

**National Student Nurses' Association®**

# **Guidelines for Planning**

## **Meetings and Convention**



**National Student Nurses' Association ®**

**45 Main Street, Suite 606**

**Brooklyn, NY 11201**

**(718) 210-0705**

**[www.nсна.org](http://www.nсна.org) [www.nснаleadershipu.org](http://www.nснаleadershipu.org)**

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## Introduction

These guidelines provide the basics for planning a meeting or convention for a state student nurses association. While the guidelines are designed mainly for a state convention, helpful hints can be found for planning meetings of a smaller scale.

**If you have any questions that arise during the planning of your convention or meeting, please feel free to contact the NSNA ® Headquarters at (718) 210-0705 or e-mail a member of the Board of Directors at [nsna@nsna.org](mailto:nsna@nsna.org). We will be happy to provide you with additional assistance.**

**If you would like a member of the Board of Directors to attend your convention to bring greetings, hold a workshop, speak on a panel, etc., send a written request (a minimum of 30 days prior to your convention) to the NSNA ® Headquarters, stating the Board member you wish to attend, what their function will be, the location and dates for your convention, and what expenses (if any) can be covered by your association. Your request will be reviewed by the Executive committee.**



## Site Selection

### Selecting A Date

Planning for a state convention should take place as soon as possible after the election of the board. The vice president, or convention planner, must first set the date and place for the meeting if it hasn't already been chosen by the previous board.

Choose several potential convention dates prior to site selection or even discussion of your program. Hotel, speakers, and publicity hinge on when and where the meeting will take place.

Consider the following:

1. When can most students participate? (Not during finals or vacation!) Weather is also an important factor.
2. What time of year is easiest to plan so you can get your publicity to the majority of your student population?
3. Are there times in your state when hotel rates are considerably reduced? Convention bureaus in most cities or the sales office in major hotels can help you determine this.

4. Is the date in conflict with the NSNA ® convention, MidYear Conference or state nurses' convention? Be sure to avoid a conflict in dates. If the meeting planned is a state convention, the date should be prior to the NSNA ® convention so new officers are able to attend it. A fall convention date should be prior to the MidYear Conference.

5. Have you spaced out your state meetings, convention, workshops, etc., so members have things to plan for and look forward to throughout the year?
6. Alert the schools at least six months in advance of your meeting so that faculty can arrange time off for students to attend.
7. Remember to inform NSNA ® of your convention and meeting dates.

### Selecting A City

Once you have selected a time frame in which you want your convention to be held, you can select the site. Pick the site first, then go for specific dates. In all cases, it is best to contact the convention bureaus in the cities you are considering for a convention. They can provide information you need on the city itself, the meeting facilities, audiovisuals and hotels. Also contact the Chamber of Commerce for additional information about the city.

Depending on the size of a state convention, boards of directors may need to book a convention site a year or more in advance in order to guarantee a facility with enough space. However, one year is usually enough time for most state conventions.

There are a number of key questions to ask about any potential convention city:

1. Transportation: Is the city accessible by car, plane, bus, and train? Where is the airport located and are buses, taxis, and limousines available from the airport? Is parking available and how much does it cost? Where are the bus and train station located?
2. Student population: Is there a large student population in the city being considered? The higher the nursing student population in the convention city, the easier it will be to publicize your event and draw people locally.
3. The city: Does the city have "pizzazz" and is it safe for nursing students? A city that has recreational, cultural, and entertainment activities will also help attract audiences to your meeting.
4. Convenience of location: If your state is large, consider holding the convention in a different location each year so that students throughout the state have an opportunity to attend. You may also consider having your meeting as centrally located as possible. If you have additional meetings (other than conventions) throughout the year, consider spreading them out over several locations in the state.
5. Safety: Is the city or site location safe? Does it have low crime rate, and good police protection?

## Selecting A Convention Hotel

The first step is to make a list of your hotel requirements prior to contacting hotels or the convention bureau. Consider the following:

1. Total number of sleeping rooms, including the number of singles, doubles, triples, quads, and suites, and the cost for each.
2. The date of your meeting and alternative dates. When most attendees will be arriving and when they will be leaving.
3. The number and seating capacity of each meeting room and exhibit area needed.
4. Will you have food functions (for example, luncheons, banquets)?

Once you have determined the above, contact the convention bureau or the hotel's representative in your selected city. If the hotel sounds like it will meet your needs, make an appointment to tour the hotel. Use the checklist in this booklet as a guideline when you tour hotels.

