

Council of Divisions' Best Practices

Ways to Improve Your Division / Interest Group

What can you all do better?

*Use liaisons in Teaching, Research, & PF&R committees to help you with programming, planning, questions, etc.

*Clarify your call for papers

*Clarify who you are – Comm Tech, Critical Cultural Studies, Entertainment Studies – may make sense to those who have been involved for awhile – but think about those who may be new to AEJMC or finding the Call for Papers the first time. Don't assume everyone knows who you are or what research you expect.

*Define student papers more clearly—what will your division/IG accept as a student paper? Make sure your call for papers specifies this.

*Distribute guidelines for reviewers—what are the expectations of reviewers? What are examples of acceptable and unacceptable comments?

*Specify how many reviewers must read a paper.

*Specify how many submissions one author may have to your division/IG

*Define co-author requirements and listings

*Provide examples of papers presented in the past and types of research accepted. Give potential authors an opportunity to see what you've done in the past and give them insight on what you'd like to see in the future.

*Mine the program to solicit new members. Find out who is doing research that would be appropriate for your division, send the author an e-mail or a letter and encourage them to consider your own division/IG

*Send a note to those who presented in your division/IG but are not members. Encourage them to join. Make a point of inviting them to your members' meeting or social.

*Avoid repeats in the program—don't bore your members. Give them new panelists, new topics and new ideas each year.

*Do surveys of your membership as to what topics they are interested in and develop panel sessions around those.

*Provide evaluation sheets to those who attend your panel sessions at the convention. Report these results to your membership. Use them for future programming.

*Develop job descriptions for each officer position. This will help with consistency issues as well as when you are recruiting people to run for an office. A clear idea of what their responsibility will be is very helpful.

*Keep records. A notebook of activity, etc. should be kept by each officer every year and then passed along. This provides excellent historical reference as well as consistency.

*Develop policy that will ensure consistency in leadership. Some divisions have a committee of past heads stay on the executive committee for at least a year to help with continuity. The Ad Division has such a structure.

*Think about having a vice-chair elect to help ease people into the process. Public Relations has had success with this. If you do choose to do this – remember it does require a bylaws change.

*The executive committee under the leadership of the division/IG head should develop specific goals for the coming year at the convention in which they are elected. Share these goals with your membership. Get them involved with helping you meet them.

*Be in touch with your membership. Use your newsletters, listservs, websites to provide helpful information, suggestions, samples of research, news about your industry, syllabi, etc.

*Don't be afraid to appoint a task force to help solve or research important issues – division journals for example. Don't jump in without lots of input and research. A special task force of people familiar with the process can be very helpful and gives the members input.

*Think about ways you can work with graduate students. Do you have a reduced membership fee for graduate students? Do you have a mentoring program? Do you encourage student submissions?

*Make the annual convention your first priority. Don't dilute your resources and your potential programming opportunities with regional meetings. Some groups are putting all their efforts into regional conferences and then come up short at national convention. The greatest bang for your buck is in August. If you want to do both – be sure you can support both in workload, papers, reviewers, etc.

*Use all programming opportunities such as off-site programs, pre-conference workshops, special luncheons with professional groups, new member socials, etc.

*Collaborate with other organizations – SPJ, AAF, RTNDA, ASNE, ASME, PRSA, etc.

What other divisions and interest groups are doing....

*Newspaper—recruiting student journalists to serve as reporters at the convention

*SPIG—Great Ideas for Teachers—showcases best teaching ideas and practices across divisions

*Vis/ComTech—Best of the Web—showcases creative projects and multimedia work done by professors throughout the year

*MAC—in its call for papers, provided definitions of research related to minorities, trying to broaden the definition and ways to think about research in the area

*MAC—created a document to be distributed to the membership about ways to diversify courses

*PR—did well at “shamelessly” self-promoting the division to increase visibility within the association

*Vis—VCQ is its own entity now and is not affiliated with *News Photographer*

*Vis—created a CD on teaching visual communication classes with syllabi, lectures, assignment material and distributed it to membership

*Vis—added a line on its judges' reviewing form asking reviewers for demographic information (helps later on with writing the annual report)

*Adv—has a syllabi exchange on its website

*Several groups have top paper and top student paper awards

*Multiple divisions and IG—have a 2nd vice head, which also helps with continuity, training, leadership and transitions

*Adv—wrote a letter to all paper presenters congratulating them on their acceptances, encouraging them to consider joining the division and encouraging them to consider the division for future paper submissions

Your ideas go here...