

Appendix I

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Guidelines for Hosting the National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR®)

I. INTRODUCTION

The National Conferences on Undergraduate Research (NCUR), established in 1987 and merged with the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) in 2010, sponsors an annual student conference dedicated to promoting undergraduate research, scholarship, and creative activity in all fields of study. Unlike meetings of academic professional organizations, this gathering of young scholars welcomes presenters from all institutions of higher learning and from all corners of the academic curriculum. Through this annual conference, NCUR creates a unique environment for the celebration and promotion of undergraduate student achievement, provides models of exemplary research and scholarship, and helps to improve the state of undergraduate education.

Adding to the uniqueness of the conference is NCUR's tradition of moving from city to city, each year hosted by a college or University that shares the values of NCUR. This allows conference participants to be transformed by the best that a host has to offer in the way of facilities, food, fun, and fellowship that are structured around a shared appreciation for the power of undergraduate research. NCUR also has a lasting impact on the host institution, often elevating the profile of undergraduate research and deepening its cultural institutionalization. The success of an NCUR depends on the ability of the host to deliver more than a good conference. It is also important that the conference showcases the broadening and diversification of undergraduate research.

The following guidelines are provided to assist sites wishing to host an NCUR conference. The guidelines are advisory in nature and not contractual obligations.

These guidelines include features that the Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR) deems essential to maintaining the tradition of excellence of NCUR conferences. Within CUR, the NCUR Oversight Committee (NOC) is the primary governance body linked to the conference, and provides essential consultation and recommendations to the CUR Executive Board and National Office. The NOC operates with twenty members, including a combination of former NCUR host, current host, incoming host, and representation from the CUR Divisions. These members make an invaluable contribution from their respective institutions by volunteering their service.

II. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application process to host a NCUR meeting involves several steps. Basic outline of the process and important dates:

- Letter of Intent: Due March 20
- Review of letters, and selection of Universities moving forward in the process: April
- Full Proposal (for institutions invited to move forward): Due July 31
- Site Visit: Occurs between August 20 and September 20
- Presentation at fall NOC meeting: Occurs late September or early October
- NOC makes host recommendation to CUR Executive Board
- CUR Executive Board Approval (by January)

Step 1. Online Letter of Intent and Its Review by the NOC

The CUR National Office, after consultation with the NOC, will invite institutions and networks of institutions to submit a letter of intent indicating their desire to host an NCUR conference. Directions for this letter can be found on the CUR website (<https://www.cur.org/what/events/host/ncur/>). The deadline for submission of the letter of intent is March 30th of the year four years in advance of the year in which the conference will be hosted. In 2014, for example, proposals were received for the 2018 conference.

The NOC will review the letters of intent and identify a small number of institutions to present full proposals; bids from a network of institutions may be asked to provide supporting documentation before being invited to submit a full proposal.

CUR has been thrilled with the quality and national impact of past NCURs, and bids for future NCUR hosts will remain largely the same. But the role undergraduate research plays in higher education has matured, and the tools available to the higher education industry are changing. To recognize this, CUR is interested in bids that acknowledge some of these changes. As of 2014, CUR continued to welcome bids from any institution of higher education, but for the first time it encouraged bids from institution(s) that

- have already institutionalized undergraduate research on their campus (*e.g.*, through significant and repeated participation in NCUR, through undergraduate participation in on-campus research events, through a documented increase in undergraduate research);
- make undergraduate research experiences accessible to a broad range of students (*e.g.*, across all disciplines, providing early-career experiences, embedded in curriculum, drawing historically underrepresented students); or,
- have a bid that is a cooperative effort of a network of institutions and/or organizations that will each make significant contributions to the proposed NCUR.

These characteristics are secondary to the core ability of a potential host to deliver an excellent NCUR, but when all other aspects of a bid are equal, a bid with one or more of the above characteristics would be given a preference by the NOC.

Throughout the application process, NOC members and the CUR National Office are available for consultation in preparing either this letter of intent or a full bid proposal.