Be certain that you will have the full cooperation of the hotel manager and sales representative. If you have contacted a convention bureau, they will set up appointments with hotels that can meet your meeting requirements. Working through a convention bureau can be time saving and you will find that they are usually able to answer all of your questions and offer suggestions.

### Meeting Space Costs

Find out what you will be charged for meeting space. Have an idea of how many meeting rooms you will need and capacity before you meet with the hotel sales representative. Once you have come to an agreement, put that agreement in writing! Depending on the number of sleeping rooms, there may be no charge for meeting space, particularly if there are food functions.

### Room Rates

Try to choose a hotel with reasonable rates; many hotels will give special rates for students' conventions. The hotel will want a guarantee of how many sleeping rooms your convention will use. You must estimate how many students will stay overnight each night during the convention. It is better to underestimate rather than overestimate on sleeping rooms.

Make sure you reach an understanding in advance regarding the number of complimentary suites and rooms. It is generally one room per 50 rooms occupied. A one-bedroom suite (with a bedroom and living room) counts as two rooms.

Always check terms with the hotel different regions use different language, but these give you a handy guide:

Single:	one person
Double:	two persons, one bed
Twin:	two single beds for two person
Suite:	combination of one or more sleeping rooms with parlor
Connecting rooms:	private access between rooms
Adjoining rooms:	without access
Studio:	room with sofa
Parlor:	sitting room
American Plan:	three meals a day
Continental Plan:	breakfast only
Modified American Plan:	two meals a day

### Alternatives to Hotels

Not all states can afford, nor are their conventions of sufficient size, to merit spending the money to have a convention in a hotel. If this is the case, consider a conference facility or a school campus. Just remember to make sure that there are enough breakout rooms for small meetings; that the facility is fairly easy to get to and that it has sleeping rooms available or at least close by-dorm rooms may be available at a reasonable rate; and that sufficient equipment is available, i.e., microphones, blackboards, chairs, and audiovisual equipment.

### The Final Decision

The final decision on a convention site is made by the board of directors.

Once the board of directors has selected a hotel and a written agreement has been negotiated, notify all other hotels you have contacted with your decision. Continue to work with one representative of the hotel sales office as your contact and get the names of the other hotel staff in other departments with whom you will be working such as convention services, catering, audiovisuals, maintenance, and security, etc. As the convention chair you should be the primary contact with the hotel for all arrangements prior to the event and then on site.



## Developing A Budget

In selecting your convention site, you need to have a general idea of what your budget can afford. Once the actual site is selected and costs negotiated, it's time to sit down and prepare an actual convention budget.

A budget should balance income and expenses. The following is an outline of a convention budget to use as a guide in planning your own. You may not need to include all of these items, but you must plan a budget and attempt to balance income and expenses.

### Income

#### Registration:

	<i>Estimated</i>	<i>Actual</i>
___ Members @\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
___ Non-members @\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
___ Daily members @\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____
___ Daily non-members @\$ _____	\$ _____	\$ _____

#### Other: (If applicable)

#### Advertising (newsletter,

convention books)	\$ _____	\$ _____
No. ___ exhibits @ \$ ___ ea.	\$ _____	\$ _____
Donating Sponsors @ \$ ___ ea.	\$ _____	\$ _____
Program sponsors @\$ ___ ea.	\$ _____	\$ _____
Sponsors events @\$ ___ ea.	\$ _____	\$ _____

### Expenses

#### 1. Board

a. Travel and expenses for Board	\$ _____	\$ _____
b. Parliamentarian-Professional fee plus expenses (optional)	\$ _____	\$ _____
c. Site visits	\$ _____	\$ _____

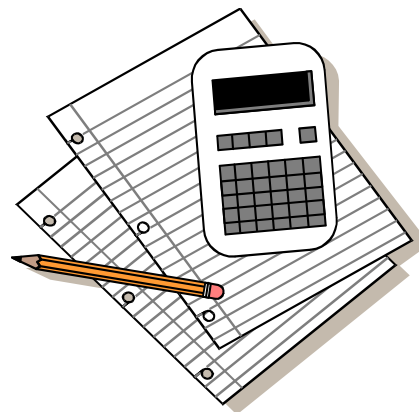
#### 2. Miscellaneous Services

a. Gratuities	\$ _____	\$ _____
b. Stenotypist (optional)	\$ _____	\$ _____
c. Signs	\$ _____	\$ _____
d. Telephone	\$ _____	\$ _____

