Overview of Cluster Chair Roles and Responsibilities in the Abstract Review and Development of the Abstract-based Program Content of the SSWR Annual Conference

Cluster chairs play a significant role in the abstract review and development of the abstract-based program content for the SSWR annual conference. The multi-stage abstract review process, which is led by the cluster chairs, is intrinsic to a successful, impactful, and scientifically rigorous research conference. We could not offer the conference without the energy that volunteer reviewers, cluster chairs, and staff devote to the abstract review process.

**CLUSTER CHAIR TERM AND APPOINTMENT PROCESS**

**Service Term:** 3-year term

**Eligibility Requirements:** Prospective cluster chairs must meet the following criteria:
- PhD in social work or social welfare (or be on a social work faculty)
- Maintain a current program of research
- Possess relative expertise to the SSWR clusters and topics

**Recommendation Process:** Every year, a number of cluster chairs rotate off. The SSWR Board, conference committee, and the Special Interest Group (SIG) conveners are asked to recommend individuals that meet the eligibility requirements.

**Vetting Process:** The SSWR Vice President/Conference Chair vets each of the prospective cluster chairs. The SSWR Vice President/Conference Chair then recommends the cluster chair appointments to the conference committee and board who vote to affirm the appointments.

**CLUSTER CHAIR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Abstracts submitted to the conference are categorized within 28 clusters (see below). Each cluster is chaired by 2-4 members of the social work community for a 3-year term – in many cases we aim to appoint three co-chairs to better distribute the work. Cluster chairs have a very significant role in the abstract review process and ensuring timely notification of abstract status to authors.

Cluster chairs jointly are responsible for the following tasks in this progressive order:

- **Recruit additional reviewers** (as needed);  
- **Review initial reviewer assignments** (each abstract is reviewed by two reviewers);  
- **Complete outstanding reviews** (when reviewers don’t complete on time, have conflicts of interest, or when abstract content and reviewer expertise is not a good match);  
- After the Vice President/Conference Chair oversees the abstract review score discrepancy analysis for outlying reviewer scores, the cluster chairs **provide a third review for abstracts** where there are outlying reviewer scores;  
- **Determine abstracts acceptances across all format** (individual oral papers, posters, symposia, roundtables, and workshops); and  
- **Create paper sessions** which contain 4-5 highly scored individual oral paper abstracts, **convert highly scored papers that don’t fit thematically into a paper session to ePosters** when the authors agree, and **recommend prospective paper session moderators**.

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