Step 2. Submit Full Bid Proposal

Applicants whose letters of intent are endorsed will be asked to submit a full written proposal to the CUR National Office (NO) by July 31. This proposal should demonstrate the applicant's readiness, ability, and commitment to host an NCUR conference and address the areas in these guidelines. At minimum, the proposal should include the following:

- Proposed dates of the conference.
- Overview of Campus Facilities:
 - A description of the campus and relevant facilities to host the conference, including photos and/or a virtual tour of the campus and relevant facilities.
 - Campus map(s).
 - Location, number, and capacity of auditoria or halls for plenary sessions. Main space: at least 800-1200 in capacity; overflow: at least 1600 (depending upon conference size),
 - Number of "smart" classrooms available for oral presentations, with related technical specifications (minimum of 55 required).
 - Space for poster sessions; 10,000 square feet minimum.
 - Detailed information about gallery space, including security and lighting, and space for artistic performances.
 - Registration venue and information about timing and availability of registration.
 - Possible food vendors and plan for breakfast and lunches, (menu choices, serving times, locations, and, if outdoors, an option for inclement weather.)
- Overview of Community, Travel, Transportation, and Accommodations
 - Accessibility of campus via air and ground transportation, including number of current airline seats per day to local (or nearby) airport/s.
 - Local transportation considerations, including safety for pedestrians, shuttle service to/from airport(s) and hotels.
 - Number of available hotel rooms and rates.
 - Peak room nights ~1200 rooms
 - Local restaurants adequate to feed participants Thursday, Friday, and Saturday (for those departing Sunday) nights.
- Ability to accommodate Thursday night participants with activity or dinner.
- Description of the "Big Event" (Friday Evening Activity).
- Accessibility of campus and accommodations for persons with disabilities, in accordance with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Diversity and other indicators of inclusion and equity
- List of potential plenary speakers
- Other relevant information that would enable the NOC to make an informed decision.
- Provide 3-5 dates for a potential site visit—must fall between August 20 and September 20.

Step 3: Site Visit and Fall NOC Meeting Presentation

Based on the proposals received, the CUR National Office, after consultation with the NOC will request a site visit and a final presentation at the fall NOC Meeting. Site visit teams include 2-3 members of the NOC, including 1 representative from the National Office. Site visits are an opportunity to show the team the institution/network's commitment to and ability to host NCUR as well as for the team to provide feedback to the bid institution/network. The visit should include meetings with upper-level administration, the NCUR planning committee, campus tour of facilities for NCUR use, and overview/tour of surrounding community.

The Fall NOC Meeting, held at the following year's host campus, will occur at the end of September or early October. Each bid institution/network will have 1 hour to present to and answer questions from the full NCUR Oversight Committee.

Step 4: Selection of Future Host Site

Based on the proposal, site visit, and fall meeting presentation, the NCUR Oversight Committee will make a recommendation for a future host site to CUR's Executive Board. The Executive Board will vote and make a final decision regarding future host sites.

III. GENERAL CONFERENCE OVERVIEW AND INFORMATION

Dates of the Conference: The annual NCUR conference occurs in the spring, either in March or April. Conference planners need to avoid¹ major religious holidays: Palm Sunday and Easter (including Orthodox) and Passover (usually two weekends). Optimal timing places the dates between mid-March and mid-April. Dates before mid-March are problematic in that logistical timelines for conference organization and feedback are unworkably compressed. Conference dates that are after mid-April risk overlapping with final exams or graduation ceremonies at some institutions. To maximize benefits to students participating from the Host Institution, local spring breaks and university holidays are best avoided.

Conference Length: The length of the conference shall be two and one-half days, beginning with early registration on Wednesday evening and ending Saturday at noon. The NOC meets on Wednesday at the Host Institution prior to the start of the conference. The Host Institution should plan a social hour and dinner at the end of the NOC meeting when NOC members meet appropriate Host Institution personnel.

Conference Size: The target size of the conference should be between 3500-4500 student presenters. A Host Institution may aim for the lower or higher end of this range; its choice will depend on a given site's ability to host its chosen number and still mount a quality conference. Sites should anticipate that approximately 95% of the students whose abstracts are accepted will attend the conference. Student presenters will likely make up about 85% of the total number of conference registrants.

Diversity and Inclusion: The Council on Undergraduate Research (CUR), in keeping with our strategic pillar of diversity and inclusion, promotes inclusivity with respect to race, religion, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, political affiliation, genetic information or disability.

