

Guide to Planning an AOASM Regional STUDENT Conference

This is for a single-day conference ONLY – I strongly advise against attempting a multi-day (weekend) conference because of costs, transportation, scheduling

1	Select a Venue
2	Secure a Date
3	Create Your Ideal Schedule
4	Contact Speakers (think local, then expand)
5	Start Promoting the Conference Early (no schedule needed)
6	Create Your Final Budget
7	Secure Funding and Set a Final Price
8	Final Promotions and Registration

1) Select a Venue: (VERY early in the process – like now)

- ❖ **Location, Location, Location** – how convenient is this for ALL of your chapters?
- ❖ **Costs, Costs, Costs** – FREE is better, hosting at one of your region’s schools provides a free venue that can accommodate large numbers of people
- ❖ **Resources, Resources, Resources** – does one of the schools in your region have a large number of Fellowship Trained Primary Care/Sports Medicine, or Orthopedics faculty?
 - Are there physicians in the area who could help, but are not direct-faculty?
 - What people are close to the area that could make the conference great?
- ❖ “Non-Sports Med” Faculty can give great sports medicine lectures
 - Ophthalmologists could lecture on common eye injuries in athletics
 - OB/GYN might be willing to lecture on female athlete triad, women’s health in athletics...etc.
 - Psychiatry faculty could discuss psychiatric issues in athletics, response to severe injury by athlete, teammates, coaches (think about how everyone from Louisville reacted to Kevin Ware’s leg injury)

2) Secure a Date: (early in the process but at least 8 months before event)

- ❖ ***Pick a date and stick to it***
- ❖ Ideally 6+ weeks before or 6+ weeks after the AOASM National Conference
 - If it is too close to nationals, it might discourage attendance
 - Your conference can be used to excite students about nationals, or take the excitement of nationals to get students involved at the regional level
- ❖ Assuming you use a school as a venue → Secure the facilities and resources you will need with the local school
 - Contact student services
 - Reserve lecture halls, classrooms, or labs
 - Contact facilities or specific departments
 - Reserve OMM tables, if needed
 - Reserve a dining facility or an area where people can eat lunch
 - Reserve other resources if needed for a specific workshop (casting saws, eye protection...etc.)
 - Contact the medical education department if necessary
 - Again, reserve facilities and faculty
 - Avoid major scheduling conflicts with your conference
- ❖ Create an environment that would facilitate conference attendance (you are hosting a regional conference – *that is a big deal*)
 - ***Will student services/medical education help you ensure there are no big tests on Monday at the host school?***
 - Request no tests the Monday or Tuesday after the conference to help facilitate attendance from the host school
 - Avoid scheduling during, or immediately before, a block break/spring break/holiday as students will be traveling and/or away from campus at the host school
- ❖ Early January is a great time of year
 - Semester is young
 - No major tests yet
 - Second-years are not in complete “boards mode” yet (they might be willing to sacrifice a ½ day on Saturday)
 - Get people excited about nationals and meet people before nationals

3) Create Your Ideal Schedule: (about 6 months or more in advance)

- ❖ What would be your ideal regional conference?
 - My format was 1 lecture, 1 workshop,
 - Informal panel / LUNCH,
 - 1 workshop → close conference for the day

- ❖ **Themes are important but not requisite** – they can help secure funding
 - If your theme is “Emergencies in Sports Medicine” could the ER club help pay for it, if you invited the host school’s ER club to attend

- ❖ Workshops are engaging and help facilitate attendance
 - Busy medical students are not as likely to travel just to listen to lectures in their free time → workshops are hands on and fun
 - Workshops do NOT have to be ridiculously expensive

4) Contact Speakers: (about 6 months or more in advance)

- ❖ Your faculty mentor at the host school can be a tremendous resource
 - Are there AOASM affiliated physicians nearby?
 - Do they recommend certain speakers who love teaching?

- ❖ Are there any sports medicine fellows at the host school, or nearby, that would be willing to speak or assist with a workshop?
 - Is there an allopathic fellowship nearby that might be willing to send a fellow or faculty member lecture, lead a workshop, or take part in a panel (fellows were in your shoes not too long ago)?

- ❖ Contact all of your ideal speakers FIRST,
 - Then start to contact other speakers (if necessary) once you get “thanks but no thanks” email or phone call from one of your speakers

- ❖ Remember, the non-traditional sports medicine speakers listed above

- ❖ Local = more likely to attend and less likely to back out at the last minute

Example of an actual email I sent a physician (whose name has been removed), who agreed to speak at the conference

Dr. *****,

I am currently planning the AOASM (American Osteopathic Academy of Sports Medicine) Student Southeastern Regional Conference for the 2012-2013 academic year.

The conference will be attended by osteopathic medical students interested in musculoskeletal medicine attending any of the seven osteopathic medical schools in the Southeast United States.

The conference will be hosted at VCOM-VA Campus and I wanted to see if **you would be willing to give a one hour lecture as a portion of the conference.**

The conference will be one day only, on January 12, 2012 from 09:00 AM – 3:00 PM.