#### 3. Rent and Services

a.. Rental of meeting rooms and exhibit area	\$ _____	\$ _____
b. Equipment and supplies, including computer, if necessary	\$ _____	\$ _____
c. P.A. equipment and operators	\$ _____	\$ _____

4. Publicity and Promotion	\$ _____	\$ _____
a.. Newsletter	\$ _____	\$ _____
b. Cost of mailings	\$ _____	\$ _____
c. Cost of flyers/brochures	\$ _____	\$ _____
d. Additional advertising	\$ _____	\$ _____
5. Program Expenses		
a. Expenses for speakers and other program people	\$ _____	\$ _____
b. Honoraria (if applicable)	\$ _____	\$ _____
c. Exhibitor solicitation	\$ _____	\$ _____
d. Meals (if applicable)		
# People x Cost	\$ _____	\$ _____
6. Registration		
a. Cards	\$ _____	\$ _____
b. Badges	\$ _____	\$ _____
c. Ribbons	\$ _____	\$ _____
d. Advance Registration		
e. Acknowledgements	\$ _____	\$ _____
7. Printing		
a. Photocopies	\$ _____	\$ _____
b. Program books, annual reports, other publications	\$ _____	\$ _____
8. Exhibits		
a. Rental/decorator expenses	\$ _____	\$ _____
b. Security	\$ _____	\$ _____
c. Signs	\$ _____	\$ _____
9. Miscellaneous	\$ _____	\$ _____
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>



## Program Convention Theme

A convention theme sets the tone of your convention programs and meetings. The theme should be an action statement that reflects a direction for the association and nursing students. In selecting a theme think about:

- Is this an anniversary convention? If so, the theme should reflect this.
- Is there a particular issue that you want to emphasize at this convention? For example, politics, legislative matters, social concerns, emerging nursing roles, unity in the profession.
- Is the theme short, catchy and easy to remember?
- Can you think about an image that relates to your theme to be used for promotion and publicity?
- Does the theme exclude anyone? If so, find another one! (For example, it would not be a good idea to have a convention theme that centers on women's rights because nursing students who are men may feel excluded).
- Does the theme make you think...does it pull you in and get you involved?
- Is your theme action oriented?

Once a theme is selected, you may use it as the topic for the keynote address and have program sessions dealing with different aspects of the theme.

## Program Content

Organizing a program to please most of the people most of the time is difficult, but it can be done. A good starting place is with previous convention programs, meeting evaluations, and information from past chairpersons.

Check with your friends, fellow board members, faculty, etc. What are the particular interests or concerns in your state? What are the issues? What advances have been made in clinical practice? What do you want to accomplish? One good method of collecting program ideas is to have a suggestion list gathered at each meeting. Review the programs from state nurses' associations, state leagues, and NSNA® conventions for topics and potential speakers.

Check the resolutions passed at previous conventions as possible topics of interest.

## Resources

There are many places to turn to for possible topic ideas and speakers. Below are a few.

1. Politics and Legislation: There is an increase interest on behalf of nurses in politics and the legislative process, so go to the people who most

closely influence laws, the legislators: U.S. senators and congressmen and state legislators. However, presentations by political candidates must be nonpartisan. Be sure to have all political views represented candidates or taking a stand on issues (unless the association has taken an official position on the issue). Find out if there are any nurses serving in public or elected positions in your state.

2. Faculty members: Your faculty may have interest, knowledge and expertise in a number of areas you are unaware of—so check it out. Authors of nursing texts are always a good draw.
3. State nurses' associations and state leagues for nursing have officers with varied backgrounds. They may also advise you of different people in the state to utilize as speakers.
4. State and local specialty groups and health related organizations have their own list of speakers and representatives; be sure to contact them. Try the in-service education personnel or continuing education instructors at various institutions. Cause related organizations have speakers available for student conventions.

## Speakers

As everyone knows, your topic may be fantastic, but unless your speaker or speakers can get the message across, it's a lost cause. So choose carefully. The public relations aspect of a speaker is also very important. People are always intrigued by "names." Don't be afraid to think BIG.

