

From AIEA to WUN:  
Making Strategic Choices in the  
Alphabet Soup of International  
Conferences

Kate Jennings

Sonja Knutson

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Which International Education conferences do you attend? Why?

- In groups of 3-4 discuss the above

# Beyond PD, why attend conferences?

- Cultivate new strategic connections – not just random networking, but being sure to meet people whose areas of professional expertise and interests link to yours (but remember this is a two way street).
- Learn about new funding opportunities – grants and scholarships.
- Gain templates, best practice info, toolkits that can save you hours of re-inventing the wheel.
- Explore new technological developments in the field through presentations and meetings with companies.
- Raise your institutions and your own profile through presenting.

# Preparation – the key to strategic conference attendance:

Which conference and for what purpose?

- CBIE has many sister organizations – NAFSA, EAIE, IEASA, AIEA, FAUBAI, etc etc.
- This site has all the IE conferences - <http://www.iau-aiu.net/content/global-calendar> so if you know which conference you wish to attend you can go to this one-stop-shop and find the time of year and link to the association.
- Dan Guhr did a publication for Edu-Canada on which staff should go where.  
[http://s8143581d93790b15.jimcontent.com/download/version/1297278557/module/4712484760/name/\(icg\)%20edu%20canada%20signature%20events%20\(capsule\).pdf](http://s8143581d93790b15.jimcontent.com/download/version/1297278557/module/4712484760/name/(icg)%20edu%20canada%20signature%20events%20(capsule).pdf)

# Preparation – the key to strategic conference attendance:

Who will pay for your conference participation?

- Can you combine an in-country partnership visit or recruitment mission with an international conference?
- Are you a student? Or are you looking for a graduate program? Several of the international association conferences are more academically inclined - requiring paper presentations and sometimes publishing proceedings.
- Consider being a conference volunteer.
- NAFSA has this great link which I used the first time I asked to attend:

[http://www.nafsa.org/Attend Events/Annual Conference/  
General Information/  
How to Talk to Your Employer About Attending the Conference/](http://www.nafsa.org/Attend%20Events/Annual%20Conference/General%20Information/How%20to%20Talk%20to%20Your%20Employer%20About%20Attending%20the%20Conference/)

Principles are basic, but useful. They demonstrate that knowing the strengths of the conference one wants to attend is critical for buy-in.

# Preparation – the key to strategic conference attendance:

Submit a proposal – being aware that this requires long lead up time to prepare:

Once you know the deadline, begin to pull together a panel to co-present.

Diversity of institution (within Canada this could be by sector (uni, college, K-12 or language), by region, by urban/rural, primarily UG to research universities, francophone/anglophone perspectives, etc)

In a growing number of conferences it is critical to bring another country's perspective.

Follow conference proposal writing guidelines exactly. NAFSA actually gives an annual session on how to write a winning proposal.

# During the conference

- Optimal strategic attendance is:
  - At least one opportunity to speak publicly – you may not be giving a presentation, but force yourself onto your feet to ask a question at a plenary or at a session
  - Attendance at a few carefully selected professional development sessions
  - A number of pre-arranged meetings balanced between new potential partners, established partners, and private sector meetings (even if your institution is not yet prepared to invest – you should understand the sector)
- Dress up, not down...no matter what the stated dress codes is.
- Give and receive business cards, write notes on the cards themselves about why you are connecting (keep in mind cultural norms re cards)

# Leadership Roles

- How could leadership roles within the organizations be beneficial?
  - Skills & experience development
  - Reputation – self and your institution/organization
  - Funding may be offered for travel to conferences & other meetings
  - Meet great colleagues and build networks
- Find out the pathways into leadership roles
- Network with leaders and staff of the organization
- Attend AGMs, meetings, regional events, etc
- Join mentorship programs



# Post conference

- Do the follow-up as you have promised.
- Connect with new contacts (email, LinkedIn, twitter, etc).
- Follow-up on future conference proposal ideas.
- Write a report for your boss that is no more than a page and only bullet points.
- Present to colleagues about the conference.