



OACUHO

Ontario Association of College & University Housing Officers

OACUHO Learning Experiences Bid Guidelines

Updated March 2025

Introduction

This document is designed to help any institution planning on bidding to host and for those institutions that have been selected to host a conference, professional development day, business meeting or workshop on behalf of OACUHO.

Conferences

Every year, a variety of conferences, meetings and workshops are hosted by member institutions to serve the membership on behalf of OACUHO. Traditionally, the conferences have included:

- Annual Spring Conference,
- Fall Conference
- Winter Conference (formerly Residence Life Conference)
- New Professionals Training Institute

In addition, some institutions have taken on the task of hosting various training and professional development opportunities for the various interest groups within the organization.

Annual Spring Conference

The Annual Spring Conference has traditionally been at the end of May/early June, starting in the evening on the last Sunday of the month and ending after lunch on the following Wednesday. The conference consists of program sessions, annual general meeting, an exhibitors fair, a buyer's breakfast (vendors and SHOs), keynote speakers, social events and activities as well as a pre-conference workshop. In the past few years, this has changed to a Monday start and Thursday end to allow members to travel on a business day. Hosts should also be aware that they are responsible for working with the Julianne Pettigrew Award Winner from the Residence Life Conference to come and present their learning experience.

Fall Conference

The Fall Conference and Fall Business Meeting traditionally occur in late October or early November over the course of one or two days. The learning experience consists of program sessions, a keynote speaker, a Fall Business Meeting, and SHO/Advanced-Members Meetings. The location is usually centralized in the Toronto area for ease of travel for members.

Winter Conference

The Winter Conference (formerly Residence Life Conference) has traditionally been held mid-November or, at the end of January/beginning of February with the focus being the professional development of the student staff within the province. Student staff members submit program proposals and the majority of this learning experience is facilitated by the student staff. The learning experience generally consists of an opening and closing, student-led presentations, socials, and a banquet. Some hosts also chose to include a development stream for professional staff in attendance. In addition to this learning, there are elements such as the Julianne Pettigrew Award for the best in show presentation. The winner of this presentation is invited to the OACUHO Spring Conference to present to professional staff (at the expense of the Spring Conference host institution).

New Professionals Training Institute

The Training Institute began in 2001 as training grounds for professionals within the organization. It has been a 4-day intensive training program with many different faculty (typically, faculty members are Advanced-Members and Senior Housing Officers), courses and topics which are designed to help orient and educate new professionals to their roles and professional obligations within the field of student housing. This institute, typically hosted in May, is open to individuals with no more than 3 years of experience in the housing field and its intent is to provide them with a general overview of the different facets of Residence Life and the Housing profession. The curriculum for this conference is to be reviewed every 4 years to ensure it is up-to-date on new professional and student needs.

Bid Process

The Board of Directors (BOD) asks all interested institutions to complete a Bid Submission as part of their application to host an OACUHO event. One year prior to the event date, or an agreed upon time between the host institution and the BOD, the host institution will continue to work with the Conference Director to provide regular updates on logistics, budget, learning experiences, etc. The information required is outlined below:

Bid Timelines

Either one year prior to the event date, or an alternate timeline agreed upon between the host institution and the BOD, the host institution will submit a more detailed report outlining additional details in the planning of their conference.

Overall Program

Your bid submissions should include details of the overall program. Please provide a general idea of any themes. Refinements can be made as the planning progresses.

- Is your theme or overall goal diverse enough to appeal to all functional areas of housing operations?
- Are your keynotes and workshops tied to a theme or overall goal?

- How does your special event(s) tie into a theme or overall goal?
- Will your keynotes be of interest to all participants regardless of their job function? Do they represent the mission and vision of OACUHO?
- How do you anticipate meeting the programming needs of all functional areas of housing (facilities, off campus housing, family housing, apartments, admissions, SHOs, colleges, private sector, residence life, etc.)? How will the committee work with the OACUHO Board in order to ensure a wide variety of topics are covered?
- How will you accommodate various functions that occur at the event (e.g. the Business Meeting, Exhibitor Fair and Board presentations at the Spring Conference)?

Schedule and Proposed Dates

Please submit a tentative schedule for the event including the proposed dates and any back up dates. While there is some flexibility in the actual dates, please keep in mind that the following timetable is what has traditionally occurred for each of these events:

- The Annual Spring Conference is usually held in mid to late May/early June.
- The Winter Conference takes place 1 day in January or February
- The Fall Conference is typically held at the end of October or early November.
- The New Professional Training Institute usually takes place every other year in May

Host Institution Information

The OACUHO membership has stated that they are interested in trying to rotate official OACUHO functions on a geographical basis where possible. The Board will attempt to honour this suggestion, while also considering the issues of accessibility and cost. The following points should be considered in your submission:

- What types of living accommodations are available for the conference delegates?
- Can a variety of dietary needs be accommodated (e.g. vegan, lactose intolerant, religious needs, etc.)
- Where will the meals be held? The banquet?
- What types of workshop/program facilities are available for use (e.g classrooms, lecture halls) and what is the room/furniture set up?
- Where will the keynote addresses be held?
- What types of exhibit hall facilities are available (if necessary)?
- How accessible is your campus transportation-wise for your colleagues from across the province?

Budget

A proposed budget including fees must be submitted with your bid. The budget should be very conservative and be your best guess, taking into consideration a range of attendees. Some items to include in your proposed budget are:

- Food and hospitality

- Entertainment
- Speakers and workshops
- Accommodations
- Registration and administrative costs
- Volunteers and awards or recognition
- Transportation (e.g. shuttles)
- Contingency fund

Contact Person and Committee Members

The contact person is normally the author of the bid and then becomes the main contact for the OACUHO Board. Given the complexity of organizing an event, it is advisable to make use of a committee structure. At this time, the OACUHO Board will be looking for a basic operating structure and not necessarily the assignments of specific tasks to individuals within the planning committee. Consider the following points in your bid submission:

- Who is the main contact for the event?
- What is the composition of the host committee?
- What type of support (administrative, planning, programming etc.) do you require from the OACUHO Board Committee and membership?
- Do you have institutional support from other departments within your University/college? If so, who?

The host committee will be linked to the OACUHO Board through the OACUHO Conference Director. The OACUHO Board and its Committees are resources available to the host committee and able to assist with all aspects of the event, especially in the area of programming and speakers.

Entertainment and Socials

While it is not critical to supply finalized plans for entertainment and side trips, it is important to provide an indication of what may be available to choose from in planning for the event. Traditionally, entertainment and side trips are a component of the Annual Spring Conference and New Professionals Training Institute. However, other learning experiences have provided optional socials at the end of the learning to help delegates who may be commuting during rush hour. Keep in mind the following points:

- Will special transportation be required for the event?
- Will there be provisions made for individuals who wish to arrive or leave early?
- Can the dietary needs of the delegates be met?
- Is the location/transportation accessible to persons with disabilities?
- Are there any additional costs associated with the event? Are individual delegates expected to cover their own costs? Will receipts be issued?
- Is the cost of the special event covered in the overall registration fee?
- Is the special event open, welcoming and inclusive of all OACUHO members?

- Will the event/side trip highlight your institution or community?

Good luck with your bid submission! Should you require any clarification or further information to assist you in the preparation of your bid, please feel free to contact any of the OACUHO Board and/or the OACUHO Conference Director.