¹ [The following dates encompass religious holidays and must be avoided for NCUR 2024: March 21-31 and April 22-30.](#)

CUR views with great concern any actions or conditions that negatively affect attendance and inclusivity with respect to the fullest expression of undergraduate research. Barriers to attendance due to people being excluded or feeling unwelcome negatively impacts our ability to remain committed to the wide expression of all forms and topics of undergraduate research, by all members of the undergraduate research community.

CUR event hosts are expected to describe efforts to provide an inclusive and welcoming meeting environment, and to disclose any current or pending local or state laws that are not in keeping with CUR's strategic pillar of diversity and inclusion. Issues of equal access and inclusivity are important factors in making awards to host CUR events

Conference Accessibility, Accommodations, and Local Transportation: Host sites shall be accessible by both reasonable ground transportation and convenient air service. Host sites shall ensure that adequate numbers of hotel rooms or other suitable accommodations are available for conference participants within walking distance or linked by bus/shuttle service provided by the host site to campus sessions and activities. Shuttle bus service should be provided by the host site to carry participants to and from distant venues. Host sites should arrange for transportation to the registration site on Wednesday evening and provide, if necessary, shuttle service to hotels that evening.

Program and Presentation Guidelines: The conference shall feature both oral and poster presentations in a wide range of academic areas including visual arts exhibitions and performances. Host sites provide moderator/discussion leaders for each oral session and performance. Moderators are usually drawn from faculty and staff of the host site. Host sites are encouraged to use students as co-moderators. Host sites are encouraged to plan for back-up moderators to ensure sessions flow smoothly. Moderators shall hold to the assigned order of presentation for each session. If presenters do not appear, the moderator shall put the session on hold until the next scheduled presentation, beginning each presentation at the exact advertised time. The conference program shall not include major events that compete with student sessions.

- **Oral Presentation Sessions:** Sessions for oral presentations shall normally be 20 minutes in length (15-minute presentation followed by 5 minutes of questions). In order to maximize the audience for student presentations, it is recommended that the Host Institution minimize the number of parallel oral sessions that are held concurrently, in addition to a concurrent poster session.
- **Poster Sessions:** Poster sessions shall be 1.25 to 2 hours in length in a facility allowing for a minimum of 50 poster kiosks, each having three exhibit sides, for a minimum of 150 presenters per session. There should be adequate space for registrants to walk among the posters (at least 10-foot radius, from the center of the kiosk, spacing) and to talk with poster exhibitors. Posters must fit on the display space without overlap. Host sites insure that presenters attach posters to the kiosks with Velcro. Push pins are prohibited. The host site is responsible for timely shipping of the poster stands to the next year's host institution, which is responsible to ship the poster stands to the following host institution.
- **Fine Arts/Design/Performing Arts Sessions:** Venues for these events shall be approved by consultation with the NOC. Provisions must be made for music, dance and drama performance

spaces. Gallery space provided for studio art and design should be such that oral presentations by student artists/designers can be given in the same or closely adjoining space.

- **Plenary Sessions:** Host sites organize three or four plenary sessions, the opening plenary to be scheduled on Thursday morning. Plenary presenters should represent a diversity of academic interests, ethnicity, and gender. NCUR has traditionally preferred that student researchers/creative artists from the host site introduce these plenary sessions and then serve as moderators during the question and answer period. Thought should be given to an appropriate space to hold plenary sessions with a communications link to another site to accommodate an overflow audience.

Program Booklet: The Host Institution shall design a Program Book that is fully paginated. The book shall be designed so readers can easily negotiate the schedule by conference day, discipline, poster versus oral session, and other special sessions. All presenters shall be indexed. A campus map shall be placed in a part of the book that can be easily accessed (such as the back cover). A reasonable opportunity to review and edit the Program Book before its publication shall be provided to the NOC Chair and to a representative of the CUR National Office. Information about CUR will be included in the program booklet.

Participant Meals: The Host Institution shall provide lunches and continental breakfasts for all participants on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday of the conference.

Host Institution Staff: Host Institution staff (session moderators, student helpers, organizers, trouble shooters) should be clearly identified during the conference through the effective use of T-shirts, name tags, and signage. Approximately 300-400 volunteers (student, staff, and faculty) are needed to execute the conference and its sessions.

