Conference presentations and publishing in graduate school

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Organization

1. **Before the proposal** – what to consider prior to submitting a proposal for AERA (or another academic conference)?;

2. **Developing the proposal** – what is involved in putting together a compelling AERA proposal?;

3. **Submitting the proposal** – what does this process entail?;

4. **Doing the presentation** – some tips and tricks (and an epic fail!);

5. **After the conference** – some thoughts after incorporating feedback and lessons learned from the conference into your paper; and

6. Some thoughts on developing a **presentation and publication strategy.**

Before the proposal…

There are a few critical things you must do prior to working on a conference proposal:

1. Review the Call for Submissions

https://www.aera.net/Portals/38/2024%20AM%20Call%20for%20Submissions_6_26_23.pdf

2. Think about the conference theme(s) and whether are a good match with your research and research interests

"Dismantling Racial Injustice and Constructing Educational Possibilities: A Call to Action"

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Before the proposal…(con't)

3. Think about where you are submitting your proposal:
    - 12 Divisions
    - Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

There is important research being conducted in all of the divisions and SIGs. The key is submitting your proposal to the division or SIG that best represents the focus and aims of your research.

Before the proposal…(con't)

- Let's take a brief look at the 12 divisions and some of the different SIGs that comprise AERA to get a sense of how the organization is governed and how that impacts the conference proposal submission process.

Before the proposal…(con't)

4. Review the different presentation formats and decide on the type of presentation you will deliver at the conference

- Paper sessions;
- Poster sessions; and
- Roundtable sessions

Let's briefly check out page 5 of the submission guidelines to learn more about the different presentation formats.

Paper Sessions

- Your presentation will be grouped together with 3-4 others in a 90-minute time slot.
- There will be a session chair (usually be a tenured/full professor in your area of expertise) that will guide the proceedings.
- Most presentation draw on audience of between 12-15 scholars and practitioners with an academic or practical interest area(s) explored in the session.

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Paper Sessions (Con't)

Typical Structure:

- 5 minute introduction by the chair
- 10 minutes for each presentation
- 20 minutes of critique (an opportunity for authors to discuss themes and trends amongst the different papers)
- 15 minutes of discussion (*literally questions from the audience*)

* Questions are a good thing!*

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Poster Sessions

- Your presentation will be grouped together with several others in a 90-minute time slot.
- Your "poster" is presented behind you on a video screen. You are there to answer any questions folks have and engage in informal discussion surrounding your research.
- People do come to these things…if you are selected for a poster, put your best foot forward!

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Poster Sessions (Con't)

Let's take a look at two posters that have appeared in previous AERA conferences. While the current poster requirements do involve A/V and interactive components, you will still need to provide information related to all of the sections found in these examples.

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Poster Sessions (Con't)

How are poster sessions different this year?

According to page 5 of the submission guidelines:

"Poster presentations need to be created in the AERA i-Presentation Gallery for monitor display at their poster session and for viewing through the Gallery. This interactive technology will permit the presenter to include video, sound, text, narration, and charts."

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Roundtable

- A total of 3-5 presentations are grouped together in a 90 minute time slot.

- This format relies on having a session chair with knowledge in the subject area facilitating discussion between the authors and audience.

- No audio/visual equipment or power source is provided in these sessions as the focus is on interaction and engaging in meaningful discussions about the research topic.

- You can bring a laptop for your own notes, otherwise put down the screen, look people in the eyes and experience everything this format has to offer.

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Developing the proposal

- **The proposal requirements for the 2024 AERA conference are listed on page 4 of the submission guidelines**.

- AERA literally receives tens of thousands of submissions, so *straying from these guidelines is an easy way to get your paper eliminated from consideration early in the evaluation and review phase*

- Proposals must be in complete narrative form – point form is not acceptable!

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Developing the proposal (con't)

Word Limits:

- Titles must be 15 words of less

- Abstracts must be 120 words or less

- The full proposal has a 2,000 word limit. Place references, tables, graphs and other data viz at the end of the document. *These pieces are not included in the word count*

Developing the proposal (con't)

Proposals should contain the following elements:

- Objectives or purposes

- Perspective(s) or theoretical framework

- Methods, techniques or modes of inquiry

- Data sources, evidence, objects or materials

- Findings, results, substantiated conclusions

- Scientific of scholarly significance

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Developing the proposal (con't)

Your proposal will be reviewed based on these six criteria, so be really direct (e.g., headings for each) when including them in the in the proposal.