- Select a well-known keynote speaker who can set the tone of your meeting by addressing your convention theme.
- You must plan ahead if you wish to contact a popular speaker. Often their schedules are planned well in advance. Don't overload your programs with "big names." It can lessen the impact. Choose one or two and then complete the programming with other important people.
- Don't assume that a person is an excellent speaker because they are well-known. Check around, ask your friends and faculty if they have heard that person speak.
- In the final selection of speakers, remember to look closely at the speaker's presentation style. You need a person who is knowledgeable, as well as one who can convey the message and engage the audience.
- Be sure and keep your speakers up-to-date on arrangements and time schedules; request audio visual needs in advance.
- Speaker contract or written confirmation is important to finalize the commitment.

## Expenses/Honoraria

To reduce cost, try to use speakers close to the convention site. Otherwise, you should offer to pay their

## **Check List for Speakers**

1. Make arrangements well before convention.
2. Notified speakers in writing of the time and place and directions to the convention site provided.
3. Notified the speakers in writing about length and type of presentation desired, and program objectives.
4. Expenses (including transportation) arranged with speakers in writing, with a copy for your files.
5. Biographical notes for introduction received from speakers.
6. Photograph and vitae for literature and publicity received from speakers.
7. Hotel reservation(s) made: Arrival \_\_\_\_Departure\_\_\_\_
8. Special equipment provided if necessary.
9. Speaker to be met at airport/station.
10. Assign volunteer to greet speakers, introduce to convention officers and VIPs. Have badge and packet ready for speaker.
11. Alternate speaker available.

## **Sponsors**

To help keep costs down, try to find local sponsors for your programs, receptions and special events. Sponsors like the visibility that participation brings them and are often happy to assist nursing students to make the convention successful.

Consider the following important points when engaging sponsors:

1. Once you have a program topic or special event planned, think about an appropriate sponsor. Local sponsors in your state or communities are good possibilities.
2. Give sponsors recognition in all your publicity and send them copies.
3. Make certain that you maintain control of the program. Make it clear that speaker selection is determined collaboratively with you and the sponsor and that final selection is up to you or the board of directors.
4. Make it clear right in the beginning that the sponsored sessions are educational sessions and that products, books or other sponsor services cannot be promoted or emphasized during the session and that sponsor products and literature cannot be distributed during sessions. The exhibit center is the place for this.
5. Get all agreements in writing. Include the amount of the sponsor contribution and whether or not the speaker expenses are in addition or are to be included in the contribution.
6. If possible, try to have a small reception for sponsors at your convention and have the board present. Be certain to thank them for their contribution.

## **Format**

There are several ways to enhance a program by just changing the format. Consider some of the following suggestions:

### **Panel**

A panel is the presentation of different points of view on the same subject and provides for interaction which stimulates interest. Each person comes prepared to answer specific questions provided ahead of time or can be asked to prepare a speech on related topics. An optimum number is usually three to four people. Another way to use this idea is in a "reaction panel": a panel representing different viewpoints, who react to comments made by a main speaker. These people need to be fast thinkers and it is helpful if they have a copy of the key speech ahead of time.

The role of a moderator is vitally important to keep the discussion going and to ensure that each person has an opportunity to speak. Make sure your moderator and panel members are aware of time limits.

It is often helpful to arrange for the moderator to get together with panel participants prior to their program to become acquainted, work out any details and set the order of the speakers.

## Debate

A debate is the presentation of different views on a subject by two people who then "argue points." A debate is usually utilized only if the subject matter is highly controversial. Two speakers and a moderator are necessary. The moderator must be skillful in handling a discussion.

## Role Playing

In role playing, participants watch a few of their fellow members enact roles (or someone else's) in a skit based upon some real life situation. All participants then talk about the skit and try to analyze it. It can be a highly useful tool in the proper setting. You can get a specific point across very quickly by involving students. Do not attempt this, however, unless you have a skilled and experienced moderator!

## Audiovisuals

Use audiovisual materials to highlight discussion. Often a video or slide presentation can be followed by a panel discussion. Check cost carefully. Rental of equipment can become expensive.

## Meeting Set-Up

There are table arrangements to suit every need and every audience, large or small. Costs can vary with the type of seating set-up – check with the hotel on types available and cost. Specify in advance the set-up you will need. Give the hotel staff all the information you can *in writing*, as early as possible. A standard room set-up sheet filled out for each function is a good idea. Some of the more common seating arrangements include: theater or auditorium style (good for large audiences); classroom style (chairs behind tables, good for working sessions where there will be a lot of note taking such as during business meetings); conference style (several chairs around one big table—good for board of directors meetings and meetings with less than 20 people); horseshoe (U-shaped table with chairs around the outside, good for small programs and meetings that require a lot of interaction between participants); other settings include T-settings, V-classroom setting and parallel set. If you are going to use the same room over and over again, it is less costly to leave the room set up in one way since there is usually a charge for room arrangement alterations.

