

# **THE PLAINS ANTHROPOLOGICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE**

## **A Guidebook for Hosts and Organizers**

Prepared By:

Mary Adair (University of Kansas)  
Rob Bozell (Nebraska State Historical Society)  
Mary Lou Larson (University of Wyoming)  
William Lees (Oklahoma Historical Society)

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[www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org](http://www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org)

*It takes a lot of doing to organize a conference like this, and that in itself reflects the passage of professional time. In 1949 or 1950, I think it was, there was a snafu and no one sent out an announcement of the Plains Conference, nor was a Call For Papers issued. Nothing whatsoever was done. Everyone came to Lincoln just the same, forty or so people, and we had a good conference. Don't you wish it was as simple as that now?*

E. Mott Davis, letter to F.A. Calabrese, September 4, 1992  
(reprinted from 50<sup>th</sup> Plains Conference Program, Lincoln)

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## THE PLAINS CONFERENCE

This guide was assembled in response to a need for organizers to have a document assisting them in sponsoring a productive and well-organized Plains Conference. The guide is certainly not intended to be the final word on how to carry off a conference. Rather, it represents the observations and suggestions of several people who have organized Plains Conferences and in doing so made mistakes and carries what may be a useful degree of 20/20 hindsight. The guide is viewed as a “work in progress” and the intent is for future hosts to modify it. With the guide being posted on the Plains Anthropological Society website, it will serve this purpose even better, as suggestions about upgrading the guide may be taken from anyone viewing the document on the internet. Authors of the original guide were Mary Adair (University of Kansas), Rob Bozell (Nebraska State Historical Society), Mary Lou Larson (University of Wyoming), and Bill Lees (Oklahoma Historical Society). Mary Lou Larson and Mike Metcalf (Metcalf Archaeological Consultants, Inc.) in 1999-2001, Lauren Ritterbush (Kansas State University) and Tom Thiessen (Midwest Archaeological Center, NPS) in 2002, and Amy Bleier (State Historical Society of North Dakota) in 2010 and 2014 completed subsequent revisions and additions.

### *History of the Conference*

The first Plains Conference was held in Vermillion, South Dakota in August, 1931. The meeting took place only three additional times (1932, 1936, and 1940) over the next 16 years. It became an annual conference in 1947. From 1947 through 1959, the meeting was held in Lincoln, Nebraska, the Missouri Basin Project headquarters of the Smithsonian Institution – River Basin Surveys. Since the early 1960s, the Plains Conference has been held in all Great Plains U.S. states and Canadian provinces. It has grown from a small, informal gathering of scholars to a regional three-day conference with attendance averaging 375 in recent years. The Plains Conference and the journal *Plains Anthropologist* have always been linked under the same organization that was formally named the Plains Anthropological Society in August 1982. The conference and journal are operated under the auspices of the Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors.

### *Purpose and General Organization of the Conference*

The Plains Conference is designed as a forum for scholars, researchers and students to share information in the form of formal presentations and informal workshops, tours, and social events. The Board conducts most of its annual business at the conference as well as holding its annual meeting. The Society by-laws state the meeting is to be held in October or November and a rather standardized format has been developed. The meetings normally begin on Wednesday with the Early Bird Party. Presentations and meetings take place all day on Thursday and Friday and Saturday morning. Oftentimes, tours are scheduled during the day on Wednesday and/or Saturday afternoon. A few conferences have run through Sunday morning. Because the Plains cover a large area and airline transportation may be indirect, conference participants may drive as long as a day and a half to reach the conference site. As a result, every effort should be made to allow Saturday afternoon and Sunday for travel. A meeting extending into Sunday presents a departure from the norm and should be done in *only the most unusual circumstances*.

