A Guide to Planning a SESAH Conference

(Revised November, 2010; 2012;
September 2016)

Introduction

One of the defining activities of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH) is its annual conference. Beginning with the society's founding meeting in 1983, scholars, students and friends have gathered every fall in some southern city or town to exchange ideas, explore the local architecture, and enjoy one another's company. Collegiality and conviviality have been hallmarks of this much beloved event. In such an atmosphere scholars at various stages of their careers have shared their knowledge, experience, wit, and wisdom. Many have received valuable criticism of and encouragement in their work. Graduate students and junior faculty in particular have been warmly received and recognized for the fresh insights and approaches they bring to the discipline. That the collegial spirit of these conferences might be perpetuated, we have prepared this guidebook for those who plan future conferences of the society.

SESAH's annual conference is a combination of business, scholarship, exploration, and merriment. Its essential components are:

> 1. The Annual Board of Directors meeting
> 2. The Annual Business Meeting of the membership
> 3. A Luncheon (or dinner) in conjunction with the Business Meeting
> 4. An Awards Ceremony
> 5. Paper Sessions
> 6. A Keynote Address
> 7. One or more Receptions
> 8. Tours, featuring local architecture

The conference generally convenes for three days, usually beginning on a Wednesday evening (for the Board of Directors meeting) and ending with a Saturday tour or tours. Each conference is hosted and organized by a member of the society who presides as a program director or chair. It is not uncommon, and can be advantageous, for this position to be shared by co-chairs. The program director(s) may be supported by an academic institution, which becomes the hosting institution. Program directors and locations are approved by the Board of Directors, acting on a written proposal made by the prospective chair(s).

Proposing to Host an Annual Conference

The SESAH vice-president is responsible for identifying future meeting sites. The annual conference has been hosted by a variety of program directors in diverse locations within the geographic boundaries of the society (see Appendix A, "List of Annual SESAH Conferences).

Proposals from those who would like to host a conference in their location are eagerly sought. A proposal to host an annual SESAH conference often begins with an informal conversation between members of the society. Encouraged by such a conversation, a prospective program director then researches the many requirements for hosting a successful conference and approaches the potential host entity in order to obtain written commitments, financial and otherwise. Once this research is complete, a formal proposal is made in writing and presented before the board of directors at the annual conference, two (2) years prior to the proposed meeting. (See Appendix G)

Developing an Annual Conference Proposal

A planning committee chaired by the meeting host should be in place during the summer at least one (1) year prior to the conference date, which will allow for final discussion and suggestions at the preceding board meeting(s).

Although not every facet of the conference needs to be finalized prior to the event, a written proposal should be presented for acceptance to the Board at their meeting two years before the proposed events. This proposal should demonstrate that preliminary arrangements and decisions have been made for the following items:

1. Name of the program director(s)
2. Calendar dates for the conference
3. Basic schedule of events
4. Venues, including
   a. Session rooms
   b. Lecture hall(s)
   c. Banquet location
   d. Board meeting location
5. Hotel(s)
6. Travel to the location and between its venues
7. Keynote speaker
8. Budget: following the spreadsheet formats and protocols provided by the Treasurer
9. Letter of support from the hosting institution
10. Tour destinations

Establishing the Conference Date

Each year's academic calendar seems more crowded with events than the previous year's. So it is increasingly difficult to select conference dates that do not conflict with the plans of some of those who would otherwise attend the SESAH meeting. Nonetheless, it is the practice of SESAH to avoid scheduling conflicts with such organizations as the Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC), the Southeast Region Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA), the American Studies Association (ASA), the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and the University of Virginia's annual Fall Symposium. SECAC and the ASA plan their events several years in advance, while the Southeast ACSA and the University of Virginia's tend to schedule their meetings on a year-by-year basis. Appendix B contains contact information for these organizations. They should be consulted before setting a SESAH conference date. SESAH has traditionally met during the period that stretches from early October to early November.

The conference date should also, of course, be established in concert with a given college's and

university's academic schedule; university events, football games, etc., can limit access to University facilities. It is also important to check for possible local/regional event conflicts, as these can also limit access to hotel accommodations.

Establishing the General Conference Schedule

The annual conference usually begins on Wednesday evening, with the SESAH Board of Directors meeting, and continues with paper sessions on Thursday and Friday, and a tour on Saturday. The Business Meeting and Awards Banquet may be a lunch or dinner affair, depending on the conference schedule. The keynote speaker's address has, in the past, often been linked to the Awards Banquet, although this is not required. Usually, the keynote speaker's address is open to a wider audience.

Conference Venues

Various kinds of facilities have been used to accommodate the events that make up SESAH's annual conference. Though many permutations exist, conferences can be generally classified in two ways: those held on the campus of an academic institution and those accommodated by conference hotels. Each has its advantages. Conferences held exclusively (or mostly) in hotels are convenient. Their convenience extends beyond the obvious proximity they afford participants who lodge in the hotel. Conference hotels are designed to accommodate all of the activities of conferees. They have small and large lecture halls, audio-visual equipment, reception rooms, and food services. Hotels are often located downtown, near restaurants, bookstores, and places of interest to architectural historians. Conference hotels often offer package 'deals' wherein conference rooms are discounted or included for free when the organization provides a sufficient number hotel guests.

