

Regional Conference Hosting and Planning Guide

(All dates presume a September/October conference: Adjust accordingly)

IMPORTANT NOTE: Each regional conference is its own independent organization and is not a part/subgroup of the AAS. As such, each regional conference has its own tax status with the IRS separate from the AAS and cannot utilize the AAS tax-exempt/501(c)(3) status for its purchases/expenses/financial reporting. The AAS does not have knowledge of nor does it maintain records indicating which regional conferences have obtained their own tax-exempt/501(c)(3) status. This is maintained by each regional conference. The AAS also does not have knowledge of or responsibility for maintaining regional conference logos, letterhead, stationery, websites, liability insurance, or bank accounts.

The timeline and guidelines below are offered as suggestions and are based on procedures followed by hosts of the annual New York Conference on Asian Studies (NYCAS). Many of the activities outlined below will run concurrently and continuously. Be prepared to be flexible while working towards your goals.

Individual campuses will have their own deadlines in terms of reserving rooms, arranging A/V equipment, food and beverage arrangements, financial assistance, and so on. Identify the key people on campus who coordinate such activities as early as you can.

Consider ways in which the conference can relate to courses that can or will be offered in the semester or year in which the conference is held on your campus. Courses on Asia offered during a conference can greatly increase campus participation in the conference.

Compile a list of electronic means of publicizing your conference, including H-Asia (and the many other relevant H-Net lists, such as H-Japan, H-PRC, H-SEAsia, H-NEAsia, H-Buddhism, H-Announce, etc.), local and regional listservs, the AAS's #AsiaNow blog, <http://www.asian-studies.org/asia-now>, and the AAS offer to disseminate **one** annual e-flyer (email blast) **or** provide **one** set of electronic mailing labels for each regional conference (see below).

Every effort possible should be expended to ensure a diversified set of panels from both regional and disciplinary perspectives. Topical and inter-area panels should be encouraged.

Refer to recent programs from your conference's annual meetings for guidance concerning traditional aspects of schedules—banquets, cultural events, business meetings, luncheons, and so on.

The AAS offers services to organizers of regional conferences affiliated with the AAS. An updated list of such services is available on the AAS website at <http://www.asian-studies.org/About/Regional-Conferences>. For the display ad from the AAS, which they request to be included in the program, you will need to contact the AAS office directly 3-4 months before you prepare your printed/online program.

Some conferences maintain e-mail lists of Asianists in the region or who have attended past conferences. The program chair for each year's conference sends lists of names and email addresses to whoever manages the list. You will also want to generate a supplementary mailing list appropriate to your region and circumstances. In addition, the AAS can send one ONE email blast on behalf of each regional

conference (or provide one set of digital mailing labels) to a selection of its membership to promote the regional conference or solicit panel proposals.

Confirm all financial and other arrangements in writing after speaking with Deans, VPs, Department Heads, and others. **Keep a paper trail.**

As Early As Possible: **Establish the dates for your conference and notify various campus offices scheduling events of your choice for the dates in writing.** Whenever possible, avoid selecting dates which conflict with common campus events such as sporting events, alumni weekends, open houses, etc. **Also avoid religious holidays (esp. Jewish and Muslim, the dates for which shift from year to year).** **Notify the leadership of your regional association and Hilary Finchum-Sung, AAS Executive Director (hvfinchum@asian-studies.org) of the dates so they can be added to the regional association and the AAS websites.** Be aware of likely conflicts with other regional conferences, whether near or far, and try to avoid them. **Once the dates of your conference are selected, they should not be changed.**

Establish a Program Committee and Local Arrangements Committee with appropriate chairs and coordinators.

Consider a broad theme for the conference, which can attract participants from outside the region, but be aware that most regional conferences are generally quite open in terms of accepting quality panels and papers.

Contact possible joint sponsors for a major Outreach Event, often one or more workshops geared specifically to pre-collegiate teachers. Identifying a teacher or teachers with an interest in Asian Studies and outreach work will prove invaluable. Faculty in education departments—not directly connected with Asian Studies—often support these workshops if contacted early. Some local nonprofit organizations—e.g., World Affairs Councils, Councils for International Visitors, museums—have an interest in collaborating with universities on K-12 teacher outreach.

Funding is available to support an Outreach Event from the AAS Council of Conferences (COC) (see information below) based upon successful application and COC grant award. The Outreach Event is optional. If you decide not to have one, notify the leadership of your regional association right away, so that the officers can decide whether to seek other organizers for an Outreach Event elsewhere (all regional conferences are eligible to apply for funding for one such Outreach Grant per year from the AAS Council of Conferences). COC grant funding is limited and competitively awarded, so be sure to write a quality application and meet the February

1st annual application deadline. See: <http://www.asian-studies.org/Grants-and-Awards/COC>.

Discuss options for a cultural event during the conference. It is often possible to raise outside funds to bring established professional performers to regional conferences. Applications are generally due a full year before the event. Sometimes student organization or cultural events funding may be available. It is a good idea to try to tie an Asian cultural event into an ongoing series already organized at your school.