### Check List -- Meeting Rooms

1. Sufficient seats properly arranged.
2. Place cards, if needed.
3. No smoking signs, glasses, water pitchers and water.
4. Light switch location and in working order.
5. Cooling, heating control location and checked.
6. Stage equipment.
7. Lectern ready. Light working. Gavel in place.
8. Microphone working.
9. If requested, and necessary, have equipment installed and working; projection screen installed; LCD projector; and operator standing by.
10. Directional signs to meeting functions.
11. Rest room locations.
12. Member of your committee as usher, if necessary, and he/she can also give out any materials.
13. Fire alarms, exits, and fire extinguishers located.
14. Phone number of hotel staff for emergencies.

## Gratuities

Before the payment of any gratuity, consult with the hotel sales manager and the convention bureau representative as to practices and policies concerning the payment of such gratuities, including acceptable methods of distribution. Some functions include in the bill an automatic gratuity.

Persons normally tipped for *special* services: bell captain, head waiter for special function, package room supervisor, and housekeeper.

# Exhibits

Many state conventions have exhibits to help offset convention costs and to provide members with an extra benefit to the program. Be sure you can handle exhibits before you solicit them.

## Should You Have Exhibitors?

Exhibits are not an "extra," but should be considered an integral part of the meeting. Use the following criteria to determine if your state is ready for the responsibility of exhibits.

### Do You Have:

1. Someone to do the job: Is there a student who has the time and is willing to commit to handling the workload of soliciting and coordinating exhibits?

2. Stable attendance: Can you give the exhibitors people to see and talk to? Realistically evaluate your attendance figures from previous conventions to determine this. Don't promise exhibitors a number of attendees you know you can't deliver.

3. Proper setting: Can you give exhibitors the space they need for exhibits?

4. Enough time: Can you allow time for the exhibitors to see your convention participants? A convention of over 200 participants needs at least two days of exhibit hours. There should be at least three hours of time each day for an out-of-town exhibitor to consider attending your convention. Schedule some time when there is no program conflicting with exhibit hours. Can you schedule the convention program so exhibits are an integral part of the convention? Are there activities or contests that can take place in the exhibit area?

## Types of Exhibits

The average booth space should be 8' x 10' to accommodate a 6' table. The exhibit area should be in close proximity to meeting rooms so students can get back and forth between exhibits and programs easily. All booths should be in the same area and easily accessible to student flow. State whether you are using booths or table tops. Booths have draped sides and a back drop. A table top is a table with a drape.

Estimate how many exhibits you can hold in your exhibit area and stick to it. Don't pack them in just to earn extra income. It will cost you in good will, not to mention next year's exhibits. Be sure you state in the letter exactly what you are providing.

## Exhibit Rates

First, realize why you charge for exhibits: to offset the costs of your convention. Plan your exhibit charges realistically knowing what your actual convention costs will be.

Many associations set different rates for not-for-profit organizations and for-profit companies. You may consider swapping a free booth with the state nurses association.

### Check List for Soliciting Exhibitors

1. You will have \_\_\_\_ feet of exhibit space
2. You will get exposure to over \_\_\_\_ nursing students.
3. Students from the following states will be in attendance: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.
4. We will hyperlink your web page to our web page.
5. We will publicize your attendance in our registration materials, newsletters, flyers, etc.
6. You can for \$\_\_\_\_ put an unstaffed table with your literature in a speaker session or workshop.
7. For \$\_\_\_\_ you can put your ad in our registration packet or program book.

## Contacting Exhibitors

Once you establish your exhibit rates, inform the exhibitors. They should receive information preferably six months prior to your convention, but no later than two months prior to your convention. Be sure to let exhibitors know any special policies, limitations, rules or regulations regarding exhibiting before they agree to attend.

Does the organization have any limitations on the distribution of literature, samples and souvenirs inside or outside the official exhibit area? If so, tell the exhibitors. Are there any restrictions as to the type of exhibits allowed, the use of entertainment, costumes, audiovisuals, food or beverages within the official exhibit area? Can exhibitors sell on the exhibit floor?