Big Event: The Host Institution shall hold a special event on Friday evening (Big Event) of the conference, such as a banquet, arts festival or special program that spotlights unique features of the Host Institution or region. The event shall be optional for conference attendees, and shall not be subsidized out of the general conference registration fee income. Revenue to support the event may be generated by charging an admission/participation fee.

Faculty Administrator Network (FAN): Approximately 20-30 FAN sessions, planned for each conference by CUR, are designed for faculty and administrators who are involved in the promotion of undergraduate research and creative activities. These activities include special topic lunches, breakfast sessions and/or formal presentations in which faculty and administrators can address issues of undergraduate pedagogy and research program administration. The Host Institution provides FAN-sponsored locations during the conference where faculty and administrators can meet formally and informally. These gathering/lounge places should provide internet access. FAN sessions shall not overlap with student presentation time blocks. The location of a faculty/administrator lounge should be clearly identified in the program materials.

Faculty and Administrator Reception: The Host Institution shall hold a reception for faculty and administrator participants on the Friday evening of the conference that occurs prior to the “Big Event,” including an opportunity to meet the NOC and other representatives of CUR.

Graduate School Fair: Host sites shall provide designated time and table space, in close proximity to the poster session venue, for graduate school representatives to meet with prospective students. A host may charge each graduate school for a table provided; recent fees have ranged from \$150 to \$250, with an additional \$195 vendor registration fee. Complimentary tables for the CUR NO and NCUR Proceedings should be included in either the fair or other appropriate area.

Abstract Review: The Host Institution has the responsibility for review and selection of 250-300 word abstracts for conference presentations. CUR will also solicit reviewers from the general CUR membership, at the request of the Host Institution. The work presented at the conference should represent the nation’s best undergraduate research, scholarly, or creative work. Host Institutions should be rigorous in review of student abstracts and may need to reject or suggest revision of a substantial number to ensure presentation quality, student participation, and the prestige of the conference. While the quality of the abstract should remain the main criterion for acceptance, the Host Institution reviewers should make every effort to have a diversity of academic interests and disciplines. The Host Institution shall post NCUR abstract review criteria on the website. Students may submit no more than one abstract, with the possibility of a second as co-presenter. Any institution found to be negligent in paying its PAST NCUR registration fees shall not have its students’ abstracts and/or manuscripts considered for review for a period of two years, as reported to the host institution by the NOC.

Web Site: The conference web site will reside on the CUR server. The Host is responsible for creating the content of the public side of the site (including, among other things, the conference logo, abstract booklet, campus maps, and conference schedules). Other technical help to support these efforts will be available through CUR. The administrative side of the web site will be maintained by CUR but will be modifiable at CUR’s discretion to incorporate site improvements recommended by the Host Institution. The Host Institution will link CUR’s NCUR website to its institutional homepage.

Conference Logo: To maintain the NCUR branding, the host site conference logo must incorporate the NCUR signature louvers and the yellow (sunburst) coloring in some way. Examples can be found on the CUR website under the Host Site Development link.

Under-represented Participation: NCUR has consistently supported attendance of under-represented students at the conference. Host sites, CUR, and the NOC work cooperatively to sustain the presence of under-represented student presenters at the annual conference. Host sites will provide the NOC with a written plan to support these goals, in accord with state and federal guidelines (e.g. McNair Scholars, LSAMP).

Support and Oversight Provided by the NOC and CUR:

Conference Mentor: Once a host site is selected, the NOC will provide the Host institution with a conference mentor to support conference planning and implementation.

Fall and Spring NOC Meetings: During the fall (typically between the last week of September and the first week of October) prior to hosting the conference, the Host Institution shall arrange a 1 ½ day campus review and planning meeting. During the spring, Wednesday before the start of the conference, the Host Institution shall arrange a 1-day NOC business meeting.

NOC Membership: Upon selection as a conference site, the host institution shall nominate a representative to serve on the NOC, with that term to start twenty-one months prior to the conference and run through the conference year.

Mailing Lists: CUR will maintain updated distribution and mailing lists for the host site to use for the call for papers.