On the other hand, many colleges and universities have facilities that can be used for academic conferences. Increasingly in recent years, academic institutions have developed and improved their ability to host conferences, recognizing that such events further both their academic and economic goals. Many are willing to support academic conferences by offering their facilities, student volunteers, and equipment as in-kind donations, which can substantially benefit the meeting's budget. Many schools have beautiful and interesting facilities to offer. It also seems fair to surmise that SESAH members, many of whom are academics themselves, enjoy visiting the campuses of their colleagues. Even so, the challenge of finding a sufficient number of appropriate, convenient, and available rooms during the academic term can impede or prohibit an on-campus SESAH meeting.

In the end, a combination of venues is often necessary. Regardless of their location, all conference venues must adequately accommodate their designated event. Attendance at the SESAH meeting has ranged, in recent years from around 70 to over 120 persons. Plenary session lecture halls should accommodate at least as many. Lectures open to the public should obviously seat more. Banquet rooms, likewise, should serve all attendees. Session rooms, of course, may seat fewer persons, depending on the number of concurrent sessions and their anticipated popularity. The SESAH Board of Directors meeting has a potential attendance of 18-25. A large table with comfortable seating is desirable for it. Recent board meetings have included a modest buffet supper (paid for by the individual board members) in the same room for the convenience of its members. Finally, a central location for conference registration must be provided. It may be helpful to have a registration table in the hotel lobby even if the meetings are elsewhere. Space for book-display tables (if there is to be a book display), other displays, and refreshments may also be desirable.

Rooms should be reserved at a convenient, comfortable, and reasonably priced hotel regardless of whether any other events are held there. A block of 30-50 rooms can usually be promised to a hotel in exchange for a discounted conference rate. The number of rooms needed each night will vary, so current conference chairs should verify these numbers from recent annual meetings.

All lecture rooms should contain furnishings and audio-visual equipment customary to the discipline: projectors, screens, lecterns, amplification systems, laser pointers. It is important that the lighting can be controlled so that projected images can be clearly seen, the speaker can see his or her notes, and the audience can see well enough to take notes. All conference rooms should be accessible to all attendees, including those with disabilities. Session rooms should be near each other.

Transportation

The program director should give adequate thought and preparation to the transportation needs of conference attendees. Appropriate directions and information (maps, etc.) should be provided for people driving to the conference. For those who fly, transportation options to and from the airport should be indicated. (Remember to include approximate costs of each option in the meeting information.) Depending on the circumstances, arrangements may need to be made for shuttle buses to and from the airport. The main thing is to make the transportation options clear to participants and to try to meet their needs. The conference publicity material should make all these options clear.

Another matter is transportation at the conference. If the paper sessions, awards banquet, keynote lecture, etc., are not held at the hotel, how will people get there? If the meeting is held on an academic campus, is the site within convenient walking distance of the hotel? Will shuttle buses be needed to get people to and from the conference site?

A final matter is transportation related to tours. Commercial bus services are the preferred means of transportation. Given the size of past conferences, one 55-passenger bus should be sufficient. However, this should be checked against pre-registration figures. It is customary to provide a tip to the bus driver. Opinions vary as to how much, so it might be wise to ask the bus company for guidelines.

Meals

A guide to local restaurants should be provided. Breakfast is often more problematic than other meals. Does the hotel provide a continental breakfast in the lobby? Are there convenient coffee shops nearby?

Refreshments before and between paper sessions should also be considered. Drinks, whether hot or cold, should include de-caffeinated choices, and tea and water should be available as an alternative to coffee.

The awards banquet should take place in a facility that can easily accommodate 70 to 80 people. The food should be plentiful and good, and people should not have to wait long for it. With discretion and care to follow state laws and institutional policies, offering wine and beer would be most appropriate for this affair; non-alcoholic alternatives should be offered as well.

Tour(s)

The first tasks in organizing tours are to identify appropriate sites and make the initial arrangements for the tour(s). Areas of concern include tour costs, availability and knowledge of tour guides, hours the site or property is open, etc. A key thing to keep in mind is the comfort of meeting participants. One hour on one site is probably better than a half hour at two sites. Consider driving distance between sites; long bus rides between sites should be avoided. Also remember comfort issues such as bathrooms and pauses for refreshments.

If the tour includes a lunch break, remember the time and space required to serve 55 people in a restaurant. Box lunches may be a reasonable alternative. Also remember that some members are vegetarians.