NSNA ® can provide a list of recruiters active on a national basis; however, this should not be your only source of potential exhibitors. **Include in your search for exhibitors: hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, nursing specialty shops, professional nursing associations, public interest organizations, nursing schools, and whomever you think will enhance your conference as an exhibitor.** Check in your library for a copy of the American Hospital Association Guide to select all hospitals in your geographic area. Review the current classified sections of local newspapers. Other valuable contacts include advertisers in *Imprint* and advertisers in other nursing journals.

Be sure to keep NSNA ® informed of your convention dates and sites. NSNA ® will publish convention dates on *www.nсна.org*.

Arrange for adequate insurance coverage and be sure that all necessary conditions for such coverage are met. Be sure that you can provide adequate security for the exhibitor's displays, materials and equipment during non-exhibit hours. Include a disclaimer and indemnity clause in exhibition contracts.

An exhibitor will expect certain basics from a group once they commit to have exhibits. Establish with the hotel, and inform exhibitors about:

- Loading and unloading procedures; move in and move out date and time;
- Exhibit hours;
- Obstructions (such as poles or columns) in the exhibit hall;
- Ceiling height and lighting;
- Electrical hook-ups available and cost;
- Booth locations;
- Address for shipments.

When assigning booths, take into consideration the type of agencies you are placing next to one another. Don't put the armed forces next to each other; and don't put hospitals with similar names next to each other.

**When your convention is over, remember to send a follow up thank you letter to your exhibitors. This will help to bring the exhibitor back to your convention next year.**

## Registration

To cut down time in convention registration, try to divide the tables into the following areas: (1) pre-registered, (2) on site registration, (3) exhibitors, and (4) speakers and VIPs. Have these areas identified.

Have packets with all materials ready to be distributed. Have as many name badges for pre-registrants prepared ahead of time as possible. Keep a list of registrants, or at least a count, for your records. Exhibitors may wish to purchase labels of attendees.

A guide to all hotel facilities should be posted by the registration desk and the convention agenda prominently displayed. Delegates should be given all necessary literature including details on convention program, "Who's Who," where everything is located, rules for the business meeting and parliamentary procedure information. Committee members should also receive copies of the relevant check list.

Have a NSNA ® information table in the registration area. NSNA ® automatically ships materials for the table. Chambers of Commerce or Convention Bureaus will offer badges and other materials free or at low cost. For a large convention, they may provide staff to help out.

Don't forget the "tourist" coming to the convention. A flyer listing restaurants, entertainment and churches really helps. Try to include prices and other pertinent information. You may ask local students to staff a hospitality table with area information.

A section of tables to be used by school constituents should be made available in a high traffic area for the sale of fundraising items. If space is limited, tables can be on a first come, first served basis.

In determining the fees for registration, consider keeping the cost low for members. Add the cost of membership for non-members as an incentive for them to join. Some states have "convention specials" where a student can join and register for convention at a reduced rate. **If you provide this service remember to mail the NSNA ® membership application with payment immediately to NSNA ® so that your new members can begin to receive their benefits.**

Final point to remember. When handling money, you can't afford chaos and confusion. Consult the hotel's credit manager. Be sure that whoever is cashing checks and making payments has been identified. Who is allowed to sign master accounts? If a large amount of cash is being handled, get a security box at the hotel to store monies. Be sure anyone handling money is bonded.

## **Check List -- Registration**

1. Send advance registration acknowledgments (i.e. postcards or letters) to confirm receipt of pre-registration.
2. Procedure for guests, VIPs
3. Welcoming service and hospitality table
4. Signs for registration desk
5. Lobby registration table, if required
6. Identification badges
7. Facilities guide
8. Agenda displayed
9. Consult hotel Credit Manager
10. Experts to handle money
11. Literature distributed
12. Other

## **Promotion**

A convention may have the greatest speakers and program, but no one will be there if they don't know about the event in advance. So, don't forget the publicity.

Here is a suggested timetable for promoting a convention. Not all of these jobs are the responsibility of the convention planner or vice president. The newsletter editor and public relations chairperson, if there is one, should play a major role in promoting the convention. The entire board of directors should be kept informed and be involved in the convention. This is the grand finale of the board's year in office, and everyone should be committed to the convention's success.

