



southeastern college art conference

## **SOUTHEASTERN COLLEGE ART CONFERENCE ANNUAL CONFERENCE PLANNING GUIDE**

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The annual conference is one of the principal activities of the Southeastern College Art Conference (SECAC). A conference has been held every year since 1946. The meeting continues to provide a forum for professional exchange and an opportunity for interaction among SECAC members.

While every effort is made to keep the costs of the conference modest so that attendance is within the means of an academic community that has limited financial resources, it is important, even necessary, that the conference be self-supporting.

What does it take to plan and implement a successful SECAC conference? This document attempts to pose and answer some basic questions that can guide the host of a SECAC conference. Each conference is unique because each institution has different resources and can provide different opportunities. Those differences are part of the attraction of a particular location and the planner of a conference should capitalize on his/her institution's unique offerings. At the same time, experience demonstrates the wisdom of following proven procedures and repeating those elements that work. This guide reflects the cumulative experience of SECAC staff and the many volunteers who have served as conference chairs.

### **How does my institution get to host a SECAC conference?**

The Board of Directors of SECAC approves the site of each annual meeting several years in advance. An institution interested in hosting the meeting should inform the president of SECAC in writing of this interest. The President will present the invitation to the Board that usually informally approves sites of meetings six or seven years in advance. It formally approves sites three years ahead. Over the long term the Board tries to place meetings in different parts of the SECAC region, and tries to alternate between large and small schools as host. However, the size of the organization has made it almost necessary that the meeting take place in the larger communities in the region.

What are the things that my institution needs to consider before issuing an invitation to SECAC?

1. What facilities does our community have for meetings and for housing a group of 300 and more people? A large hotel that can house participants and provide meeting space has many advantages: time is not spent in getting to and from, transportation costs are lower, interaction between participants is easier and can be more spontaneous. Some of the disadvantages are: more equipment rental is often required, rooms are not designed for the kinds of programs that characterize the SECAC meeting, the host institution does not get to show off its facilities. The location and price of a hotel must be considered. In addition to room rates, what complimentary

services are offered: complimentary rooms, free use of banquet facilities or meeting rooms? What reasonable eating-places are in close proximity?

2. What resources does our community have? What local museums, attractions and other institutions are in our area and need to be involved. Without doubt, a significant attraction of any location is the opportunity to visit museums, private collections, other campuses, and often receptions or other special events are held at such places.

3. What human resources do we have? Who will chair the meeting? The Director of the conference needs to be someone who is well organized, can oversee every function, and will accept the responsibility for seeing that deadlines are met and conference policies are implemented. The person needs to be able to devote approximately two years to the project, with the most intensive work occurring in the summer prior to the fall meeting. How much help can the Director expect to have from colleagues, students, volunteers?

4. What institutional resources do we have? Will the Conference Director receive any release time, student workers, or other assistance? Are there local or state grant agencies that can support any part of the conference? Will the institution assist with the costs of bringing in a major speaker, special equipment, receptions, or other things? Are the appropriate Deans, Vice-Presidents, and other administrators supportive? Does the institution have a conference planning or continuing education facility and what help can it provide and on what terms?

5. Exactly when will the meeting be held? Traditionally the SECAC conference has been held in late October, but the exact time is the decision of the host institution. The factors that determine the date are: hotel availability, other major events on the campus or in the community (football games, etc.), dates of other professional meetings that are of interest to SECAC members. For a number of years the meeting has begun on Thursday and continued through Saturday night, originally to allow participants to take advantage of "stay over Saturday night" airfares. Those airfares are a thing of the past and a Saturday night stay is no longer the rule of thumb for many participants.

6. What transportation can be arranged? How will people get to our community: train, car, or air? How will they get from the airport to the site of the meeting? Does the conference hotel provide that service? How will participants get to functions held at various sites on campus and in the community? What bus companies serve our community and at what prices? Transportation has become a major expense for SECAC conferences and must be given careful consideration. Is your city served primarily by one or two airlines and can you obtain convention rates for SECAC members? This information should be included in your advance publicity.