Plenary Speaker

The keynote lecture should be scheduled for either Thursday or Friday evening. As mentioned above, this event may serve as the conclusion to the awards banquet; however, issues to consider include adequate provision for slides and sound. If the lecture is held at a different site than that for the meeting, plan for adequate time to conclude the banquet and arrive at the lecture on time. As the speaker is often in attendance at the banquet, remember that she/he may need a few minutes to collect their thoughts before beginning their talk. Finally, the keynote lecture is also often a component of a college's fall lecture series (making it one way of obtaining additional funding), and this may affect the selection of the lecture site.

Call for Papers

The call for papers should go out in the SESAH newsletter and electronically between January 15 and March 1, with abstracts due by about May 1. Arrangements for other announcements are made by the program director with assistance from the SESAH vice president. Appendix C contains a list of newsletters, organizations, and listservs that are good venues for publishing the call for papers. Included in the call for papers are the guidelines for the Annual Conference Fellowships that fund travel to the conference for graduate students and emerging professionals (see below).

Review of submitted abstracts should be done by the paper committee chaired by the program director. The paper committee is appointed in time to review responses to the call for papers.

All authors of abstracts should be notified by about June 1 regarding the acceptance or rejection of their paper. The call is typically a general one for papers on any subject related to architectural history. The program director or a designee on the paper committee then organizes the accepted papers into thematic sessions. Also at this time, applicants for the annual fellowships funding travel to the conference are reminded that their papers are due August 1 (see below, and Appendices E and F).

Session Chairs

Session chairs have typically been drawn from those members who regularly attend SESAH meetings and give papers themselves. Past conferences have also included session chairs drawn from the host school's faculty and local/regional professionals (architects and historians). The program director, with assistance from the paper committee, provides each session chair with the

presenters' information, biographies, and abstracts as soon after the acceptance notice as possible. Session chairs then contact the presenters in their sessions, and work with them individually prior to the meeting, to assure that the final paper drafts are successful and appropriate. Session chairs are expected to introduce the speakers, and KEEP THEM TO A STRICT TIME SCHEDULE so that ample time is allowed for all. See Appendix D, "Crimes and Misdemeanors: Tips on Collegiality in Professional Paper Presentations," which is a helpful and essential guide for presenters and session chairs.

Paper Sessions

Ideally, the paper sessions are scheduled so that no more than two sessions occur at the same time, though it is sometimes necessary to have three. The session rooms should easily accommodate 30 to 40 people and should facilitate the projection of images. The practicality and ease of projection should be verified prior to the conference. Each room should have a worker assigned who can operate the computer and projector and assist with any problems that may arise. These workers should be knowledgeable about digital technologies and be given a brief orientation regarding the operation of the equipment and how to handle problems. Each room should have a laser pointer. At some conferences ice water has also been provided, located on a table at the back of the session room or elsewhere.

Registration Materials, Budgets, Banking & Financial Reports, and Record-Keeping

Annual conference information should appear in the Spring newsletter and the SESAH's website no later than three months before the conference. The deadline for pre-registration should be about a month before the conference. SESAH hosts registration forms and payments through the website, and so the payments and registration data are recorded by the treasurer. The program director coordinates with the treasurer for reports regarding revenues and registrations.

The information that must be recorded includes the registrant's name, mailing address, email, phone, institutional affiliation, and SESAH membership status, as well as the detailed dollar amounts paid for each part of the program. From that data, , the program director will note personal preferences for meals, local transport to venues, and tour(s). Original forms received from participants are backed up online.

The registration packet, distributed to the participants upon arrival, typically includes the following items: name tag; meeting schedule, details about the meeting locations, the paper session schedule, guides and maps to get people around, and a list of participants and their addresses. At the conference, a registration table should be set up in the hotel lobby on Wednesday evening, and at the meeting site on Thursday morning.

Budgeting and Fund Transfers

The conference is meant to pay for itself, but because it is impossible to know in advance the exact number of participants, it important to budget conservatively, even if this leads to a meeting "profit." In order to keep expenses low, many organizers have secured institutional support to help with expenses. This support often has included administrative and financial staff time, student helpers, underwriting of the keynote speaker, and donations of space for various meeting events.

The participants pay (1) a registration fee (suggested by the organization and approved by the board)

and (2) separate tour fees for each tour (to pay for transportation, entrance fees and meal costs). Members may also pay their annual membership dues as part of the meeting registration procedure, although the dues are for the calendar year. All persons reading papers, attending the conference, or chairing a session must be SESAH members. Currently the registration fee for students is one-half of the full registration fee, and this decrease in revenue should be accounted for in the budget. In order to accommodate spouses, friends, and local participants, there should also be single-event prices, so that individuals who are not SESAH members and want to attend single events like meals or a tour can do so. In sum, everything possible should be done to encourage participation while maintaining a balanced budget, which should include a reasonable sum for contingencies.

Depending upon the specific arrangements agreed upon with the treasurer, all of the accumulated funds should be sent to the treasurer no later than one month after the conference's end. Final fund transfer(s), or late payments, should be made no later than the end of the calendar year.

