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.**

If you have any questions, please contact A. DeeJay Hastings, CAE, SSWR program director, dj@sswr.org.