Let's take a look at some successful AERA proposals to get a sense of what that structure looks like in practice!

Developing the proposal (con't)

Follow the rules – follow the preferred structure and stick to the word limits for each section of the proposal

Stand out – Really lean into emphasizing how your proposal stands out in your field (e.g., novel framework, new insights, looking at an issue from a different perspective, giving voice to different populations, etc.)

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Developing the proposal (con't)

Significance matters – really pay attention to the significance section. It is critical that you articulate the contribution that your research has on the field, practive, the community, etc.

Developing the proposal (con't)

Before moving on, let's take a brief look at the Common Mistakes and FAQ found on page 10 of the submission guidelines:

https://www.aera.net/Portals/38/2024%20AM%20Call%20for%20Submissions_6_26_23.pdf

Submitting the proposal

The time has come…

Let's pretend that it's now two weeks from this very moment…

Now that your AERA proposal is ready to go, let's log into their submission system so you can get a sense of their (non user-friendly) system and the steps involved in submitting your proposal.

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Doing the presentation

Tips and tricks!

- Bring energy and passion to your presentation. It's not unprofessional, it's engaging, memorable and will get you noticed (in a good way)!

- Be confident! Be open to feedback and willing to engage with different perspectives, but you are expert on your research project and can bring some "swagger".

- Plan well in advance and rehearse your presentation several times to ensure that you are comfortable and to troubleshoot any possible issues.

Doing the presentation (con't)

More tips and tricks!

- Regardless of format, put down the screen, look people in the eyes and try to enjoy everything that presenting at an academic conference has to offer.

- If you have a paper presentation, try not to avoid going over the time limit as AERA session chairs will cut you off.

- If you have a poster presentation, you will be standing for 90 minutes. Wear comfortable shoes and dress accordingly (comfortable business casual).

- Be yourself!

Doing the presentation (con't)

There are lots of great ideas about how to deliver an effective conference presentation online, including:

1) https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/career-advice-article/how-to-give-an-effective-conference-paper/

2) https://www.universityaffairs.ca/career-advice/ask-dr-editor/proposing-and-structuring-conference-papers/

3) https://fourwaves.com/blog/conference-presenting-tips/

4) https://www.exordo.com/blog/presenting-at-a-conference/

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After the presentation

- Make sure you spend some time enjoying cool and interesting things in a different city before leaving the conference

- Most questions and comments directed to you at conferences will be put forth with the best of intentions.

- Think about how you can incorporate that feedback into your paper/research project (if appropriate).

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After the presentation (con't)

- Send emails to any other graduate students or professors that you met so you can grow your network and stay connected to any cool people (*FYI: it is totally normal for Masters students to approach professors at other universities to ask about PhD supervision opportunities, and for students to follow up on those conversations*

Presentation and publication strategy

- Conferences are just the beginning of the publication cycle!

- After the conference, you should also consider different venues (e.g., peer-reviewed journals, edited books, etc.) that are good fits for your research.

- Seek out professors in your faculty that need research assistance (Melanie knows who has the $$$) and show them how you can contribute to making their work a success. These work experiences invariably lead to unique and interesting publishing opportunities.

- Pursue these opportunities with reckless abandon!

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Cameron's Publication Strategy

2-2-2-2-2-2 Plan

During any four-year period, I try to reach a point where I have:

- 2 publications coming out;

- 2 publications in press;

- 2 publications in revise and resubmit;

- 2 publications submitted;

- 2 publications being written; and

- 2 publications for which research is ongoing.

Questions?

Conclusion

I hope you find these ideas and resources useful in preparing your AERA conference proposal.

Always feel free to reach out to me (Cameron.Hauseman@umanitoba.ca) if you have any questions that arise while preparing your proposal.

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Questions and comments?

Questions?

Contact Information:

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