**Issue the invitation.....then plan the party!**

You will probably be thinking 4 - 8 years ahead in planning to issue an invitation to host a SECAC meeting. While some of the above questions cannot be answered specifically that far in advance, they all need to be considered before you issue an invitation. Once the invitation has been accepted you will have to define many things. The following outline attempts to provide guidance and a timetable for the arrangements that must be made. It is highly advisable to have written confirmation for all arrangements.

**I. 3 years in advance...**Present a proposal to the SECAC Board of Directors that includes: 1) possible dates, 2) suggested hotel accommodations, and 3) as much other information as possible. If you want to propose a joint meeting with another organization, that must be a part of the initial proposal (see appendix). If the SECAC Board formally accepts your bid to host the meeting, you should then proceed to:

A. Make final determination of dates for the meeting.

B. Negotiate a contract that secures rates and all other relevant terms with the hotel of your choice. Allow sufficient time for the contract to be reviewed by the President of SECAC, who signs the contract, and the Administrator. (See attached contract).

C. Contact your local convention bureau, continuing education department, your institution's administration, and any other institutions and organizations that can be of assistance or that you want to participate.

D. Review conference policies carefully (See attached).

E. Identify the Conference Director.

## II. 2 years in advance

A. Identify the Program Chair(s). It has been customary to have a chair for studio and a chair for art history, but there could be a committee. If Program Chairs are on the faculty of the host institution coordination it is easier, but often Program Chairs are from other institutions. (See attached guidelines for program development).

B. Communicate with SECAC officers and Administrator and past Directors of annual meetings about all aspects of previous meetings. Communicate with the membership about preferences for session topics, guest speakers, and ways to organize the meeting. Examine budgets and programs of recent conferences.

C. Develop an organization to coordinate plans for the conference - a committee or whatever works for you.

D. Develop a budget. (See attached guidelines and financial statements for previous conferences).

E. Make arrangements for special speakers and guests.

## III. 1 year in advance

A. Attend the SECAC Board of Directors meeting and present a budget and outline of conference plans.

B. Distribute material about your meeting, your school, and your community to conference participants.

C. Set up a timetable and coordinate deadlines for conference mailings (Newsletters, pre-registration material, etc.) with the SECAC Administrator.

D. Set up a web page about the annual meeting, and link the page to the SECAC web page.

E. Participate in a session at the annual conference that introduces your plans for the following year.

## IV. The year of the conference

A. A call for session and panel proposals for your meeting should be issued immediately following the most recent SECAC meeting – typically November.

A. Once sessions and panels have been chosen and as early in the year as possible, the SECAC Administrator will produce and mail the Call for Papers which contains program and other preliminary information about the conference. Session chairs should be designated in this publication and a deadline for response should be stated. This is mailed to all members but a more extensive mailing list can be developed if desired.(See attached Newsletter).

B. In the spring, ideally before graduation time, another Newsletter is published. This includes any information about the conference that was not available in January.

C. May - June...Receipt of abstracts, proposals, papers and development of a preliminary program schedule.

D. June - submit budget to Executive Committee if there have been significant changes.

E. July 1...Submit all information for the pre-registration material to the SECAC Administrator who prepares the announcement for distribution.

F. July - August... This is a period of intense work. It is close enough to the meeting that definite arrangements with bus companies, caterers, equipment rental vendors, etc., can be made. To the extent possible, get terms in writing. If any deposits are going to be required, coordinate with SECAC Administrator to obtain a payment. **Be sure and keep receipts for all**

**expenditures for which you expect reimbursement!** Final adjustments in the program and assignment of specific spaces should be made in preparation for printing the final program. Coordinate plans for materials that will go in the registration packet with the SECAC Administrator.

G. Mid to late August ... mailing of pre-registration material which includes directions for hotel registration and instructions for conference registration with a cut-off date for pre-registration.

H. September...Make arrangements with various vendors. Make every effort to get vendors - buses, caterers, etc. - to let you adjust numbers within the last week before the conference. Organize volunteer workers for such essential tasks as changing projector bulbs, directing visitors, helping at registration desk, driving (check liability and insurance issues), keeping coffee going, etc. Submit final copy for program, which goes to the printer as early in the month as possible.

I. September - October...SECAC staff will be receiving registrations and can provide numbers on demand. Coordinate with SECAC Administrator about preparation of signs, procurement of supplies, and volunteers for registration desk.

