



**THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF HISPANICS IN HIGHER EDUCATION (AAHHE)
AND EDUCATIONAL TESTING SERVICE (ETS)
OUTSTANDING DISSERTATIONS COMPETITION 2012**

Guidelines

The following guidelines and accompanying explanations are provided to ensure objectivity and the highest possible standards for the Dissertation Competition.

1. Who is eligible to enter the competition?

The competition is open to anyone who has completed a dissertation that focuses on Hispanic(s) in higher education **or** to any Hispanic individual who has completed a dissertation in the social sciences, broadly defined, between December 2009 and August 1, 2011.

Dissertations are eligible if they are in domains that are related to the ETS corporate mission, including education, linguistics, psychology, statistics, testing, and so forth. Studies using any research approach (historical, experimental, survey, qualitative, etc.) are eligible.

Dissertations in the humanities, basic sciences, technology, engineering and mathematics are not eligible.

Completion is defined as:

- (a) received the doctoral degree between the specified dates
- OR**
- (b) satisfactorily completed all the course work and the dissertation between the dates specified and the dissertations are acceptable to the candidate's committee, but the degree has not been conferred.

A routine check is made with the chair of the dissertation committee of the applicant to protect all competitors, the universities, the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education and Educational Testing Service.

2. What are the criteria used in evaluating the dissertations?

The following criteria will be used to evaluate the dissertations:

- (a) appropriateness of the research approach used;

- (b) significant impact it will make to the field;
- (c) creativity and innovation of the study;
- (d) scholarly quality of the dissertation which features:
 - the research design and approach, data analysis, bibliography (current and appropriateness to the study); theoretical framework, comprehensiveness, integration and conceptualization;
- (e) significance of its contribution to knowledge in the field which includes: the discussion of findings, implications and contributions to the discipline.

3. What is the first deadline for the competition?

September 5, 2011

Applicants submit via PDF or Word format a copy of dissertation abstract to the chair of the dissertations competition, Dr. Azara Santiago-Rivera: azara@uwm.edu.

THIS IS A VERY FIRM DEADLINE. ANY DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS RECEIVED AFTER THIS DATE WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

4. How should the dissertation abstracts be prepared?

For the first round of judging, the applicant's dissertation is rated **SOLELY** upon the dissertation abstract submitted. These abstracts, then, must reflect accurately, concisely and precisely the research of the full dissertation.

The following directions must be used in the preparation of the abstract.

a. Format

The abstract should include the following:

- (1) **Title page** – A sample title page is attached to these guidelines. Please provide all the information requested. One page in length.
- (2) **Letter** – A letter, on university stationery and signed by the chair of the dissertation committee, must indicate that the dissertation meets the eligibility criteria, defined earlier in these guidelines, and detail is essential. The letter must also state how the chair would rank the dissertation among previous dissertations he/she has chaired. Further, the Chair should address the evaluation criteria listed above.
- (3) **Summary** – On a separate page, include a summary, **approximately 150 words in length**, stating in non-technical terms, the purpose and major findings of the study. Double-spaced and one page in length.
- (4) **Main report section** – You should include the statement of the problem; the purpose of the study; definition of key terms; sampling techniques to include size, description,(if applicable); theoretical framework;

hypotheses; overview of analysis of data (if applicable); main findings, conclusions; and implications.

THE MAIN REPORT SECTIONS SHOULD NOT EXCEED FIFTEEN (15) PAGES IN LENGTH, DOUBLE-SPACED.

- (5) **Bibliography** – Include a complete reference to each item cited in the dissertation abstract. References for items not used in the abstract should not be included.
 - (6) **Appendix** – If the applicant requires additional space in which to present details of a research instrument, a theoretical point of view, or to elaborate on some other vital point, an appendix may be included. Not to exceed (3) three pages, double-spaced.
- b. **Length**. The total abstract should not exceed twenty-five, double-spaced, 8 ½" x 11" pages, including all the sections mentioned above.
 - c. **Writing Style** – Your writing style should be clear, consistent, and concise. Particular care should be taken to ensure that each table, chart and/or figure is adequately explained.
5. **Evaluation of Abstract (see page 6)**
6. **How many copies of the dissertation abstract are required?**

A copy of the dissertation abstract should be sent via PDF or Word format to:

Dr. Azara Santiago-Rivera
University of WI-Milwaukee
Enderis Hall Office 791
PO Box 413
Milwaukee, WI 53201
azara@uwm.edu

7. **What is the general procedure that will be used in the competition?**

The judging, generally speaking, will be in two phases. The first phase will use the dissertation abstracts as a basis. The chair of the competition will send the abstracts to a Panel of Judges who will evaluate the abstracts. Each judge will be asked to submit to the chair of the competition a ranking of the top ten (10) abstracts.