Written Contracts

There should be written and signed contracts with all of those entities providing services, such as the hotel, plenary speaker, caterers, bus company, etc. This is especially important for the hotel, where certain items such as meeting rooms may become complimentary if the meeting generates sufficient revenue from rooms and meals. Contracts involving substantial sums and commitments (above $1,000.00) should be reviewed and approved by the president, with the treasurer's advice. It is not acceptable for any third-party entity to run the SESAH meeting, or to be contracted to collect money on behalf of SESAH, except in the case of a university, which must provide accounting services without charges or fees.

The program director will coordinate with the SESAH treasurer for payment of deposits and fees associated with the annual meeting either by check or electronically.

Using Previous Meetings as Models

Organizers should obtain copies of the programs and budgets from the previous annual meeting or previous two conferences to use as a guide. These materials should be obtained directly from the previous meeting chairs.

Other guidance is provided in Appendix G.

Complimentary Admissions for Publication and Best of the South Awards Winners

It is customary to provide awardees with a complimentary admission to the event at which they are receiving an award, typically a meal, but not customary to offer them a full complimentary registration.

Annual Conference Fellowships: Graduate Students

Annual Conference Fellowships fund attendance at the conference for up to three (3) graduate students. The program director(s) are responsible for forming a committee to select those students who will receive travel grants to attend the conference and present a paper. This committee will be drawn from the SESAH board of directors, and is the same that referees the abstracts received in response to the Call for Papers. See Appendix E for the policy statement and the application form

for the Graduate Student Travel Grant. The deadline for submission of the completed application form should be about three months before the annual meeting.

Annual Conference Fellowships: Emerging Professional

Annual Conference Fellowships fund attendance at the conference for an Emerging Professional. The program director(s) are responsible to collaborate with SESAH Preservation Officer to select the emerging professional who will receive a travel grant to attend the conference and present a paper. See Appendix F for the policy statement and the application form for the Emerging Professional Scholarship. The deadline for submission of the completed application form should be about three months before the annual meeting.

Post-Conference Report

Within two months following the conference, a brief report outlining the conference's organization, registration data, and its final budget should be prepared and sent to the SESAH vice president and treasurer.. Copies of all materials generated for the conference (two copies of each item) should be sent to the secretary. A PDF copy of the program and paper abstracts should be provided to the SESAH web weaver for uploading to the website.

A List of the Annual SESAH Conferences

1. **1983** **Atlanta, Georgia**
   - John Howett, Mitchell Bring, and Mark David Linch, program directors
   - Keynote: William L. MacDonald (Smith College), "Connection and Passage in North African Architecture"
2. **1984** **Tallahassee, Florida**
   - Leigh Gates, Lauren S. Weingarden, Mary Anne Peters, & Linda Mainville, program directors
   - Keynote: Michael Graves (Michael Graves, Architect)
3. **1985** **Atlanta, Georgia**
   - Robert M. Craig, program director
   - Keynote: Stanford Anderson (MIT)
4. **1986** **Tuscaloosa, Alabama**   [joint with SECAC]
   - Robert Mellown, program director
   - Keynote: Arnold Glimcher (Pace Gallery, NYC)
5. **1987** **Knoxville, Tennessee**
   - Lawrence Wodehouse, program director
   - Keynote: P. Reyner Banham (UC Santa Barbara)
6. **1988** **Mobile, Alabama**   [joint with Pioneer America Society & Gulf Coast SAH]
   - Philippe Oszuscik, program director
   - Keynote: John M. Vlach (George Washington University)
7. **1989** **Little Rock, Arkansas**
   - C. Murray Smart, program director
   - Dell Upton (University of California, Berkeley)
8. **1990** **Atlanta, Georgia**   [joint with SECAC]
   - Nadir Lahiji [w/ Robert Craig], program director
   - Keynote: Kurt Forster (Getty Center)
9. **1991** **Starkville, Mississippi**
   - Rachel McCann, program director
   - Keynote: Robert Mark (Princeton University)
10. **1992** **Charlotte, North Carolina**
    - Kingston Heath, program director
    - Keynote: William Jordy (Brown University)
11. **1993** **Clemson, South Carolina**
    - Marty Davis, program director
    - Keynote: Alan Gowans (National Images of North American Living, Research and Archival Center, Washington)
12. **1994** **New Orleans, Louisiana**   [joint with SECAC]
    - Peggy McDowell
    - Keynote: James S. Ackerman (Harvard University)
13. **1995** **Birmingham, Alabama**
    - John Schnorrenberg, program director
    - Damie Stillman (University of Delaware)

14. **1996** **Boca Raton, Florida**
- Donald Curl, program director
- Keynote: Andres Duany (Andres Duany and Elizabeth Plater-Zyberk, Architects and Planners)

15. **1997** **Atlanta, Georgia**
- Elizabeth Dowling and Dan McGilvray , program directors
- Keynote: John Pinto (Princeton University)