**You may want to promote your convention to students from neighboring states. This would be an added source of revenue and a good way to network.**

## **Timetable For Publicizing a Convention**

### **Six Months Before Convention**

- Articles on convention in all issues of newsletter from at least September through convention date. Initiate any promotion contest. Posters to schools. Notify faculty so that special arrangements may be made to allow students off from school. You will not have all of the convention specifics at this time, but try to have date, place and convention theme.

### **Four Months Before Convention**

- Ongoing contact with schools by all board members. Inclusion of convention date, site, theme, etc., in recruitment promotion.
- Invitation letters to deans, faculty and school presidents.

### **Three Months Before Convention**

- Follow-up letters to all school presidents with flyers or poster with advance registration, hotel information, etc.
- Delegate information to all school presidents.
- Phone campaign to schools (particularly to those that are inactive). Remind of hotel and registration cut-off dates.

### **Two Months Before Convention**

- Convention program booklet or schedule—include room numbers, times, speakers and titles, list of ex-

hibitors.

## **One Month Before Convention**

- Send out reminders.
- Send out confirmations with invitation to bring a friend.

## **Post-Convention**

• Convention report to all school presidents and members via newsletter. Include the date and place of the next convention if available.

## **Volunteers**

Ask school presidents to provide volunteers to serve as ushers, greeters for speakers, hospitality desk staffers, time keepers and monitors at business meetings, and any other-tasks that will take place during the convention. Designate one person to head a volunteer committee who reports to you.

## **A Note About Delegating**

It takes teamwork to conduct a successful convention. You can form a board committee to help with the planning and spread the work out. It is helpful to have some school presidents from the area where the convention is being held on the committee. It is important that one person be responsible for overseeing and coordinating the convention; this may be the convention committee chairperson or the vice president. Delegate tasks that are clear, and that have a deadline that the person is capable of achieving.

## **Evaluation**

Your experience and the comments from those in attendance will be valuable assistance to next year's convention chairperson. Put together a brief and concise evaluation form for use at the convention. You want people to answer the questions, so don't ask questions that require essay answers. Keep things brief and to the point, use multiple choice questions and leave room for comments. Ask for suggestions for next year's program topics. Distribute the questionnaire in the materials handed out during registration and ask speakers to remind attendees to complete the form and return it to a designated place.

## **When It's All Over...**

You did it! Make certain that everyone involved is recognized and thanked for their involvement. The president may recognize volunteers and committee members at a business meeting or other appropriate time. You may plan a small reception at the end of the convention and invite all those who helped to make the meeting a success. Send letters out to all of those who supported the activity (deans, sponsors, hospital recruiters and other exhibitors, and anyone who should be thanked for assisting the association).

You may not know it at the time, but you have learned a lot and will be able to use this experience to advance your career in nursing. Give yourself a pat on the back...you deserve it!

## **Resources**

Resources on a variety of topics are available from the following:

Anthony J. Jannetti, Inc.  
East Holly Avenue, Box 56  
Pitman, NJ 08071  
(856) 256-2300

American Society of Association Executives  
1575 I Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20005-1168  
(202) 626-2723

## CONVENTION SITE CHECK LIST

Hotel Contact Person \_\_\_\_\_ Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (       ) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

### ACCESS

Does hotel have access for handicapped? [  ] Yes [  ] No

(Note: Associations are obligated to comply with the American Disabilities Act (ADA))

### EXHIBIT AREA

Size needed \_\_\_\_\_ Is this space available? [  ] Yes [  ] No

Size and number of exhibit tables available \_\_\_\_\_

What comes with exhibit table? \_\_\_\_\_

Is there additional charge for furnishings such as chairs? [  ] Yes [  ] No

### MEETING ROOMS

Number of rooms needed:

-- Business meetings \_\_\_\_\_ Seating capacity needed \_\_\_\_\_

-- General sessions \_\_\_\_\_ Seating capacity needed \_\_\_\_\_

-- Workshops and seminars \_\_\_\_\_ Seating capacity needed \_\_\_\_\_

-- Other \_\_\_\_\_

-- Breakout rooms \_\_\_\_\_ Seating capacity needed \_\_\_\_\_

-- Other (such as receptions, lounges) \_\_\_\_\_

-- Location of meeting rooms in relation to registration area and exhibits area.

Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

### GENERAL

Is hotel staff courteous and available when needed? [  ] Yes [  ] No

Audio Visual Equipment

-- available from the hotel or contracted out? [  ] Yes [  ] No

-- if not available from hotel, does hotel have recommendations? [  ] Yes [  ] No

-- Cost: \_\_\_\_\_

**SLEEPING ROOMS**

Room rates: Single \_\_\_\_\_ Double \_\_\_\_\_ Triple \_\_\_\_\_ Quad \_\_\_\_\_

Tax on room charge \_\_\_\_\_ Any additional charges? \_\_\_\_\_

Comp rooms (i.e. one comp room for \_\_\_\_\_ rooms reserved?)

Deposit required? ( ) Yes ( ) No How much? \_\_\_\_\_ How far in advance? \_\_\_\_\_

Deposit payment cash \_\_\_\_\_, check \_\_\_\_\_, credit card \_\_\_\_\_

Terms of deposit refunds (i.e., 24 hours notice) \_\_\_\_\_

Cutoff date for room blocks? \_\_\_\_\_

Size of room block they will give you? \_\_\_\_\_

Are rooms clean and comfortable? \_\_\_\_\_

Notes:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**RESTAURANT FACILITIES:**

-- In hotel: location in relation to meeting rooms and exhibit area.

food cost: \_\_\_\_\_

hours hotel restaurants are open: \_\_\_\_\_

-- In neighboring areas:

fast food or other reasonably priced? [ ] Yes [ ] No

food available? [ ] Yes [ ] No

location in relation to hotel: \_\_\_\_\_

hours restaurants are open: \_\_\_\_\_

is neighborhood safe? \_\_\_\_\_

**TRANSPORTATION:**

-- Where is airport located in relation to hotel (miles)? \_\_\_\_\_

bus station? \_\_\_\_\_

train station? \_\_\_\_\_

-- How long does it take to get to airport, train and bus stations?

-- Does the hotel provide transportation from airport, bus or train station to hotel? [ ] Yes [ ] No

-- Is public transportation available in the city? [ ] Yes [ ] No

-- Are taxicabs available? [ ] Yes [ ] No Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_

-- Estimated cost of taxi and shuttle from airport to hotel \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Will hotel provide complimentary services such as sponsoring a snack? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Is the hotel unionized? [ ] Yes [ ] No

--If so, when is contract renewed (it is important to know this so that you avoid possible strike conditions).

Will the hotel be undergoing renovation while you are there? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you have to put down deposit for space? \_\_\_\_\_ How much? \_\_\_\_\_

When is it due? \_\_\_\_\_

Can you get an itemized bill? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Do you have to pay immediately after convention or can payment be due in 30 days?

[ ] Yes [ ] No

Will you be liable for breaking the contract in the event of a natural disaster such as a flood or blizzard? [ ] Yes [ ] No

Is liability insurance required? [ ] Yes [ ] No

If you are planning a banquet or luncheon: How far in advance must you finalize number of meals and what kind of leeway do you have for final number? \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECK LIST:** (use the day of the meeting)

Arrive at the meeting site the day before the meeting or start early in the day if the meeting starts in the evening.

Meet with the hotel representative and go over details, room set-ups, banquet arrangements, etc. All arrangements have been made well in advance and this is a good time to make certain that details are understood and last-minute adjustments made.

Before the program starts, check each room for:

Seating arrangements: \_\_\_\_\_

Head table – seating for \_\_\_\_\_ Podium \_\_\_\_\_ Microphone \_\_\_\_\_

Water service \_\_\_\_\_

Do you know how to turn down the lights if necessary? \_\_\_\_\_

AV equipment present and in working order? \_\_\_\_\_

Is microphone working? \_\_\_\_\_

How can you contact AV technician if necessary? \_\_\_\_\_

No smoking signs visible? \_\_\_\_\_

Waste receptacles available? \_\_\_\_\_

Blackboard (if required)? \_\_\_\_\_

Table for handouts or other materials? \_\_\_\_\_

Room environment: lighting adequate? ventilation adequate? low noise level? temperature?

Notes: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Make note of location of hotel telephones in case you need to call conference manager.

**SAFETY:**

Is there any danger from wires in the aisles? Note that wires should be taped down. Are three-pronged adapters available if needed? Are security guards available? How do you contact them if needed?

In case of fire, where are emergency exits? Where are fire alarm boxes? What is hotel procedure for fire emergencies?

Is there a nurse on the site in case of emergencies? What is the location of the nearest hospi-