J. One week before the meeting make final arrangements with caterers, bus companies, rental companies, assemble registration packets, and attend to a myriad of last minute details.

**V. At the conference** the Director oversees volunteers and student workers; maintains contact with a designated hotel employee about any problems with the hotel; oversees bus and transportation matters; gives final meal counts to caterers; gives a report on the conference to the Board of Directors and at the annual membership meeting. The SECAC Administrator will assist in preparation of that report.

The registration desk is under the direction of the SECAC Administrator but you will need to supply assistants to help man the desk..

**VI. After the conference** the Director submits bills, with receipts, to the SECAC Administrator for payment. If bills are sent directly to SECAC by vendors, the Director should be prepared to approve the amount before payment is dispersed. The Director should make every effort to see that all bills are submitted to be paid in the calendar year in which the conference takes place. It is very useful if the Director presents a report on the conference with any recommendations that he/she feels would be of help for future Directors. There may be policy changes that the Director would like to recommend for the Board of Directors' consideration.

### **Procedures for Program Development**

The SECAC conference is primarily for the benefit of conference program participants, who generally account for 60 - 75% of conference attendance. No matter how long a program participant spends at the conference - two hours or two days - that person's participation is documented in the printed conference program; that person had the opportunity to present him/herself to colleagues and peers through delivery of papers or by participation in a panel discussion. Printing, space and equipment rental, and transportation are some of the major costs incurred. Each annual meeting should pay for itself and if this is to happen, program participants must pay the required conference fees. All program participants realize benefits; all must share the costs.

Directors of annual meetings and their Program Chairs should consider this point of view when recruiting or approving persons to participate in sessions. *SECAC Conference Policies* allow the Director of the annual meeting to exempt an unlimited number of participants from payment of the membership fee and all or part of the registration fee, provided the costs of such are included as an expense item in the conference budget. In summary, conference planners are expected to monitor carefully the participation in the annual meeting of any person who is paying neither the membership nor registration fees.

Current format for SECAC conferences has the program beginning on Thursday and ending with a social event on Saturday night. The Board of Directors meets late Wednesday afternoon. The objective is to have as many sessions as possible, allowing for as much participation as possible. However, there is a limit to the number of simultaneous sessions that can be held and still have an audience. The space that is available is also a factor in determining the number of sessions to schedule. Conference schedules have varied from four sessions, two hours in length, each day to four sessions, one and one-half hours in length. A 30-minute break is allowed between sessions with drinks and snacks available, and from three to five sessions are scheduled for each time block. Program chairs must be prepared to strictly enforce time limits for papers.

The traditional way to organize the program is for the Conference Director or Program Chairs to issue a Call for Sessions and Panels from the SECAC membership with a deadline set early in the conference year. While the terms "session" and "panel" may be used interchangeably, a "session" is usually understood to be the presentation of several formal papers; a "panel" is a less formal, round-table discussion about a specific topic that is guided by a chair. The review process should be clearly spelled out when the call is issued and the names of the Program Chairs and Program Committee members should be published. It is essential that the program be developed by a representative sample of the SECAC membership, which includes art historians, studio artists, art educators, curators, and visual resource specialists. If a joint conference is planned, the review apparatus needs to be representative of the two organizations. It is the task of the Conference Director, the Program Chairs, and the Program Committee to make the program as inclusive as possible and representative of the members' wide-ranging areas of interest. Once the review process is complete, the Conference Director or Program Chairs should publicize the selected sessions and panels in the SECAC Newsletter and the on-line Call for Papers, which lists the session and panel chairs and briefly describes the topics. The Call for Papers may also include general or open sessions to accommodate proposals that may not fit in the proposed topical sessions and panels. For example, a panel may be designated for graduate students. In some instances the program may include special invitational or sponsored sessions, but these should in no way impinge on the principal of open submissions.

Although individual chairs are responsible for selecting participants for their sessions or panels, the Program Chairs may help session chairs fill out sessions or panels, or reorganize those for which there was minimal response. Again, the Program Chairs, as well as the Conference Director and the Program Committee, should keep in mind the diversity of the SECAC membership and the need for balance and inclusiveness in developing the conference program.