## PLANNING SCHEDULE AND STAFFING

The success of a gathering the size of the Plains Conference begins with good planning several years prior to the event. Planning ahead gives conference coordinators time to secure meeting space, make arrangements with local hotels, secure financing or donated services, create committees and delegate responsibilities, and to identify any particular features of the conference (i.e., plenary session, themes, or special symposia). Currently, the conference is organized and planned entirely by the conference coordinators (the Plains Anthropological Society does not have a separate Conference Committee), the following is a breakdown or checklist of *major* decisions that should be made up to three years before the conference. Each of these decisions is defined in greater detail in following sections. Early and often communication between conference coordinators and the Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors is strongly encouraged.

### *Three Years Prior to Conference*

A proposal or invitation to host the conference should be made by the conference coordinator(s) at the general business meeting of the Plains Anthropological Society held at the annual Plains Conference. An acceptance of this invitation generally is made by the membership present at the meeting. When multiple proposals exist, scheduling each for different years accommodates them. According to the by-laws, the location of the annual conference should be scheduled at least two years in advance. A tentative date for the conference should be included in the invitation at the initial conference presentation.

### *Two Years Prior to Conference*

Since the annual conference is often scheduled to take place at a hotel, the selection of the facility should be made based on the number of available guest and meeting rooms, cost, general appearance of the facility, and location. If the conference is scheduled to take place at the coordinator's institution, arrangements should be made with area hotels to block rooms and set rates. Confirm dates of the conference with the hotel(s) and the Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors.

*Look for all available financial support, including cash donations, volunteers help, or in-kind services. Suggestions include working with regional archaeological societies, educational institutions, federal and state agencies, cultural resource management firms, and the local Convention and Visitors Bureau. Future organizers should contact past conference hosts to obtain recent budgets, expenditure lists, and sponsors.*

### *One Year Prior to Conference*

Past organizers stress the need to delegate authority to various hard-working and trustworthy individuals well in advance of the conference (i.e., audiovisual, book room, field trip responsibilities) and set an agenda for the completion of important tasks. It may be useful to have regularly scheduled meetings during the planning stages and more often as conference approaches.

Make specific arrangements with the hotel. Room costs probably were arranged the year before, so work with the hotel on such items as availability of beer, back-up equipment, free rooms, etc.

Prepare a preliminary budget based on financial data supplied by the previous year's conference. Factor in any support and set registration fees. The conference chair can request a start-up loan from the treasurer of the Plains Anthropological Society.

Place announcements of conference online and in journals and newsletters, including a full page announcement in the *Plains Anthropologist* and shorter announcements sent to the Society for Historical Archaeology, Society for American Archaeology, Midwest Archaeological Conference, and Southeastern Archaeological Conference for inclusion in national and regional newsletters.

### *Year of Conference*

*Abstract forms and conference information.* Conference information should be distributed by mail and online. Mailed information should be disseminated with the *Plains Anthropologist* or through a direct mailing paid for by the organizers. The paper copy abstract forms and conference information sheets may be included with the spring issue of the *Plains Anthropologist*, reducing the cost of a separate mailing by the conference organizers. The conference organizers **must** coordinate this early (January or February) with the editor of the journal to determine deadlines. If the organizers cannot meet the *Plains Anthropologist* deadline, mailing labels may be requested from the treasurer of the Plains Anthropologist Society with the cost for mailing borne by the organizers.

Abstract forms and conference information also should be available online. In anticipation of the 72<sup>nd</sup> Annual Plains Anthropological Conference, Organizer Ken Kvamme purchased a domain name and created a conference website, [www.plainsanthroconf.com](http://www.plainsanthroconf.com). The link is a one year subscription but may be renewed for future conferences, thus eliminating the need to re-create a website. Alternately, organizers may create a new website specific to the conference for which they are hosting. An online presence allows for all necessary information to be in a centralized location and it is easier to post updates before the conference. The Plains Anthropological Society webmaster is available to post information too, particularly important items such as contact information, location, and deadlines.

The Plains Anthropological Society has a Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Plains-Anthropological-Society/472124482845772>. A Plains Anthropological Society member may be added as an administrator by contacting Amy Bleier. A person does not need to be a Facebook user to view it. The Facebook page is visible to all online users, although any post must be Ok'd by an administrator. Any member of the organization may be added as an administrator. As of 2014, several hundred Facebook users subscribe to the site.