16. **1998** **Fayetteville, Arkansas**
- Ethel Goodstein and Murray Smart, program directors
- Keynote: Cyrus Sutherland (University of Arkansas)

17. **1999** **Lexington, Kentucky**
- Julia Smyth-Pinney and Malcolm "Jed" Porter, program directors
- Keynote: Patricia Waddy (Syracuse University)

18. **2000** **Lexington, Virginia**
- Pam Simpson and Delos Hughes, program directors
- Keynote: Carl Lounsbury (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)

19. **2001** **Columbia, South Carolina**   [joint with SECAC]
- Charles R. Mack, program director
- Keynote: Richard Guy Wilson (University of Virginia)

20. **2002** **Mobile, Alabama**   [joint with SECAC]
- Philippe Oszuscik, program director
- Keynote: Paul Sprague (Univ. of Wisconsin-Milwaukee)

21. **2003** **Savannah, Georgia**
- Robin Williams and David Gobel, program directors
- Keynote: Allan Greenberg (Allan Greenberg Architect LLC)

22. **2004** **Knoxville, Tennessee**
- Marian Moffett [John O'Brien and Barbara Klinkhammer], program directors
- Keynote: John Reps (Cornell University)

23. **2005** **Ft. Worth, Texas**
- Jay Henry [Pam Simpson], program director
- Keynote: Sarah Williams Goldhagen (Harvard University)

24. **2006** **Auburn, Alabama**
- Nina Lewallen, program director
- Keynote:

25. **2007** **Nashville, Tennessee**
- Robbie Jones, program director
- Keynote: Kenneth T. Jackson (Columbia University)

26. **2008** **Greensboro, North Carolina**
- Lisa C. Tolbert, program director
- Keynotes: Louis Nelson (University of Virginia) and Thomas Hanchett

27. **2009** **Jackson, Mississippi**
- Jennifer Baughn and Michael Fazio, program directors
- Keynote: Robert Ivy (editor, Architectural Record)

28. **2010** **Chattanooga, Tennessee**
- Gavin Townsend, program director
- Keynote: Fikret Yegul (The University of California at Santa Barbara)

29. **2011**	**Charleston, South Carolina**
- Ashley Wilson and Allisyn Miller, program directors
- Keynote: Witold Rybczynski (University of Pennsylvania)

30. **2012**	**Athens, Georgia**
- Mark Reinberger, program director
- Keynote: Richard Guy Wilson (The University of Virginia)

31. **2013**	**Charlotte, North Carolina**
- Lee Gray, program director
- Keynote: Joan Ockrman (University of Pennsylvania)

32. **2014**	**Fayetteville, Arkansas**
- Ethel Goodstein-Murphee, program director
- Keynote: Gwendolyn Wright (Columbia University)

33. **2015**	**San Antonio, Texas**
- Anna Nau and Elizabeth Porterfield, program directors
- Keynote: Kathryn O'Rourke (Trinity University)

34. **2016**	**New Orleans, Louisiana**
- Gerald McNeill and Laura Blokker, program directors
- Keynotes: Richard Campanella (Tulane University) and Keith Eggener (University of Oregon)

35. 2017	**Lynchburg, Virginia**
- Travis McDonald, program director
- Keynotes: S. Allen Chambers (Lynchburg) and Travis McDonald (Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest)

Contact Information of Allied Organizations

Southeastern College Art Conference
    SECAC
    PO Box 508
    Chapel Hill, NC 27514-0508
    (919) 929-0547

Southeast Region Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture
For information contact the National ASCA office:
    Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture
    1735 New York Avenue NW
    Washington, DC 20006
    (202) 785-2324

American Studies Association
    American Studies Association
    Suite 301
    1120 19th Street NW
    Washington, DC 20036
    (301) 405-1364

For information regarding the University of Virginia's annual Fall Symposium contact:
    Richard Guy Wilson
    School of Architecture
    Campbell Hall
    University of Virginia
    Charlottesville, Virginia 22903
    (804) 924-3715
    rgw4h@virginia.edu

Appendix C

Newsletter & Listserv Addresses

The email listserv seems to have surpassed the professional newsletter as the preferred means of announcing conferences and calls-for-papers to targeted academic audiences.   Nevertheless, to reach the widest population of potential SESAH participants, both hard-copy newsletters and listservs should be used by SESAH program directors.

Society of Architectural Historians Southeast Chapter Newsletter
Information regarding the call for papers should be sent to the SESAH Newsletter editor(s) by February 1 for publication in the Spring Newsletter.

