

## Creating an Effective Poster:

### General Tips & the Nitty Gritty Details

- A poster is a way to *visually* communicate your study to many people.
- You want your poster to tell a story even if you aren't there to narrate! At conferences (and the Expo), there will be times when you are "assigned" to be by your poster to answer questions; at other times, though, your poster will be hanging up – amidst many others for people to read.
- Make sure that your poster is neat and is free of grammatical errors and typos. Prior to printing the "final" large poster, print out a smaller version of the poster and read it out loud. Correct the changes. Repeat as necessary. Be **sure** you have corrected all the errors!

### General Tips

#### Organize your poster in columns

- People will read your poster in columns, from left to right.

#### A good poster has about 50% blank space, and lots of informative pictures and figures.

- Blank space can be used to highlight section breaks.
- Don't include a figure or a picture just to take up space. It should add to the person's understanding of the poster.
- Remember to label figures/pictures.
- Remember: A picture is worth 1,000 words!

#### Figures should dominate the poster

- Text should be used to augment the figures. Use this guideline: edit and cut AND THEN edit and cut AGAIN. Remember this is not a paper, it's a poster.
- Show your audience your main points using pictures and brief sections of text. If you bury your main points in blocks of text, nobody will read it!
- Use informative figure titles: "Temperature versus movement" is not as effective as "Crabs move slower when it is cold."
- Experimental methods are usually best presented as a flowchart rather than described in text.
- If a detailed caption is necessary, put it directly below the figure.
- If you have bar graphs, color in all the columns. **Make sure all your axis labels are large enough to read from a distance!**
- A bulleted list of "Conclusions" works well in a poster.

#### Citation of Sources

- You should cite works in the narrative of your poster (Crowe et al., 2004) and make sure you have a section called "Literature Cited".
- The citation method preferred by your discipline is fine.

### The Nitty Gritty Details

#### **You will use Microsoft PowerPoint**

1. Create a new file with a descriptive title.
2. Open **Page Setup** and set up the following (as an example):
  - Slide sized for: **CUSTOM**
  - Width: 48 in
  - Height: 36 in

- Slides: **LANDSCAPE**

3. In essence you are creating one giant slide with all your information. Some particulars to using PowerPoint in this way:

- You need to type in all your text using the text box feature of PowerPoint. Your title will be created in one text box. Author, institutional affiliation and contact information will be created in one text box. The subtitle INTRODUCTION will be a text box. The actual text of the introduction will be another text box. Each title for a figure will be a text box, etc. etc. etc.
- Keep the poster background white.
- You will have to change “view” as you work on your poster so that you can see the general layout and when you are typing in the text.
- You can cut and paste figures from Excel with no problems. Don’t forget when you create your figures in Excel, use large fonts for axes and labels (at least 24) so that someone can read them from 1-2 meters away.
- You can cut/paste pictures with .jpeg extensions with no problems. Beware of pixilation, this means that a picture might look great on the web but once you put it on the poster and “pull” it open to the appropriate size, lines show up in the picture or the color is un-even.
- Figures/pictures should be at least 5”x7” in size.
- You CAN NOT cut and paste text directly from Word (don’t ask me why, but you can’t; some of the text comes across mismatched lines and fonts).
- Here are general recommendations for **font sizes** for different parts of the poster
  - Title: 60-75
  - Authors, Institution, Contact Information: 45-60
  - Subtitles (Introduction, Materials, and Methods, etc.): 36 bold
  - Main Text: 32. NO SMALLER THAN 24 (depending on the font)
  - Reference or Literature Cited can be smaller, usually 24, but no smaller than 18
- Make sure the author and presenter are clearly listed on the poster. A photograph of the presenter is a very effective addition. People should be able to read your poster as they stand 1-2 m away from it.
  - Capitals and lower-case words are easier to read THAN ALL CAPITALS
  - The font is important. Open round letters are easier to read than condensed letters

4. Make sure to include on your poster:

- Your name, your department, any co-author(s)/co-presenter(s), and your faculty mentor(s)’s name and department
- Current UNCG logo (can be downloaded at <http://ure.uncg.edu/brandguide/?brandcat=university-logos>)
- Acknowledgement of any financial support you have received for your work

5. Save your poster as a PDF. Your file name should include your last name and keyword/s from the poster title (e.g., Reilly\_PeerModeling).

6. A typical poster with a white background costs \$15 to print. One with a pattern/color background will be much more expensive. **As of right now, URSCO will pick up the cost of printing ONE poster per project as long as you have a white background.**