USAIN Conference Host Considerations

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Location and Site Selection

Members are invited to host the biennial conference at their institution. Approximately 18 months before the next conference, a call goes out for proposals to host the conference. The USAIN Executive Council is charged with the responsibility of evaluating and selecting the USAIN conference location. Below are some of the guidelines that an institution might consider when preparing a proposal.

Capabilities and interest of host institution(s) to:

- provide assistance with local arrangements
- help to secure funding for the conference
- support from the host institution in the way of staff time, space, and, if possible, financial sponsorship. Host institutions typically contribute $3,000-$4000 as a major conference sponsor
- gain commitment(s) of key administrative personnel of host institution(s) to assure support for the biennial conference

Site selection:

- alternate among regions of the United States (whenever possible)
- good accessibility by air is mandatory
- a community with a number of local and regional attractions (may include university or college arts departments, galleries or museums, private or public galleries, museums or arts centers, and unique institutions, facilities or activities which support the concept of local, state, regional, national or international cultural heritage.)

Facilities

- A venue where at least 100-125 attendees and vendors can fit comfortably is required.
- In addition, concurrent breakout sessions (at least 4) and pre-conference activities/workshops should be taken into account.

- ○ A pleasant hotel with a large meeting room that will seat 100-150 people for general sessions and meals
  - ○ Concurrent "break out" meeting rooms that will each seat 50-75 participants theater or conference style
- Public space for exhibits, preferably with attendees in the main meeting area
- Facilities to host simultaneous pre-conference activities
- Good facilities to allow for group meals for the entire group or smaller groups
- Space to hold the entire conference within one building or within walking distance of the conference hotel
- Secondary local non-conference hotel accommodation options
- Facilities to offer some sort of fun/social event
- Facilities must be able to accommodate disabilities and be ADA compliant. Willingness to provide disability accommodations upon request
- Space in a heavy traffic flow area to accommodate registration and coffee breaks
- Consider sustainability in planning the conference (e.g., eco-friendly dining services, less paper, etc.)
- Space for a conference office near the conference area
- Facilities able to accomodate poster session with poster display boards

Accommodation

- Does the venue provide accommodation or are there hotels nearby?
  - ○ 80-120 sleeping rooms for 5-6 consecutive nights. A block should be set aside at a reduced conference rate.

Catering

- Is catering included or can external catering companies easily get to and work inside the venue?
- Provide catered meals for the entire group
- Accommodate special dietary requirements (vegan, kosher, nut-free, gluten-free, etc.)
- Coordinate a dine-around for attendees one evening to highlight local restaurants of diverse price points and cuisine.

Transportation

- How easy is it for participants to travel to the venue by public transport? Are there enough parking spots for those who drive? How will you transport attendees to the opening reception, awards dinner, and other events?
- Good air transportation into a city within a reasonable distance from the host city.
- Reliable transportation from the airport to the hotel.
- Transportation between conference venues as needed.

Technical aspects

- Does the venue have the right IT, audio, and video equipment? You'll need projection screens, microphones, plenty of charging spots for participants, and WiFi access for all participants.
- Provide more than one microphone for presenters/audience questions (if the room requires amplification).
- An adequate supply of quality audio/visual equipment including projectors for computer presentations
- Wifi available for all attendees throughout the conference.
- Available technical support during the conference
- Live streaming and recording capability for virtual conference options.

Registration/Information

- Staff registration/information desk prior to, during, and after the conference
- Provide general conference services such as registration, name tags, and signs.
- Provide information on the area and/or organized tours for attendees and guests/families before and after the conference
- USAIN will host the conference website and maintain it as an archive.
- Registration can be conducted by the host institution or by USAIN; USAIN has the option to set up payment for events to go to the host institution rather than USAIN. We can allow people to join or renew their membership at the time of registration and split the funds between USAIN and the host.

Communication

- Provide monthly reports to the USAIN Executive Council, including hotel and date confirmations, registrations, committee updates, projected sponsorship money and budgets with projected profit.
- Ensure effective coordination with the various conference committee chairs.
- Work with the USAIN Communications Committee to send out conference updates and reminders to build excitement prior to the conference and live updates during the conference.
- Manage time aggressively: breaks are important, and so is making sure everyone in a session has time to speak for their full time and that there is adequate time to move between sessions.
- Use Sched or another online meeting scheduler to provide online access to the program.
- Provide a 1-page schedule-at-a-glance for attendees.
- Ensure a photographer is available to capture and archive conference highlights.

Program

- Consider providing concurrent sessions for contributed papers. This provides more options for attendees to choose sessions and gives more members the opportunity to present in a way that's more valued for promotion and tenure. However, some conference attendees prefer fewer/no concurrent sessions so that they are able to see all of their colleagues' presentations.
- Consider hosting the interest group sessions and meetings concurrently as breakouts; e.g. not everyone has collection management responsibilities.
- Provide guidance for getting presentations organized/loaded in advance (this is the contributed content committee's job); not everyone will send slides in advance of the conference, but most people will. There may be a technological solution to everyone having to find and open their presentations, or a CPP committee member may need to facilitate.
- During the review of submissions, the committee should pay attention to the diversity of presenters to avoid too much of the program coming from too few institutions, if possible. (In Easy Chair, the chair can look at this and keep the

contributions blind for the rest of the committee but let them know when proposals are from the same institution as an additional consideration.)

- Speakers and panel participants who are from businesses (vendors, marketing consultants, etc.) that stand to profit in any way, monetarily or in terms of public relations, should only be presenters in the vendor update session of the program.
- Keynote or special speakers may receive travel, meals, and lodging (normally one night) expenses. The registration fee will not be required. Honoraria may be paid, within the scope of the budget.
- Contributed papers, posters and panel speakers who are members of USAIN or who are the representative of a member institution will not be compensated in any manner, to include honoraria, travel, food and lodging expenses. They will be required to pay the usual conference registration.
- Get Sched set up early, before/near when the contributed papers and speakers committees convene so that it's clear how many time slots need to be filled and what the conference's space needs are.

Pre-Conference

- Provide space and transportation for up to 4 half-day pre-conference sessions.
- Ensure hotel block reservations include dates for pre-conference attendees.

Financial Support / Budget Considerations

- Check if the local Tourist Development Council via the Chamber of Commerce offers any awards or incentives for hosting a national conference. Applications may be due 6-8 months prior to event and require a proposed budget and letter of support from USAIN president. These funds may be generated by a local "bed-tax" based on the number of guests in local hotel rooms due to conference attendance.
- Money raised through sponsorships from vendors, publishers, or local groups sets the tone for money available to pay speaker fees and/or travel expenses. Also money raised can offset registration fees. A successful Sponsors

Committee and garnering local support (usually done by the local committee or person) can make a huge difference in USAIN covering conference expenses.

Other Considerations

Hosts are typically asked to consult on aspects (facilities/dining) of planning for the AgNIC annual conference, which typically follows directly after the USAIN meeting. This may include negotiating with the hotel for additional days with the block rate.