It is very important that the Conference Director or Program Chairs inform session chairs of their responsibilities. SECAC has developed Guidelines for Session Chairs (see attached guidelines), which are sent out by the Administrator as soon as individual session chairs are notified- usually early February.

Each SECAC affiliate organization, such as FATE, VRC, CWAQ, ATSAH, and SESAH, is entitled to plan and organize one session or panel at each SECAC conference. Each affiliate organization must formally submit a session proposal by the deadline specified in the Call for Sessions and Panels. This will facilitate program development and give the Conference Director or Program Chairs the necessary latitude in planning the conference program in order to assure that it is diversified and balanced. Members of affiliate organizations are encouraged to submit additional proposals for sessions or panels, which will be reviewed with other non-affiliate session proposals. The Conference Director or Program Chairs should contact the representative of each group to discuss their wishes and needs.

It has been customary to have at least one "name" speaker and if resources permit, more than one. If such persons are scheduled well in advance, their presence can be a part of pre-meeting publicity. Speakers can be a drawing card but cost must be considered. For many meetings, the host institution has presented such a speaker as part of a grant-funded lecture series that

represents a contribution to SECAC. Usually in such situations the speaker's appearance must be open to the general community. Other things that should be taken into account in selecting a speaker is the specialty of the person - is their appeal broad enough for the SECAC membership and are they sufficiently dissimilar from speakers at recent meetings.

SECAC currently gives several awards and an event at which these can be presented should be scheduled. There have been awards banquets, award luncheons, and the awards have been presented before introduction of the guest speaker. It should be an occasion when a maximum of number of conference participants are present and when the attention of the group can be focused on the presentation.

Recent conferences have concluded with a social event that includes a meal and the opportunity for dancing.

Food arrangements have been quite varied and range from receptions with simple refreshments to sit-down dinners. It is advisable to leave participants on their own for some meals so that they can take advantage of the local specialties. A list of restaurants in the area is recommended for the registration packet. If a dinner is going to be included, consider whether to hold it at the hotel - it may be required as part of a package deal - or to have it somewhere else in the community. By all means try the food before you make a final decision!

Do not hesitate to innovate and vary the format if your situation affords unique opportunities. Just see that the basic objectives of the conference are met.

### **Guidelines for Budget Development**

Just as any budget does, the SECAC conference budget must project revenue, most of which comes from registration fees but also includes any contributions from local sources, and fees collected for meals or other events. It is recommended that revenue projections be conservative or a best-case and worse- case projection be developed. It is advisable to include as much as possible in the registration fee and to limit separate charges, though meals and optional excursions often have to generate their own revenue. SECAC provides a set amount from its annual budget for Gulnar Bosch Travel Awards, and this figure should be included as revenue when preparing the budget for the SECAC conference budget. Consult with the SECAC Administrator or SECAC President to determine what the amount is. See a complete discussion of the Bosch Travel Awards immediately following this section.

Expenses should be projected as accurately and in as much detail as possible. The usual items of expense are audio visual equipment, food, transportation, speakers' honoraria and expenses, printing, postage, SECAC staff expenses, telephone, copying, and miscellaneous to cover those unanticipated expenses. Transportation has consistently been one of the highest costs in situations that require use of buses and audio visual equipment becomes more expensive every year.

The budget that is presented to the Board a year in advance of the conference should be as carefully thought through as possible, for the Board sets a maximum pre-registration fee for the conference based on the projections that you submit. A final, and quite accurate budget, should be developed before the pre-registration material is printed, for all costs included in that announcement will be based on your budget.

Review the attached financial statements and consult with the SECAC Administrator in preparing your budgets.

### **Gulnar Bosch Travel Awards**

The Gulnar Bosch Travel Awards provide limited travel funds for select students whose papers or works have been accepted for juried presentation so that they can attend the SECAC Annual meeting. It was Gulnar Bosch's intent, through her bequest to SECAC, that interest generated from funds invested by SECAC would be used to encourage student participation in SECAC and their future involvement in the organization.