- I was hoping that you would give a lecture on **Sudden Cardiac Arrest in Athletics: Screening, Management, and Treatment from 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM on January 13, 2012.**
 - o This topic is just an idea – anything you think would be more appropriate for students is welcome!

The current sports medicine club officers at VCOM have agreed to help assist you if needed. And of course, **I will do anything I possibly can to help you** with your lecture or to ensure that you can present at the conference.

THANK YOU for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you, and hopefully working with you, in the near future.

All the Best,

Jacob Bright

5) Start Promoting the Conference Early (No Schedule Needed):

(about 3-4 months in advance)

- ❖ Send out emails to your regional Vice Presidents & Presidents to **get the date stuck in their minds**
 - o Ask them to share the date with their chapter
- ❖ Create a Flyer (powerpoint slide) you can email to all your chapters
 - o You can place a “tentative schedule” or just use it as a “save the date” like you would with a wedding or party announcement
- ❖ Give people time to plan, clear things with their school, and apply for excused absences with their schools
 - o Some schools may ask to see a flyer or tentative agenda

6) Secure Funding and Set a Final Price: (about 3-4 months in advance)

- ❖ Apply for “grants” with the host school or their student service department
 - Some schools will give a small- to medium-sized grant for a conference
 - If done well your conference can make your host school look GOOD
 - They are willing to help more often than not

- ❖ Ask the host schools “sports medicine focused” chapters to help contribute
 - Obviously their AOASM affiliated Sports Medicine Club
 - Orthopedics Club or Orthopedics interest group?
 - Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation group?
 - Alternative Medicine?
 - OMM/OMT or Manipulation/Manual Medicine Club?
 - Emergency Medicine – if ER themed (or another analogous club with a different theme)

- ❖ Local Residency programs may be willing to help provide money or resources

- ❖ **OMM Workshops (or anything involving OMM) typically are FREE TO OPERATE** because all schools have large numbers of tables and/or students have tables they will let you borrow
 - Think about OMM faculty at the host school or also any osteopathic physicians near the host school who are heavily involved in AAO or AOA

- ❖ Local clubs will likely be willing to participate in funding the conference
 - Ortho Club – “If you help pay for these casting supplies, you can keep the remaining supplies”
 - Sports Med – “If you help pay for these injection models, then your club could have a private “injections meeting” later before returning the models”
 - Alternative Medicine (or ER) – “If you help pay for food (or insert any other resource) then your club members can attend, even if they are not members of AOASM”

 - You get the point...

- ❖ Contacts for free (or really cheap) stuff
 - **Ask your orthopedic faculty if they know of an “orthopedic rep” they have a long-term relationship with**
 - **Some companies or reps may DONATE supplies to the conference**
- ❖ More money = more workshops, more supplies
- ❖ Cheaper food (pizza or even just snacks) means more money for workshops
 - Asking people to provide their own drinks could save as much as \$50.00

7) Create a Final Budget: (about 3 months in advance)

- ❖ How will you pay for:
 - Food → Registration fees
 - Food supplies (napkins, plates, cups, utensils) → Have a local club to donate them – some clubs have stockpiles of this stuff they never use
 - Supplies for Workshops → Grants from the host school, grants from local residency programs, practices, providers, local clubs (Sports Med, Ortho, ER...etc.) pitching in, +/- registration fees
- ❖ How much money do you need for all of your supplies and food
 - How much do you want to charge per person?
 - How many people do you need to attend the conference, at that price, to meet or exceed the cost of supplies + food?
 - Is that number feasible?
 - Think about discounts for pre-registration vs. same day (\$12.00 vs. \$20.00 or \$10.00 vs. \$15.00, for example)

If I had charged \$12.00 per person, instead of \$10.00 per person for my conference we would have made money to give back to the host school

- Had the fee been \$15.00 per person we would have made A LOT of money

\$2, \$3, or \$5 dollars per person doesn't sound like much but when you multiply that by 65 people at a regional conference → now your **conferences income increased by \$130 (\$2.00/person), \$195 (\$3.00/person), or \$325 (\$5.00/person) than it would have otherwise**

- ***Keep a VERY CLEAR record of money paid by attendees to show the host school (or anyone else that needs to see it)***

8) Final Promotions and Registration: (final 8 weeks before conference)

- ❖ All speakers have confirmed that they will attend
- ❖ All supplies have been priced competitively and will arrive before the conference (VERY IMPORTANT)

- ❖ PROMOTE, PROMOTE, PROMOTE
 - If people do not know, they will not go

- ❖ Same day payment vs. Pre-registration only vs. Both
 - Will you cap registration at a certain number; no more than 80 people?

- ❖ Make sure that if you don't cover your costs, it is a small amount of money
 - Less than \$100.00

- ❖ Likewise, it is **REALLY BAD** if you have more paying attendees than supplies at your workshops
 - Consider a “registration cap” or
 - **Do not allow more people to attend than you have supplies for**