# New NAGT Education Research Division

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NAGT has created a new division that seeks to serve members interested in geoscience education research. The division has a website: <https://nagt.org/nagt/divisions/geoed/index.html>. We believe the division can serve to focus activities that serve existing NAGT member’s needs as well as a focal point for the recruitment of new members.

The question we need to consider is what should the division do? What activities would best serve the needs of the community? I believe that the activities of the division need to meet member’s needs for competence, community and agency (self-determination theory: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Self-determination_theory>). An organization that meets these needs will support the career success of its members. In the sections below, I outline some ideas on the activities of the new division with the caveat that this is meant to be nothing more than a straw man proposal.

**Activities of the New Division**

I think it is important that this division serves two types of individuals engaged in different types of educational research. The first type of individual is engaged in scholarly teaching. Scholarly teaching builds on what others have learned in an ongoing way, seeks evidence of learning, and uses evidence to improve practice. Scholarly teaching includes intellectual activities designed to bring about documented improvements in student learning and share them publicly (e.g., within a learning community). As such, scholarly teaching reflects a type of action research often focused on improved teaching practice. The second type of individual is one who has the knowledge and skills to add to our knowledge-base of teaching and learning through the peer-reviewed publication. These individuals are engaged in disciplinary-based educational research (DBER; <http://sites.nationalacademies.org/DBASSE/BOSE/DBASSE_072106>). DBER goes beyond scholarly teaching and is driven by a desire to understand how students learn effectively and how teaching influences this process. DBER requires in-depth understanding of the literature, critical reflection, and sharing through publication.

In order to meet these needs, I see this division involved in activities such as the following:

* Periodic communications that share news, events and announcements through newsletters, blog circles, and/or listservs
* Organize educational sessions at GSA, AGU, and other appropriate meetings such as NARST or AERA.
* Be an avenue for the recruitment or organization of research teams that can address specific questions or respond to RFPs.
* Develop short professional development events using online technologies such as journal clubs, interviews with researchers (both in geoscience education and outside disciplines such as cognitive psychology), or specific research methods. This activity should mutually support SERC activities to avoid competition and duplication.
* Be an avenue for community feedback to the editorial staff of the Journal of Geoscience Education, if so requested by the Editor.
* Consider methods that the division could support the tenure and promotion of divisional members.

As a start to building community among the members of the new division, I suggest the following tasks:

* Hold a reception at GSA for those interested in building the division. CHECK! (Thanks to Erica at SERC)
* Survey the people in the list below on their interests and needs that could be served by the division.
* I think it is important to hold an election early to identify the division chair so the community has agency.
* Discuss with Cathy the IT tools that could be used to support the division activities.
* Develop the web pages and other associated documents that describe the division and can be used to recruit division members. CHECK! (Thanks to Dave Mogk)

**Next Steps**

Please join us for a **NAGT Research Interest Group and** **GSA Education Division Reception** at GSA 2013 in Denver, CO, Sunday, 27 October, 5:00 pm-6:00 pm Hyatt CCC Centennial Ballroom G. We will have a brief inaugural business meeting to a) call for nominations for Division officers, and b) to learn about opportunities to publish articles in the Journal of Geoscience Education. We'll hope to see you in Denver, and bring a friend!

At the meeting, we will discuss the process to identify division officers. Dave Mogk and I will create an online form for nominations for Geo Research Division officers.  The nominations can from the members of NAGT or self-nominations.  We are working on the following proposed timeline: nominations through December 1 and online voting by members in January. The charge to initial officers will include the following:  a) formalize a mission statement, b) develop by-laws if needed, and c) chart initial Division activities.