TIPS FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS

A poster presentation is an excellent way to gain valuable experience presenting your work to peers and colleagues one-on-one. Many students present posters at their first conference as a way to learn about the conference experience without some of the stress of giving a talk in front of a big audience. But don't be fooled—poster presentations are hard work and should be prepared carefully and presented professionally. Some tips to help improve the quality of your presentation and enhance your ability to communicate within the discipline of psychology include:

1. **A poster is not a paper glued to a poster board.** Don't think that you can simply print out a paper you wrote and stick it to a poster board—not only is the small font difficult to see but there is typically too much information to present in this way. People at the conference will not want to stand and read your poster—they expect you to "walk them through" your research, using the poster as an illustration of main points, findings and conclusions.

2. **Choose what information to display.** A poster should include the basics of an APA style report—title, abstract, introduction, methods, results and discussion. But each section should include only the highlights of this material, not the entire paper (see #1). You should give the details verbally as you "walk them through" each part of your poster. Figures or tables of results should be included for a quick and clear illustration of your findings, some even include a "take home message" that is stated simply at the end.

3. **Posters should be seen and heard.** Use large font (18 or 24 point) so that people standing a few feet away can easily see your main ideas or results. Make it colorful, include figures, tables, graphs, even photos of your experimental set-up, if appropriate (you can request A/V equipment in advance to show video of your experiment or stimuli, if appropriate). Don’t include too much text, just hit the highlights and then tell your peers the rest in a well-rehearsed script that you have practiced.

4. **Network.** Poster presentations have the unique advantage of bringing you eye-to-eye with your colleagues so take advantage of this. Ask for suggestions, opinions, etc. not only about your research but about your career too. Professors and other students are great resources.

5. **Be professional.** This is, afterall, a professional conference so look and act the part. Dress nicely and be prepared to discuss your work with colleagues and peers. Attend other talks or presentations and engage your peers in interaction. Poster sessions run for 2 1/2 hours so try to rotate co-authors by the posters at all times, if possible. First authors must be present at their posters during the first and last 20 minutes of the poster session.

6. **How about a handout?** Many conference-goers appreciate handouts of your poster. These can be one-page summaries of the presentation including your name and contact information for those who have questions for you later. Prepare about 50 handouts.