Consider ways of involving students in activities related to the conference, including helping with publicity and funding through student organizations, suggesting panels, working for the conference when it takes place, and so on.

Consider organizing an exhibit of books and other materials of interest to Asianists attending. If done well, the book exhibit can generate income as well as provide a tangible contribution back to the campus in terms of books donated to the library. Publishers frequently donate books. Some of them may pay for a display table in the exhibit hall. **NOTE: The AAS provides a selection of AAS publications and promotional materials for display at your regional conference.** All AAS publications provided are for your conference's benefit and are yours to do with as you wish after the completion of the conference.

Consider a regional Program Committee in which those serving on the Program Committee would be committed to creating a panel for the conference. Attempt a balanced coverage of the regions of Asia and the disciplines of Asian Studies. Be alert to possible gaps in regional, temporal, or disciplinary representation.

Begin to develop a budget of expected expenditures. Think of creative methods of subsidizing and/or cross-subsidizing the conference. It is often possible to get a Dean or VP to agree to pay for a student assistant, a student group to commit to supporting a cultural event, a local cultural organization or restaurant to host a reception, etc. **Be sure to keep a list of everyone to be thanked in some way in the final program and at particular events.** Contact the campus in your region that has U.S. government funds in support of Asian Studies to see if they are able to support specific aspects of your conference. The budget will help you set a registration fee. Some conferences allow one-day registration for a somewhat lower rate.

Begin to create a master e-mail address list. This will facilitate electronic correspondence.

Develop housing options for conference attendees. If a campus guesthouse is available, be sure to reserve rooms. It is often possible to arrange to have a block of rooms set aside in nearby motels for those attending the regional conference at a special rate. Your local visitors' bureau or your campus's office of special events might be able to help with hotel bidding and/or rates. Your university very likely has arranged discounted rates at local hotels. It is a good idea to have your office of special events or similar staff who frequently organize large group meetings review the hotel contract.

Preceding Year:

As Early as Possible

Establish a website for the conference. This should be linked to your regional association homepage.

Your conference URL and the regional association URL should be included on any written material; please check the letters carefully. Your website for the conference will grow and become more complex as arrangements proceed and details are firmed up. The website should include links to local accommodations and attractions in addition to details about the conference. It is likely that there is someone on your campus who can assist with website design.

As Early as Possible

If you plan to hold an Outreach Event, begin the preparation of a grant proposal to the AAS Council of Conferences. Note the deadline is February 1 of the year of the conference. Reviewing the COC website for the current round of applications will help prepare you for the types of proposals funded: <http://www.asian-studies.org/Grants-and-Awards/COC> On that site, you will find a list of recent Outreach Grants. Consult the current representative to COC from your region for additional information, if necessary. COC reps from each region are listed on the AAS's COC webpage: <http://www.asian-studies.org/About/COC>.

As Early as Possible

Reserve campus rooms for panels and related activities. It is also possible to hold panels and other events in a local hotel. You can get an idea of how many breakout rooms will be required by checking the programs from past conferences. Room will also be needed for receptions, business meetings, and meals.

As Early as Possible

Determine whether you can provide computers, LCD projectors, and sound in all breakout rooms. If you are not able for technical or financial reasons to provide full technology in each and every breakout room, inform participants during the proposal submission/acceptance process that not all rooms will have technology, and remind them often if their panel will not have technology.

- As Early as Possible **Make tentative reservations for meals on campus** since many campuses plan events very far in advance (this needs to be reconfirmed in the year of the conference). It is likely that someone on your Local Arrangements Committee will especially enjoy choosing menus and dealing with associated details.
- As Early as Possible **Invite the incoming AAS President to speak at your conference.** Most AAS Presidents welcome an opportunity to be involved as a discussant in a panel in addition to making an address at the luncheon or dinner. *Remember to leave at least 30 minutes for the President's address.* According to AAS procedures, the elected Vice-President automatically becomes President the following year. Do not hesitate to secure a commitment from the incoming AAS President once your dates are set, even a year ahead of time. You can write to the invitee directly, but be sure to cc the AAS Executive Director, Hilary Finchum-Sung, who coordinates AAS presidential visits (hvfinchum@asian-studies.org).
- As Early as Possible Consider organizing a book exhibit for the conference. A campus librarian may be willing to assist with this. Send letters to publishers with Asian Studies lists inviting them to set up a table or send books (you can charge for a table and usually the books are sent as a gift to your campus, so you can sell them or donate them to the library). You can also try to sell ads in the program.
- May/June Send a PDF advertisement to the current year's conference coordinator announcing your conference the following year. This advertisement will be used as a page in the printed program for the year preceding yours.
- September **Seek commitment from a senior campus administrator (President, Provost, VP, Dean, etc.) to make welcoming remarks.**
- September **Open a campus account for your conference in order to deposit checks and make disbursements.** If your website developer will be setting up an online payment system for registration fees (highly advisable), they most likely have a procedure in place for establishing an account tied to the online payments.
- Set up a website to accept paper and panel proposals.**
- September/October at previous Annual Conference **Be prepared to announce the particulars of your conference the next year and to have a handout with your website, mailing address, e-mail address, and telephone number. This can be used later for distribution at the annual AAS conference the following spring.**
- November 1 **Basic details of your conference—dates, theme, chair/co-chair, email contact—should be sent to the AAS to post on their website.**