IV. NCUR PROCEEDINGS

The *NCUR Proceedings*' purpose is to give student authors opportunities to complete their research experiences with a paper that has been blind-reviewed by faculty outside of the home institution in the student's discipline. This review is an intermediate step that assists the student and the faculty advisor in readying a manuscript for acceptance by a professional conference, a disciplinary peer-reviewed journal, or both. NCUR Proceedings provide students with the opportunity to complete their research experience by publishing a "reviewed" paper. CUR has identified a designated contractor that produces the Proceedings. Ten dollars (\$10) of every student registration fee is to be paid by the Host Institution to CUR to support the publication of the Proceedings. This amount should be reflected in the budget proposed by a Hosting Institution.

V. PREPARATION OF CONTRACT

After acceptance and approval of the selected institution's full proposal, the Council on Undergraduate Research shall create and provide to the impending Host Institution a contract agreement that includes the following:

1. **Financial Contribution by CUR.** CUR agrees to provide the Host Institution with the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000 "CUR Contribution") to be used to support the operational costs of the NCUR Conference. This sum shall be paid and administered as follows:

a. The CUR contribution of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) shall be rendered to the Host Institution in one payment of \$25,000 approximately one year prior to the Conference date and/or upon the signing of the official host agreement and the second \$25,000 to follow after the NOC meeting the fall prior to the Conference date.

b. Except for transferring the *NCUR Proceeding* funds from the Host Institution to the designated publisher, the \$50,000 contribution to the Host Institution is the sole financial responsibility of CUR for the NCUR conference.

2. **Financial Contribution by the Host Institution.** The Host shall provide the sum of fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) toward the operational cost of the Conference. With the exception of the CUR contribution, the Host shall assume all financial responsibility for the costs of the NCUR conference.

3. **Conference Budget.** The Host Institution shall provide a budget that includes at least the following elements:

a. Registration fees below represent the 2019 rates, which are subject to change on an annual basis. Decisions on NCUR fees will be made by the CUR Executive Officer, in consultation with the NOC, following CUR policy.

CUR Enhanced Member Institutions	Fee
Students	\$180
Faculty/Staff/Other	\$190
CUR Institutional or System Member Institutions	
Students	\$190
Faculty/Staff/Other	\$200
CUR Individual Faculty/Staff Members	\$200
Non-Members	
Students	\$200
Faculty/Staff/Other	\$210

b. All formal presenters from the Host institution shall pay the full registration fee; Host institution students attending sessions are not required to pay the conference registration fee.

c. For the purpose of planning/learning, the Host institution shall waive the conference registration fee for up to five staff members for an upcoming Host institution.

d. Graduate Schools/Vendors registration that shall include no more than \$195 registration, plus the cost of table space (\$150 - \$250), totaling \$345 to \$445. CUR would like to keep the cost for the Graduate School Fair as reasonable as possible to encourage graduate school participation in NCUR.

e. The Host shall return to CUR a Conference Capitation Fee as follows:

- \$40 per paid registration for up to 2000 individuals
- \$50 per paid registration for 2001 to 3000 individuals
- \$60 per paid registration for 3001 individuals or more.
- NOC members are provided complimentary registrations and hence not included in the capitation fee.

f. Payment of Capitation fees shall be made to CUR as follows: \$50,000 by June 15th of the conference year and any balance by September 30th of the conference year.

g. The Host shall return to CUR a minimum of \$10 per registered student for *NCUR Proceedings*; CUR will forward those funds to designated publisher of the *NCUR Proceedings*.

h. All other income from the Conference shall belong to the Host Institution, including but not limited to T-shirt sales, room rebates, corporate support and special event sales.

i. Conference Budget Review (after selection as a host site): All upcoming sites and the NCUR Proceedings publisher will submit updated budgets to the CUR NO on:

- September 1, and
- March 1

for review by the CUR NO and NOC Finance Subcommittee. After reviews, conference budgets will be recommended at the fall and spring NOC meetings.

PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION OF FINAL REPORT

The Host Institution shall provide a signed Final Report on the Conference for CUR's review and approval by September 15th of the conference year and provide a presentation to the NOC at its September fall meeting. The report shall consist of at least the following elements:

- complete financial accounting
- attendance data, to include paid and unpaid registrants, broken down by presenters and non-presenters, students, faculty, administrators, others, and schools for which payment was not received.

* These guidelines are advisory in nature and are not contractual obligations.