Award recipients are chosen by a committee composed of the director of the annual SECAC meeting and two additional persons appointed by the director in consultation with the Vice President of SECAC. Candidates must have an accepted submission in a SECAC session or exhibition and must formally apply by completing the *Gulnar Bosch Travel Assistance Award Application* which is available on the SECAC website. Bosch Travel Award recipients should be recognized at the annual meeting, preferably at the same time that the SECAC Awards are presented. Recipients should receive a check and a certificate stating the nature of the award with the recipient's name and institution. Award details should be published in the subsequent issue of the *SECAC Newsletter*.

It is recommended that the Bosch funds assist at least two students each year. At the discretion of the conference director, additional money may be raised from other sources to increase the number of grantees. Usually students receiving the grants are required to live at least 200 miles from the meeting site.

Gulnar Kheirallah Bosch served as SECAC president in 1958 and often presented papers at the annual meeting. She was born in 1909 on the Oglala Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, where her father was a doctor. The family moved to Chicago where Bosch completed high school at the age of 15, and after a time of extensive travel and study, she returned to Chicago to earn a doctorate from the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. Her college teaching career began in 1941 at Florida State College of Women, now Florida State University, and following teaching appointments in Georgia and Louisiana, she returned to Florida State in 1960 as head of the art department, a post she held until 1977. Gulnar Bosch continued as an active member of SECAC for many years following her retirement. She died on October 9, 1998.

### **Guidelines for Planning and Producing a Member's Exhibition**

*In 1998 at the SECAC conference in Miami the 1st annual members juried exhibition was held and it has been a part of the conference each year since. The suggestions that follow represent procedures and recommendations that have emerged over this seven-year period.*

1. Select site for exhibition.
2. Select a person to chair the exhibition who is experienced in handling juried exhibitions.
3. Form a 3 - 5 person exhibition committee.
4. Select a juror.
5. Exhibition committee develops prospectus for the exhibition. all terms of exhibition are defined, including membership requirements. Indicate to whom payment of entry fees should be made. Prospectus is reviewed by Conference Chair and by SECAC Administrator.
6. Decide how to distribute prospectus: *via* a special mailing to membership or included in the spring Newsletter (latter is less expensive). Post the prospectus on the SECAC website.

7. Once the deadline for submission of entries has passed, list of entrants must be reviewed by the SECAC Administrator to see if all are current members of SECAC. NO NOTICES OF JUROR'S DECISION SHOULD BE SENT OUT UNTIL THIS CHECK HAS BEEN MADE.

8. Procure award money and funding for catalogue.

9. Be sure and send list of accepted artists and works to SECAC administrator who will forward to SECAC Review editor.

### **Planning a Joint Meeting**

There are times when an institution planning to host the SECAC conference wants that meeting to be a joint one with another organization, or another organization may ask to meet with SECAC. In either case, there should be extensive discussion between the two organizations before the invitation is extended. Careful consideration should be given to the following:

1. The other organization should be one with interests and objectives that are compatible with those of SECAC.

2. The other organization's projected conference attendance should be within a range that the proposed conference site can accommodate.

3. The other organization should have membership rates that are the same - or higher - than SECAC's.

4. Each organization should be familiar with the governance of the other and know who the officers are.

5. Each organization should be informed about the financial management procedures of the other.

6. Each organization should know the conference policies and planning procedures of the other.

7. While every effort should be made to accommodate the needs of the "guest" organization, it should be understood that SECAC's objective of producing a successful conference cannot be compromised.

8. The two organizations understand that a final agreement\* - essentially a contract - which defines the terms on which the joint meeting will be planned and implemented, will be signed by presidents of each organization after the Board of Directors adopts a conference budget but no later than six months prior to the conference date.

SECAC has had joint meetings with the following organizations - Mid America College Art Association (MACAA), the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH), and Tri-State Sculptors Educational Association, Inc. (TSSEA).

Schedule for determining administrative fee for join conferences (adopted at 2002 Board meeting)

15% of attendance or less	\$750
16 - 25%	\$1000

26 - 35%	\$1500
36% or more	\$2000

\*Sample agreement in Appendix

**Items below are available at the request of anyone contemplating an invitation to SECAC for a conference or those planning a conference.**

Hotel Contract

Agreement with Host Institution

Conference Policies

Guidelines for Session & Program Chairs

Agreement for a Joint Meeting

Record of Past Conferences

Financial Summaries

Previous Conference Chairs

Examples of nametags, tickets, etc.

Programs from past conferences