



UF

Preparing a Successful Conference Proposal



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Learning Objectives

- Identify components of a successful proposal
- Understand the language utilized in conference proposals
- Develop techniques for choosing topics related to conference proposals
- Learn common mistakes in proposals

Choosing a Topic

Developing the presentation topic – Do not reinvent the wheel

- Excellent topics can come from anywhere
 - Supervisors, mentors, class, professors, work
- With whom can you brainstorm topic ideas?
- What existing research paper you may use?
- Starting from scratch?
 - Begin reading
 - Create a literature review

Thinking through the Topic

Let's take a moment and write a couple ideas

Some guiding questions:

- In what ways is your department excelling?
- What research captures your attention?
- In what unique ways have you supported students?
- What are current and relevant topics in the field?
- What is relevant across campuses and campus types?
- Start thinking: who might be a good partner for this?

Thinking through the Topic (Cont'd)

Let's take a moment and write a couple ideas

Pair & Share – Breakout

- Refer to the handout
- Take about 5 minutes with your group
- Reflect and begin discussing Parts 1 & 2

Collaboration not Isolation

- Do you need to form a team?
 - *Not always, but it can help*
- There are advantages to having a team
 - Shared responsibilities and division of work
 - More comfortable
 - Wider set of knowledge
 - Diversifies your proposal with more experiences, especially if from other institutions
- Of course—there may be challenges in creating a team, as there may be with any group work

Selecting a Conference

- Find a conference based on your interest, field, or research
 - National: General – ACPA, ASHE
 - National: Field Specific – ACUHO-I, ACUI
 - Regional - GLACUHO
 - State – NASPA Florida, Assessment in Higher Education
 - Local/Campus – DSA own Student Affairs NEXT Conference
 - Led by Jerri Berry with support from the SAAR Team
- Many fields have similar conferences, pick the one that best suits you
- Factor in conference theme and values
- Not all conferences support all presentation formats

Types of Program

- Consider the audience when choosing a format
- How will technology be used?
- What types of materials will you need in advance?
- Program Types
 - Pre-Conference Workshops
 - Poster Sessions
 - Scholarly Paper Sessions
 - SA Speaks
 - Innovative Programming
 - Symposium
 - General Interest Sessions/KC Sponsored/Virtual
 - Lecture/Discussion
 - Panel Discussion
 - Roundtable
 - Workshop

Presentation Proposal Tips

- Follow conference guidelines explicitly
- Relate to associations' guiding principles
- Establish a solid foundation for proposal content
- Utilize theory/research
- Be concise & clear
- Plan an effective and enticing title
- Use good writing practices
- Consider how your proposal will be evaluated by selection committee
- Know the deadlines

General Outline

- Title
- Abstract/Description/Purpose
- Learning outcomes
- Introduction (include related literature)
- Research questions (if applicable)
- Methodology (if applicable)
 - Methods
 - Participants
 - Reliability
- Results (if applicable)
- Main arguments
- Implications
- Discussion (this can vary by the types of program)
- References

Connect with the Association's Purpose, Values, and Research

Include forms of assessment, research, and/or evaluation:

- Current research and theory
- Association's Professional/Research Competencies
- Review values and principles
- Conference themes

Engage the Audience

- Panel sessions w/Q&A
- Think, Pair, Shares
- Case Studies
- Reactions or thoughts on brief videos
- What are other ways people have engaged the audience while presenting?
 - Raise those virtual hands!

Literally...Know Your Audience

Target Groups

- Community College Professionals
- Graduate Students
- Mid-Level Student Affairs Professionals
- New Professionals
- Senior-Level Student Affairs Professionals
- Undergraduate Students
- Vice President for Student Affairs

Institution Types

- Community Colleges
- For-Profit
- Large Universities
- Mid-Sized College & Universities
- Minority Serving Institutions
- Small Colleges & Universities

Feedback and Revise

- Consult with other professionals
 - Faculty
 - Advisors
 - Mentors
 - Peers
 - Previous presenters
- Get opinions, advice and begin editing

Submit your Proposal

- Do not miss the deadline
- Be prepared for a 6+ week response depending on the conference
- Good Luck! 😊

Secure the Bag

- Good sources of funding for project and travel include:
 - Graduate School
 - Program Area or Department
 - Volunteering at conference may get fees waived
 - Reach out to all contacts

Things to Remember

- Incorporate theories or research into the presentation
- Provide a substantial foundation of information leading the reviewers to understand your expertise
- Use literature from Student Affairs and other fields
- Collaborate throughout the whole process
- Connect presentation to the theme or values of the conference
- Make the purpose and importance of the presentation explicit
- Proofread

Develop the Presentation!

Make sure the presentation still fits your original proposal,
conference, and the theme

Thank you for your time!

Questions?