Lydia Brandt
University of South Carolina

Ruben Acosta
Florida Department of State
Division of Historical Resources

SESAH Newsletter Co-Editors
newsletter@sesah.org

The Newsletter of Society of Architectural Historians
The *Newsletter* is published electronically by the Society of Architectural Historians.
Please refer to http://www.sesah.org
Also post on the listserv at SAH-L@si-listserve.si.edu

Southeastern College Art Conference Newsletter
The SECAC Newsletter deadline for the Spring Issue is January 15.
    SECAC
    PO Box 508
    Chapel Hill, NC 27514-0508
    (919) 929-0547

ACSA News
"The *ACSA News* is published monthly during the academic year, September through May. All news items must be submitted in writing. Deadline for submissions is the first of each month, for the following month's issue."
    Editor
    ACSA News
    1735 New York Avenue NW
    Washington, DC 20006
    (202) 785-2324

H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online http://www.h-net.org/about/
        H-Net sponsors over 100 listservs for humanities scholars, each focusing on a particular area
        of study. Although no 'H-Architectural History' list exists, many of the H-net lists are

subscribed to by scholars working on or interested in architectural history.

Crimes and Misdemeanors:
Tips on Collegiality in Professional Paper Presentations

Pamela H. Simpson, Washington and Lee University

You have all seen it. Or heard about it. One person in a session seems to think what he or she has to say is so important that it warrants going over the twenty minutes allotted. Sometimes two or three presenters think it is simply impossible to say what they have to say in twenty minutes and each goes over a little--only five minutes--that's not much, right? No one really expects you to do this in exactly twenty minutes, do they? The results? Each of those over-runs adds up; the last presenter has only ten minutes; the audience has no time for questions at all; the meeting organizer is banging on the door trying to get the next session into the room.

The failure to stay within the twenty-minute time slot might not seem like a capital crime, but it is the equivalent of getting up in front of your colleagues and declaring, "What I have to say is so important that it justifies my stealing the time of others on this panel and of the audience." [1]

Here are some hints for avoiding such "white-collar crime" and presenting a successful paper:

1. Write it ahead of time. Since usually you are required to submit your paper to the session chair before the meeting, one would think everyone ought to know exactly how long the paper is. Still, there are those who submit a 20-page paper and ignore the chair's suggestions for cutting it. Common sense and experience indicate that a twenty-minute paper is about 10 pages long. That is with double spacing, 12-point type, and normal margins. Depending on how fast you read, it will be about two minutes per page. The papers must be written. Loading a carousel full of slides and talking from notes may be appropriate for a classroom lecture, but not for a formal paper session at a professional meeting.

2. Stick to your script. Even with a 10 page text, some people find it impossible not to give a few asides or impromptu digressions in the course of reading the paper. All of these add minutes taking away from the time allotted to others. Stay at the podium too. There is no need to wander about the stage. If you want to point to something on a slide, arrange to have a laser pointer. Don't distract your audience and yourself by dancing back and forth.

3. Practice it. If you are going to give a good paper, it has to be prepared ahead of time and practiced. Everyone gets nervous. Those people in the audience are your professional peers. Their opinions are ones you value. The key to doing the presentation well is to know your script. Practicing in front of friends and colleagues at home before you come to the meeting not only gives you familiarity with your text, it also can provide some useful feedback. Are your points clear? Does that slide illustrate your ideas? Are you speaking clearly and slowly enough? Better to have your friends tell you than embarrass yourself at the meeting.

4. Slides.

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[1] Patricia Marinardi wrote an essay for the College Art Association on "White Collar Crime" a number of years ago.   The comment on stealing time is a paraphrase of her statement on the subject.

Normally, SESAH papers are accompanied by slide presentations packaged as PowerPoint files. Windows-based computers are typically provided in the lecture room, enabling you to transfer your PowerPoint using a USB thumb drive. If you prefer to use Keynote, you would be wise to bring your own Macintosh laptop. Make sure you coordinate with the meeting director as to whether or not you need to bring your own laptop,cable hookup, etc.

5. <u>Plan for disaster</u>. It is always a good idea to carry your paper and your presentation with you on the plane. Don't check them with your bags. The last thing you need to worry about is lost luggage.

It is a great honor for your paper to have been chosen for presentation. Your ideas in the abstract have been interesting enough for selection. Now you have to do the hard work of writing the paper. If circumstances change and you cannot attend the meeting, let the organizers know in plenty of time for them to re-arrange the paper sessions. It is inconsiderate and professionally inappropriate to withdraw at the last minute or simply not show up for the meeting.

Finally, remember this is a paper, not the whole dissertation or book. You have to decide how to limit it to the twenty-minute format. If the text is more than 10 pages, cut it. When it comes to the presentation, stick to your script and practice, practice, practice. If a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing well, especially in front of your professional colleagues.

<u>Annual Conference Fellowships</u>

Policy Statement & Application Form
SESAH Graduate Student Travel Grant

Purpose:

The SESAH Graduate Student Travel Grant Program seeks to encourage a wider participation of graduate students in architectural history and related disciplines, and to support the presentation of scholarly papers by graduate students, at the SESAH Annual Conference. SESAH offers each year up to three (3) scholarships of $400 each to graduate students who attend and present a paper at the annual conference.