- Late November **Announce your conference with preliminary information on H-Asia and other electronic lists.** Include the dates of the conference and DEADLINE for papers and panel proposals. This announcement will include the URL for the regional association website, your website URL, and the chair/co-chair's e-mail address.
- Conference Year:**
- Early January/February **The AAS can send out ONE email blast** to a selection of its membership to promote your conference or solicit panel proposals (or as an alternative, the AAS can provide one set of digital mailing labels). Please download, complete, and submit an e-flyer service form, available at <http://www.asian-studies.org/About/Regional-Conferences>
- January/February **Confirm all room reservations** for panels and meals, ironing out any potential problems as early as possible
- February **Remind members of the Program Committee to create their panel or roundtable.**
- Current deadline for COC Outreach Grant Proposals is February 1**
The COC website has details: <http://www.asian-studies.org/Grants-and-Awards/COC>
- April/May **Final Call for Papers** on H-Asia, H-Japan, MCLC, and other electronic lists for your conference. Announce clearly the DEADLINE for papers and panel proposals and any special instructions for submissions. Be sure to include your URL, e-mail address, and telephone number.
- May-June **Request the \$3,000 regional conference annual subvention from Hilary Finchum-Sung at the AAS Secretariat in Ann Arbor.** Be sure to send a copy of this request to your COC representative and regional association leadership. This email must state clearly how the check should be made out and where it should be sent. Checks will be made payable either to the hosting institution or the regional conference itself (if the regional conference has an established bank account). The AAS is prohibited by auditor guidelines from providing a check to an individual.
- As the deadline for proposals for papers and panels approaches,** be prepared to make telephone calls and send e-mail messages to friends and others in order to encourage their participation. Remind members of the Program Committee to finalize their panels.
- Formally accept papers and panels, either by e-mail or letter, as they come in. **Pre-registration materials should be sent to all accepted panelists with the admonition that only those who pay the registration fee by a**

specified early date will have their names appear in the program. *It is often necessary to follow up with reminders, and it is very important to keep on top of this.* The registration form should include language that asks “Would you like to share your contact information with other participants? YES/NO” (this will permit email addresses to be included in the index of participants).

June-July-August

Rounding out of panels and preparation of full program. Assign individual paper proposals that seem related in some way into panel sessions. Invite colleagues to chair these. Note: applicants have a tendency to drop out. You will have to shift the panels around to some extent as the summer progresses and even last minute, unfortunately. This is why it is helpful to appoint a program committee responsible for putting together complete panels. It is desirable that panel participants not be all from the same institution, in order to encourage intellectual exchange.

Preparation of the program on the conference website, in a form in which it can be updated as needed. Be sure to mark early posted versions clearly as a DRAFT. The website form should be compatible with the preparation of the printed program that will be handed out at the conference.

Request the AAS display ad to be included in the conference program.

July/August

All prior arrangements on campuses should be reconfirmed—indeed it is important to be on top of problems all along. Paperwork sometimes gets lost and people you have been working with leave campus.

August

Allow sufficient time for the printing of the final conference program that will be prepared at the end of August/beginning of September. *In the past, the program was mailed widely. Now, however, it is only prepared for distribution to those attending the conference. Ten (10) extra copies should be reserved for distribution at the COC meeting held in conjunction with the annual AAS conference each spring.*

The full final conference program should be made available on your website, usually as a PDF document.

Early to Mid-September

Announcement on H-Asia and other electronic lists of the upcoming conference, including a link to the conference website, and any details that will help enhance registration.

September

Reconfirm all meal arrangements and notify food services of possible increases or decreases in attendees

Reconfirm all A/V arrangements. If not all rooms will have technology, remind panelists and chairs.

September	Hold a planning session with all key individuals
Two Weeks before Conference	Finalize meal arrangements, badges, folders (information packets), signs, etc. Include the registrant's institutional affiliation in addition to their name on their conference badge. Check on any possible parking problems.

HAVE A GREAT CONFERENCE

FIND SOME TIME TO ENJOY THE FRUITS OF YOUR EFFORTS

The AAS encourages tweeting about the conference and will retweet any conference-related tweets (it helps to tag @AASAsianStudies and/or the conference hashtag, if there is one, which should be shared with the AAS). You may want to include in the program and on posters around the meeting place a notice inviting people to comment on the conference activities via Twitter with a particular hashtag, such as #NYCAS2018. If you have any questions, contact the AAS Secretariat.

After the conference, please submit a **list of the names and email addresses of participants** (if not included in the program) to the regional association leadership and to the AAS.

Note: This document was originally written by Ronald G. Knapp for use by NYCAS conference organizers. It was revised for general regional association use by Kristin Stapleton in May 2017.

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