



## **SACRAO Annual Meeting Frequently Asked Questions and Tips for Poster Sessions**

### ***How do I submit my proposal for consideration?***

Use this link and follow the directions:

[Poster Submission 2015-2016](#)

### ***What is the deadline to submit a proposal for a poster session?***

The deadline is December 1 of each year with a notification granted in early January.

### ***What is the format for a poster session?***

Poster sessions are usually scheduled for a particular conference time, listed in the annual meeting program. During this time, you must be with your poster to facilitate the session. In addition, presenters will be asked to display their posters early in the conference, typically outside the area of the Town Hall and/or business meeting. (It is a good idea to make sure your poster can communicate well without you being present.) This allows for the heaviest viewing traffic prior to the actual poster sessions, allowing participants ample opportunity to prepare questions for the researcher's during the scheduled poster sessions. During the conference, attendees will circulate around the room engaging in informal conversation with the presenters. There will not be a formal presentation; rather, individuals will discuss with one visitor or a small group of visitors. Hosts will circulate through the room to engage in discussions and provide commentary and feedback.



### ***Does a poster presentation have to be research-based?***

Presentations are often a visual representation of a research project, with a methods section, data, and results; however, this is not always the case. Posters can present a best practices methodology, or an explanation of how a policy change was adapted on your campus. A poster session can describe a customization to your student information database, or a series of communications adopted by your office. The possibilities are endless. The subject should relate back to the mission of SACRAO as it identifies and promotes standards and best practices affecting admissions officers, registrars, and other academic support and student-service professionals.

### ***How should I prepare for the poster session?***

Presenting poster sessions differs from giving other kinds of presentations. These will be informal presentations. The audience comes and goes, so the presenter must constantly adapt to the viewers who are present. Some will want an oral explanation; some will merely want to look for a few seconds. Prepare several versions of your remarks, from 30 seconds to 4 minutes. Poster fair presenters should also prepare a one-page handout about their projects to give to visitors, as well as prepare a 3-5 minute overview of the project, but mostly prepare to answer questions asked by circulating participants. The poster should not exceed 30" x 60". Provide a board upon which you plan to tape or tack your poster. An easel will be provided for holding your poster board.

### ***What should I bring to the conference to support my presentation?***

Obviously, you should bring or ship your poster to the conference site. (If a presenter must travel on a plane, a container will be needed to protect the poster in transit. Poster tubes can be purchased for around \$5.00 to protect your poster during transport.) If you can't travel with your poster already tacked to your poster board, you may need to buy a board in the conference town once you arrive.



More than likely, twenty-five one-page handouts will be sufficient for people visiting your session. Also, bring business cards or cards with your name and contact information that you can distribute to anyone who may wish to discuss your project further with you after the conference.

***Do I need to be registered in order to make my poster presentation?***

Yes, you do need to register for the conference, but you do not need to be a member of SACRAO to be considered. Presenters who are not attending the actual conference can request a waiver of the registration fee.

***What should my poster look like?***

A poster should have enough information to paint a relatively clear picture without overwhelming the viewer. Ideally, viewers should not have to spend more than five minutes reading through text on a poster. Select graphics carefully, choosing information that conveys the most important message from the poster. Graphics and font sizes should be easy to read from at a distance of at least five feet.

***What are elements of an effective poster?***

- Focused, limited topic
- Statement of problem addressed by project or research/evaluation question
- Clear title, author and funding source
- Selected graphic depictions of data, participants, or before/after program effects
- Clear source of information
- Logical flow of information
- Explicit implications or lessons
- Handouts summarizing poster and contact information



### ***How much work does a poster require?***

A poster does not have to generate a lot of work. Imagine giving a five-minute report to a peer. What would you say? Write down what you would say, and organize the key points in the following way:

- 1) Statement of problem (need for project)
- 2) Purpose of the poster (can also be clearly stated in title)
- 3) Who prepared the poster?
- 4) Description of the program and target outcomes (should not be more than three to five sentences—can be depicted in a logic model)
- 5) At least one graphic (can be a photograph) illustrating the program's progress, who is involved, or how the program works
- 6) Lessons learned so far (if the project is currently underway)
- 7) Implications for future action (where will this lead?)
- 8) Source of funding for the project (if applicable)

### ***How do I design my poster?***

Improve legibility with the correct font size. To make the information you display legible for your audience, you must judge how close a reader must be to read the smallest crucial piece of data. Here is a guide to font style and size if your viewers are likely to be three to five feet from your poster:

Serif fonts have "tails" (serif means tail in French) at the base and tips of letters and have line widths that thin out on curves. They are harder to read from a distance, especially if the contrast between the letter and the background is poor. Sans Serif fonts have consistent or uniform line widths or line widths that vary only a little. They have "no tails" (sans serif means "without a tail" in French).



Title (6 – 8 words)

**S** (Arial bold) 90 - 120 pt or more

Headings (3 words) **San** (Arial) 36 - 48 pt

Text **Serif** (Times ) 30 - 36 pt.

**VERY IMPORTANT: Headings of the same level of importance should be in the same size and type of font.** All labels should be legible from at least 3 feet away.

**Color.** Color can “make or break” a poster’s legibility and aesthetic appeal. Incorporating color appropriately in a poster display means choosing and using color purposefully. Use color to show:

- which elements go together (are similar in value or are related in topic)
- which elements differ

For example, if you use a background color for two different areas of the poster, those areas should be related in some way. While variety is pleasing, poster viewers want MEANINGFUL variety.



In deciding how to use color in your poster display, here are some guidelines:

1. DO use color to show relationships among different areas of the poster. Do use color to create coherence and guide your audience through the sections of the poster. Do use color sparingly and purposefully—less is more
2. DON'T use color arbitrarily; think about the ways color can be used to show relationships and incorporate this strategy into your poster. There must be sufficient contrast between the background and the text or between the background and the diagrams for viewers' eyes to read easily. Use light colors for your text (such as yellow) ONLY if the background is dark; use fonts with a consistent shaft width so that the letters won't seem to "thin out" or disappear when viewed from a distance. There must be sufficient contrast between the lettering and the background.

(Michaud, M., 2002 cited throughout document)