Eligibility:
- Graduate students who are members of SESAH,
- Enrolled in accredited schools of architecture, art history programs, departments of historic preservation, or related academic programs,
- Their school is located more than 250 miles from the annual conference site,
- Paper accepted for presentation at the SESAH annual conference, AND
- Paper draft submitted to the program director by required deadline

Intention of full participation:
Recipients are expected to participate fully in the SESAH conference; the grant is not intended to support students to come merely to read a paper and leave, but seeks to enable graduate students to attend the several sessions, keynote address, and tours offered in the program.

Use:
Travel funds may be used for transportation, registration, tour fees, food, and/or lodging. They may be supplemented by other grants the graduate student may receive including support from the student's school.

Submission Process:
- **Call for Papers:** The program director will include information about the Annual Conference Fellowships in all calls for papers, whether online or in print. This information is in Appendix E and can be copied into whatever format needed. Some interested students may send their scholarship application with their paper proposal, but it should be emphasized that the award is based on a completed paper, not a proposal.

- **Notifying Student Presenters of Eligibility:** Program director will remind all students of their eligibility for the travel grant in the e-mail notifying them of their accepted proposals. In the same e-mail, be sure to include two pieces of information: the application form (at the end of Appendix E and available through the website) and a deadline set by the program director for completed papers. This deadline is August 1, giving students enough time to complete the draft, and the organizers enough time to read the papers and make a decision in a timely manner. The notification deadline is August 15.

- **Completed Papers Submitted:** A scholarship application is not complete unless the applicant submits a copy of the finished paper to the program director by the stated deadline. Awards will be determined largely on the quality of the completed paper.

Application and Awards Selection Process:

Application may be made at the time of proposal submission, but grants are only made to current SESAH members who are students and whose paper proposal has been accepted for presentation. The application form is included at the end of this appendix.

- **Choosing the Winners:** Awards are made on a competitive basis and are determined largely on the quality of the completed paper. The program director, usually through the Paper Chair and/or the same committee that sifted through the paper proposals, makes decisions about awards. This committee should expect to read through the papers and respond to the applicants in a timely manner, no more than three weeks after the submission deadline.

  The committee can decide to grant one award, no award, or up to three awards in any given year.

- **Notifying the Winners:** The program director will notify the winners by a congratulations email, and regrets to those not chosen.

- **Notifying SESAH Treasurer:** After notifying the applicants of their awards, the program director should notify SESAH treasurer and SESAH president so that the treasurer can write the checks to the correct people. The treasurer will bring the checks to the annual meeting, where the program director will present them to the winners at the Awards Banquet.

APPLICATION FORM FOR SESAH TRAVEL GRANT

Student's NAME_____

Program enrolled in_____

SESAH Member? Y___N___ Yr. joined?_____

Masters_____Ph.D_____

Address_____

School_____

_____

Your Phone:_____FAX_____E-Mail _____

Adviser's Name _____

Adviser's phone_____FAX_____E-Mail_____

Adviser's Address_____

_____

Projected Budget: (Itemize)

Needs:_____

Transp.: $_____(air?_____/car?_____) Registration: $_____ Tours: $_____ Hotel: $_____

Meals: $ _____Other: $_____

Are Department Funds available to you?_____Describe other support or special needs:

Attach a copy of your resume

Appendix F

Annual Conference Fellowships

Policy Statement
SESAH Emerging Professional Scholarship

Purpose:

The Emerging Professional Scholarship program encourages such non-academic professionals to join our scholarly and collegial community and to support the presentation of their research in the paper sessions of the annual conference.

SESAH offers each year one (1) scholarship of $400 to an emerging preservation professional who attends and presents a paper at the annual conference.

Intention of Full participation
Recipients are expected to participate fully in the SESAH conference; the grant is not intended to support those who come merely to read a paper and leave, but seeks to enable emerging professionals to attend the paper sessions, keynote address, and tours offered in the program.

Eligibility:
* Emerging professionals who are members of SESAH
* Work for a federal/state/local historic preservation office within the SESAH region (twelve states - Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, and Virginia),
* Worked in the preservation field less than five (5) years,
* Paper proposal accepted for presentation at the SESAH annual conference, AND
* Paper draft submitted to the preservation officer by required deadline.

Use:
Travel funds may be used for transportation, registration, tour fees, food, and/or lodging. They may be supplemented by other grants the professional may receive including support from the professional's workplace.

Submission Process:
* **Call for Papers:** The program director will include information about the Annual Conference Fellowships, including the Emerging Professional Scholarship program, in all calls for papers, whether online or in print. This information is in Appendix F and can be copied into whatever format is needed.

* Some interested professionals may send their scholarship application with their paper proposals, but the meeting organizers must remember that the award is based on a completed paper, not a proposal.

- **Notifying Presenters of Eligibility:** The program director or paper committee chair can use the information about employment included in the paper proposals to remind all professional/non-academic presenters whose proposals are accepted of their potential eligibility for the scholarship program. In the same e-mail, be sure to include three pieces of information: the application form (link to website), the e-mail address of the SESAH preservation officer (who will be the contact person for this scholarship), and a deadline set by the program director for completed papers. This deadline is August 1st, giving students enough time to complete the draft and the organizers enough time to read the papers and make a decision in a timely manner. The notification deadline is August 15.