Based on the judges' rankings, the Chair of the competition will determine the top ten (10) abstracts; these become the semifinalists. The Chair contacts the semifinalists and requests a copy of a complete dissertation to be submitted; this document will be used as a basis for the second phase of the judging/evaluating process by the panel of judges.

The Panel of Judges will convene to read, evaluate, and rank the complete dissertations and will determine the top three (3) dissertations.

A schedule, which outlines the process in more detail, is included in the **Important Dates** section that follows.

8. What are the most important dates and deadlines?

The schedule below, in addition to providing important dates and deadlines, provides additional information about the process.

September 5, 2011	Applicants submit via PDF or Word format a dissertation abstract to the chair of the dissertations competition, Dr. Azara Santiago-Rivera: azara@uwm.edu .
September 9, 2011	Chair of the dissertations competition distributes abstracts to the Panel of Judges.
October 3, 2011	Panel of Judges completes screening and advises the chair of rankings. Each judge identifies five (5) top dissertation abstracts.
October 10, 2011	Chair of the dissertations competition determines the top ten (10) abstracts and advises all entrants of the results. In effect, these are the semifinalists.
October 14, 2011	Semifinalists send a copy of complete dissertation in PDF or Word format to Dave Hobson at ETS: dhobson@ets.org .
October 20-22, 2011	Panel of Judges meets and selects the top three (3) dissertations.
October 24, 2011	Chair of the competition notifies three (3) finalists and the others not selected of results.
March 8-10, 2012	Winners are invited to participate in the seventh annual national conference of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education, in Costa Mesa, California.
March 10, 2012	The outstanding dissertations competition winners for 2012 are announced at the awards luncheon at the seventh annual national conference of the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education in Costa Mesa, California.
April 5, 2012	Announcements of the competition and guidelines are sent to all individual members of the American

Association of Hispanics in Higher Education and to the presidents of AAHHE institutional members. Announcement will be posted on the website of both AAHHE and ETS. Announcements will be advertised in the *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, *Hispanic Outlook of Higher Education* and other journals. ETS will announce the competition to its constituencies.

9. What recognition will be given to the winners?

There will be two types, or levels, of winners:

- (1) The semifinalists—the writers of the top ten (10) dissertation abstracts, from which the three (3) finalists are selected, and
- (2) The three (3) finalists—the writers of the dissertations selected by the Panel of Judges as first, second and third place winners.

The three (3) finalists will be recognized formally at the annual awards luncheon during AAHHE's **seventh** annual conference in Costa Mesa, California on March 8-10, 2012.

The American Association for Hispanics in Higher Education will pay for travel expenses within the continental United States for the three (3) finalists, to include hotel room for two (2) nights and per diem for two (2) days. The Association will also pay the registration costs for the finalists at the conference.

The first place winner will receive an award of \$5,000. The second place winner will receive an award of \$2,000, and the third place winner will receive an award of \$1,000. All three finalists will receive an AAHHE/ETS plaque.

The three AAHHE finalists will also present their dissertations in individual concurrent sessions at the conference. The American Association for Hispanics in Higher Education will also ask the three (3) finalists to submit to the *Journal of Hispanic Higher Education*, an academic article based on the dissertation.

ETS will invite the first place winner to publish the essence of the winning dissertation in an appropriate ETS publication and to showcase the research at a seminar hosted by ETS in Princeton, New Jersey.

10. Who makes the final decision?

All decisions by the Panel of Judges are final.

AAHHE Dissertation Rating Rubric

Poor Inadequate		Adequate		Excellent Stellar
1	2	3	4	5

Dimensions Evaluated	Comments / Dimension Score
Conceptualization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensiveness of questions • Creativity of literature integration • Added contribution 	_____ / 5
Research Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Methodology • Soundness of research design 	_____ / 5
Discussion of Findings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalizability • Applicability • Integration premises 	_____ / 5
Significance / Impact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generalizability • Applicability • “Staying power” • Contributions to field 	_____ / 5
Scholarly Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing • Rationale • Literature review • Bibliography 	_____ / 5

Total _____ / 25

Additional details about all aspects of the competition are online in the Outstanding Dissertations Competition 2012 Guidelines at www.aahhe.org