**Conference Management**

**Typical Learning Experiences of Students Earning Lower-Level Credit:**

* Work as an assistant conference chairperson, meeting planner and/or scheduler of meetings, workshops and conferences.
* Work on-site at conferences, meetings or seminars.
* Prepare pre-event materials.

**Typical Learning Experiences of Students Earning Upper-Level Credit:**

* Work in conference management for several years. Students may have been responsible for the management of all of the conference details, in charge of a portion of the conference, or in charge of training the staff.
* Read books and articles in newsletters and periodicals about conference management, meetings, and seminars. May have published articles on conference and meeting planning.
* Applicants for upper-level credit in this area are often granted credit in an area more narrowly defined. Common topics for which upper-level credit is awarded are program planning, program evaluation, direct marketing, adult learning and training.

**Discussion Topics:**

If you are familiar with some (but not necessarily all) of the following topics, you may be eligible for lower-level credit in the area of conference management. If you are familiar with advanced questions, you may be eligible for upper-level credit. If knowledge of some of the topics is substantial, you may consider requesting credit in more narrowly defined areas.

**Events/Programs**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* What type of events and programs do you manage? How often? (Examples of different event types include: in-house meetings, off-site meetings, seminars, workshops, conferences, tele-conferences, videoconferences, computer-linked meetings and/or electronic blackboard meetings.)
* Select four of these event or program types, and discuss their particular purposes and benefits.

Relationships, knowledge of discipline, methodologies (upper-level):

* What considerations go into deciding the type of program or event to be held?
* What is the value of having program advisory committees? How are such committees created, and what is their role?

**Audience**

* Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):
* How do you determine who should attend? How do you determine the attendees’ learning needs? Are there other ways that could be useful?

Relationships, knowledge of discipline, methodologies (upper-level):

* Why is audience/client involvement in program planning valuable? What are feasible ways to obtain this involvement?

**Advertising and Marketing**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* What media are useful and why?
* What do you consider to be the most effective advertising/marketing formats you have used? Why?
* What are good ways to obtain TV, radio, newspaper and Internet coverage of your event?
* What selling points do you use with the media?
* What market research would be helpful to programs with which you are familiar?

Relationships, knowledge of discipline, methodologies (upper-level):

* What is involved in developing a marketing campaign rather than seeking individual promotional opportunities?
* How can you determine the relative effectiveness of different promotional techniques for the same event?

**Administrative — Before the Event**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* What are important considerations when
  + choosing the facility, location and date?
  + confirming the site and space?
  + negotiating the costs?
  + determining the registration fees and per person costs?
  + developing the mailing list/attendee list?
  + developing program/agenda information?
  + copying materials?
  + ordering printed information and signs?
  + ordering registration materials: folders, ribbons, name badges, etc.?
  + preparing the registration materials/packet?
  + arranging travel to and from event, using car, plane, train, maps, directions?

Relationships, knowledge of discipline, methodologies (upper-level):

* How does the audience and the purpose of the event affect pre-event decisions, such as location, facility selection, food, speaker honoraria, etc.?

**Environment/Facility**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* What are some types of room arrangements and why are they used?
* How does the group size affect the room arrangements?
* What are some of the special set-ups you have needed for your events?
* What state and federal laws impact room arrangements?
* What special considerations are needed for outdoor events?
* How can technology be used for conferences and meetings?

Relationships, knowledge of discipline, methodologies (upper-level):

* How do the purpose of the event and the intended audience affect room arrangements and special set-ups?
* What are the conditions necessary for effective video computer conferences?

**Budgeting/Negotiating**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* What are the cost categories for your programs? What other cost categories might programmers have?
* What does determining the break-even point mean? How do you do this?
* Under what circumstances is a cancellation policy important? What should it include?
* How do you determine administrative costs? How do you recover them?
* Discuss negotiating with facilities’ representatives and service providers. What is your main purpose going into a negotiation? Other purposes? What techniques to you use? Do they use? Why?

Relationships, knowledge of discipline, methodologies (upper-level):

* How do you, or would you, go about conducting a cost/benefit analysis for your programs? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

**Scheduling/Logistics**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* What are the considerations you use in deciding on the following aspects of events:
  + *General Sessions* - how many, style seating, media needed.
  + *Breakout Sessions* - how many, concurrent, seating style, audio/visual needs, how many set-ups/breakdowns.
  + *Exhibits* - tabletop displays; booth size; number of spaces reserved in contract; pipe, drape and carpeting needed; cleaning service contracted and costs; electrical needs; advertising; signs; shipping move in and move out arrangements; days need space; times exhibits open.
  + *Meals* - how many, sit down, buffet, on own, concessions, themes, food at other times, break food and beverage.
  + *Entertainment* - what, when, how often, how long, included in price or extra, special needs and media effects, tickets, door prizes, raffles. negotiation? Other purposes? What techniques to you use? Do they use? Why?

**Speakers/Presenters/Facilitators**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* How are they chosen?
* When presenters receive honoraria, how are these amounts determined?
* What transportation arrangements are necessary?
* What speaker promotional information is useful and how can it be used?

**On-site Coordination**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* How is responsibility organized and assigned? (By day and time, by room, by function?)
* What is the function of a headquarters room?
* What emergency and last minute problems must be planned for? What are some problems/changes that you have experienced?
* How do you prepare for medical emergencies?

**Evaluations**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* What is the purpose of program evaluation?
* What is evaluated?
* Who evaluates?
* What tools are used? (structured questionnaires, open-ended questionnaires, interviews, etc.) Why?
* How are the results used?
* What changes have been made (or could be made) from evaluation suggestions?

Relationships, knowledge of discipline, methodologies (upper-level):

* What are the requirements for an effective program evaluation design? What are the challenges in carrying it out?

**Follow-up**

Facts, definitions, concepts (lower-level):

* What post-conference activities have to be undertaken? Discuss their relative importance.