dialogue, critique, and imagination, supporting scholarship that grapples with pressing educational concerns while remaining grounded in ethical responsibility.

We welcome proposals that engage theoretical, empirical, and practical questions across the field of education, including work related to curriculum, pedagogy, teacher education, policy, leadership, and community-based research. We are especially interested in contributions that consider how professors of education build and sustain communities across differences, and how such communities support critical inquiry, care, and shared action in the face of constraint.

Consider:

- What does it mean to practice solidarity in educational scholarship, teaching, and leadership amid political instability, institutional precarity, and ongoing struggles over knowledge and power?
- How might theories of solidarity help professors of education reimagine curriculum, pedagogy, and research as collective, relational, and historically grounded work rather than isolated or individual endeavors?
- What lessons from past educational movements, scholarly communities, and SPE's own intellectual legacy can inform how we respond to contemporary threats to public education and democratic life?
- How can professors of education build and sustain communities across differences that support ethical responsibility, critical inquiry, and shared action in this moment and into the future?

At this pivotal moment, professors of education are called to consider not only where we go from here, but how we go together. SPE invites scholars to reflect on how solidarity might guide educational work now and into the future.

The **Society of Professors of Education** invites proposals for presentations at its annual meeting to be held during the 2026 AERA Annual Conference in Los Angeles, California on **Saturday, April 11th**.

We are especially interested in presentations that are focused on the theme of ***Education in Uncertain Times: Solidarity, Responsibility, and Collective Work***. Proposals not related to the theme but focused on the goals of the Society are also welcome. Abstracts accepted for presentation will appear in SPE's conference proceedings; select papers may be published in *Professing Education*, SPE's journal.

All presenters must be members of the Society of Professors of Education. To be included in the conference program, join the Society at your earliest convenience. See the Society of Professors of Education web page for the membership form: <http://societyofprofessorsofeducation.com>

Proposals must be submitted via [this online form](#) by **Friday, February 13**.

Length: Proposals should be between 350-500 words. The proposal should describe the background/contexts, methods, potential findings, and significance. The proposal should not identify the presenters.

Call for Reviewers: In addition to submitting your work, you can participate in the Society as a volunteer proposal reviewer. The review process will take place soon after the deadline for proposal submissions. Please contact Saba Khan Vlach at saba-vlach@uiowa.edu if you are interested in reviewing proposals.

Looking forward to seeing you in Los Angeles!

Dr. Keffrelyn Brown & Dr. Saba Khan Vlach
SPE President & SPE Program Chair, 2025-2026

Call for SPE Awards (See SPE website for award descriptions:
<https://societyofprofessorsofeducation.com/awards/>)

The Martha Alleksaht-Snider Award

Due Date: February 13th

Submit your application materials as a single PDF file to award committee chair, Rouhollah Aghasaleh ra292@humboldt.edu

The Mary Anne Raywid Award

Nominations Due Date: February 13th

Individuals may be nominated or self-nominated, simply by naming the individual to award committee chair, Joseph Polizzi, jap383@psu.edu

The William H. Schubert Award

Nomination Due Date: February 13th

Send nominations to award chair, Seungho Moon, smoon3@luc.edu

Outstanding Book Awards

Chair: Pamela Konkol, pamela.konkol@cuchicago.edu

Please contact committee chair pamela.konkol@cuchicago.edu with the book title, author email, and publisher contact; Pamela is happy to answer questions about review criteria and what makes for an “outstanding” book as defined by the SPE. Too, SPE has a great panel of reviewers, but there is always room for more! Please consider volunteering to review a text or two.

Nominations for 2026 have already closed, but nominations for 2027 can begin now. Reviewers consider how well each text, among other attributes, assists readers in understanding the relationship between education and the social complexities in which schools are contextualized and in fostering inquiry into the history, current status, and future alternatives of teaching, learning, and education. You do not have to be a member of the SPE to nominate a text, and self-nominations/publisher nominations are welcome. The review process is competitive. SPE hopes that winners who are not yet members will choose to support the organization through membership. Texts must have been published in 2025, 2026, or 2027 to be considered. Nominations will be through October 1, 2026, as our reviewers need time to read, contemplate, and review.

Richard Wisniewski Award for Teacher Education

Due Date: February 13th

Please send nominations via email to award committee chair, Rob Helfenbein
helfenbein_rj@mercerc.edu

The William H. Watkins Award

Due Date: February 13th

Individuals may be nominated or self-nominated, simply by naming the individual to award committee chair, Kelly Vaughan, kvaughan@lewisu.edu