

# **Guidelines on diversity and inclusion for conference planning**

## **LOGISTICS PLANNING**

### **Choosing a date and time**

- ✚ Choose family friendly times where possible, eg. weekday morning/afternoon
- ✚ Announce the date and time early so attendees can plan accordingly.

### **Location and accessibility**

- ✚ Suitability of venue
- ✚ Mobility of speakers and attendees
- ✚ Clarity of signage for the event and venue
- ✚ Disabled parking availability

### **Promoting the event / Conference communications**

- ✚ Provide different ways for attendees to communicate with you before the event (e.g. contact number and email )
- ✚ Simplify registration by scanning QR code
- ✚ Ensuring diversity in who is featured and how, in online and print communications, before, during and after the event.
- ✚ Provide information on parking and drop off areas, and accessible entrances.
- ✚ Request dietary requirements with RSVP

### **Diversity within the conference organisation team or committee**

- ✚ Organizing committee and/or advisory board includes representation across: groups especially those who are underrepresented, diverse racial backgrounds and geographic regions as far as possible to ensure a diversity of views and individual networks
- ✚ Each of the conference organisers should be given an appropriate share of duties, responsibilities and visibility.

### **Speakers & Participants**

- ✚ Invite a diverse range of people as presenters, hosts, and attendees
- ✚ Ask for speaker recommendations from a diverse slate of people
- ✚ Look for diverse personalities or less established but equally stellar speakers
- ✚ Ensure gender is balanced within presentation types (especially keynotes), and across the overall program as far as possible. Depending on the field and topic, the balance can vary between 30% to 70% for a particular gender
- ✚ Request feedback and suggestions about diversity of potential presenters and attendees during event planning. If unsure, organizers could contact Equal Opportunities & Career Development (EOCD) unit, *Ms Rachel Chan Pheck Shun*, [email: [rachel16@nus.edu.sg](mailto:rachel16@nus.edu.sg)] for help.

## ENCOURAGING 'INCLUSIVE' PARTICIPATION

### Panel discussions and plenaries

- ✚ The chair should be selected carefully and should be briefed to ensure they give panel members an equal opportunity to speak. The chair should also have a good grasp of the background, field, research and expertise of different presenters and ask relevant and appropriate questions.
- ✚ Consider offering less experienced speakers mentoring or free training or guidelines on how to most effectively present their research or work and handle Q&A sessions. This gives less experienced speakers more exposure.
- ✚ Plan for small interactive sessions, networking sessions, dedicated workshops to encourage more people to actively participate, thereby increasing diversity of perspectives.

### Networking sessions

- ✚ Consider asking more established academics to act as 'buddies' or mentors who can support and introduce early career academics.
- ✚ Try different formats for networking: an informal 'ask the expert' session or smaller networking sessions with various themes to encourage intermingling between various groups instead of formation of established cliques.
- ✚ Consider the types of beverages eg alcoholic and food that are being served at networking sessions, to have a variety to cater to different groups.

## COMMUNICATING DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

### Before the event

- ✚ Create a clear equality and diversity statement specifically for the conference or event.
- ✚ Consider to include statement in invitation: "*We would be honoured to have you speak on topic xxx at our conference. We are fully committed to diversity and representation, so if you would like to see our current list of other speakers that we are inviting prior to responding, we would be happy to share this with you.*"
- ✚ To check with speakers on their preferred introduction titles
- ✚ Make sure that information is accessible on your different channels – website and social media - and also consider sharing key information and resources in an email or newsletter before the event
- ✚ We also recommend sending some tips and recommendations to speakers to ensure their presentations are accessible to all. For instance, if slides are provided, speakers could be asked to ensure that they are written in a font and colour that are easier to read for those with dyslexia or other reading/learning difficulties. Another consideration is to ensure a sufficiently large font size and font colour contrast with the background, to help people with visual impairments.

### During the event

- ✚ Where relevant, consider captions for films and live performances.

## After the event

- ✚ Collect feedback from participants on the inclusivity of the event, and publicise the findings. This will also help you with the planning of your future events.

## SUPPORTING ATTENDEES WITH CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

- ✚ Ensure reliable Wi-Fi is available, to help delegates keep in touch with family at home.
- ✚ Provide space on the registration form for people to specify any care-related requests (as they would for dietary requirements or access needs).

*N.B. The highlighted points on venue and food may be used for reference when face to face events are allowed to resume*

## References

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