- **Completed Papers Submitted:** Applicants must submit a copy of their finished paper to the SESAH preservation officer by the stated deadline.

Application and Awards Selection Process:
- **Collaboration with SESAH Preservation Officer:** After notifying presenters of their eligibility, the program director (or designee) will send a list of all professional presenters to the SESAH preservation officer. The preservation officer will accept the applicants' submitted papers.

- **Choosing the Winners:** The award should be determined largely on the quality of the completed paper. The decision on awards will be made by the SESAH preservation officer and the program director. They should expect to read through the papers and respond to the applicants in a timely manner, no more than three weeks after the submission deadline.

- **Notifying the Winners:** The program director will congratulate the winner by email, and send regrets to those not chosen.

- **Notifying SESAH Treasurer:** After notifying the applicants of their awards, the SESAH preservation officer should notify the SESAH treasurer and the SESAH president so that the treasurer can write the award check. The treasurer will bring the check to the annual meeting, where the preservation officer will present it to the winner at the Awards Banquet.

Report Schedule, Registration Data & Budget Items

The program director makes regular reports to the SESAH vice president and treasurer over the two and one-half to three year time period. Reports to the full board of directors are made at the meetings of the board each fall. The vice president provides guidance and information to the program director. The program director should consider the vice president his/her principal board contact in addition to the treasurer. Others are the president and previous hosts of the annual meeting.

Three Years Prior to the Annual Conference
Three years prior, the potential program director and vice president discuss the conference location and general logistics. The summary then presented to the board for initial approval includes the name of the intended program director(s) and proposed location. Host institutions or affiliated groups are identified as well as venue highlights for a reception or focal point of a tour. The board then discusses the summary, offers recommendations and votes on the location as proposed.

Two and One-Half Years Prior to the Annual Conference
With initial approval, the program director refines the summary and begins to identify conference space, lodging, and meeting dates. *A Guide to Planning a SESAH Conference* and materials from previous meetings are provided to the program director to assist in the planning.

Two Years Prior to the Annual Conference
The program director submits the proposal to the board of directors at the annual conference. The proposal contains the information outlined in *A Guide to Planning a SESAH Conference* (page 2) above. A preliminary budget is included in the proposal using the template provided.

One and One-Half Years Prior to the Annual Conference
The program director provides a status report to the vice president and coordinates with the treasurer as needed.

One Year Prior to the Annual Conference
The program director provides a status report to the board with a budget and full details of the conference. S/he presents an overview as part of the annual business meeting (8-10 minutes). A save the date is posted to the website and social media outlets.

Also at this time, if the program directors request, the paper committee is appointed from the board of directors. The committee will assist the program director with reviewing the responses to the Call for the Papers and sorting the abstracts into thematic panels. The committee will also review the applications and papers submitted for the Graduate Student Travel Grant program. (See Appendix E above).

Nine Months Prior to the Annual Conference
The Call for Papers is published. In the Call for the Papers, submission guidelines are largely the same from year to year. This includes instructions for applying for the Annual Conference Fellowships (Graduate Student Travel Grant; Emerging Professional Scholarship). Application forms for the Annual Conference Fellowships are updated and uploaded to the website. The program director (or vice president) coordinates with the web weaver, newsletter editors, social media editors, &c., to promote the conference and encourage responses to the Call for Papers. More complete information about the conference, such as lodging options, is added to website as it is available.

Three to Four Months Prior to the Annual Conference
Presenters are notified of acceptance (or decline) of their paper abstracts by about June 1. Registration information is posted on the website in a coordinated effort between the program directors, treasurer and web weaver. The president and officers assist as needed. An updated budget is provided to the vice president and treasurer. Any contractual obligations are discussed with the president, if the total is $1000 or more, and payments needed are coordinated with the treasurer.

Six Weeks Prior to the Annual Conference
Applications for the Annual Conference Fellowships are reviewed. Of these, applications to the Graduate Student Travel Grant program are reviewed by the paper committee; the applications for the Emerging Professional Scholarship are reviewed by the preservation officer and program director. Early registration closes and estimates for printing, catering, &c., are revised. Continued communication with the treasurer assures the meeting bills are paid and the registration data is recorded.

Two Months After the Annual Conference
A final report is submitted to the vice president and accounts are closed by the treasurer. The final report includes

1. Registration Summary (regular, student, comps, day and/or event passes, late fees)
2. Number of abstracts received, number accepted, number presented
3. Number attending the Saturday tour
4. Income/Expense totals

The vice president submits this report to the board at the next annual conference. The program director is welcome to attend the meeting, receive well-earned acknowledgement, and advise the incoming directors.

Registration Data and Budget Template
This information is provided to incoming program directors in a separate document.