*Meeting Announcements.* Announcements of the meeting dates, times, and deadlines should be placed in the winter, spring, and summer/fall issues of the *Plains Anthropologist* and online. As noted above, organizers will need to work with the *Plains Anthropologist* editor. Examples of past announcements are available in previous journals. Contact the Plains Anthropological

Society webmaster in order to post announcements online. If a separate conference website is created, post the dates and deadlines on or before the time announcements are mailed.

*Staffing.* Assembling a dedicated conference organizational team is essential to a successful meeting. Often, multiple institutions in (or near) the host city organize the conference. These include universities, state historical societies, federal agencies, avocational or professional societies, cultural resource management firms, and others. One representative from each institution should serve as a conference co-chair. Co-chairs generally are responsible for assigning various tasks to staff and volunteers. It is not unreasonable to expect anywhere from five to ten persons working on conference arrangements intermittently for a couple of years.

Work with staff on audiovisual equipment, field trips, plenary sessions or invited symposia, book sales, and checking the agenda for completion of various tasks. At least 10 – 20 additional people may be required during the conference to run equipment, staff registration tables, and so forth. This may involve, for instance, one room monitor per session, two roaming troubleshooters, and several registration table staff. Advance training sessions should be provided to prepare volunteers for their assigned tasks (e.g., lighting, sound, use of computers and audiovisual equipment, and troubleshooting). Equipment for presentation sessions and symposia may include computers, projectors, remotes, laser pointers, and special requests. Contact the facility's management to determine if podia, podia lights, extension cords, and projection screens are available (for a fee or complimentary) or if the organizers must furnish these items.

If one of the host institutions is a university, students traditionally provide organizational labor, particularly during the conference and several months leading up to it. In some instances, conference organizers from universities have employed the services of campus conference offices. Such an option is not without expense (usually a percentage of the total cost of the conference), and the choice is up to the organizers).

## **FINANCES**

A successful conference requires thoughtful and accurate financial planning. This involves a conservative estimation of attendance, anticipation of budget needs, and accurate cost estimation. The conference will require a substantial amount of money to operate, and improper fiscal planning could result in major financial liability for the Plains Anthropological Society. To avoid this, income should be estimated on the conservative side, and expenses should be estimated as accurately as possible. A reserve of five to ten percent over estimated expenses should be included as a budget item to safeguard against inflation, unforeseen expenses, and cost overruns. If not expended, this reserve will provide revenue for the Plains Anthropological Society. Conference organizers shall return profits after all expenses are paid from the Plains Conference to the Plains Anthropological Society. A financial statement must be submitted to the Plains Anthropological Society president within six months following the conference.



## *Income*

The conference can be entirely self-supporting in the sense that no outside cash contributions are necessary. Typically, however, the conference is partially supported by the hosting institution(s) through the donation of staff time, equipment, some postage and phone costs, and volunteers who help with pre-conference work and on-site efforts during the conference. Cash costs of the conference are met with registration fees paid by attendees. Cash and in-kind donations may, of course, be pursued to underwrite enhancements to the conference over and above what normally is expected.

The primary source of conference funding comes from registration fees. Registration fees should include advanced and regular rates and a reduced rate for students. These fees should be kept within a reasonable level comparable to previous years. (See previous conference announcements and speak with past organizers for advice.) Complimentary registrations usually are offered to conference volunteers who provide man-hours commiserate with the registration fees.

The 2010 organizers recommend setting a greater difference between the advanced and regular registration rates, say \$50.00. If the difference between the rates is minimal (\$15.00), many attendees do not register until days before the conference or on-site. Conference planning is easier if a more accurate estimation of attendance may be made. The difference in advanced and regular student registration rates ought to remain low.

Registration fees should be established well in advance and, with other sources of cash income, should be sufficient to fund the proposed budget. Other standard sources of income derive from sale of meal tickets, tour tickets, and commemorative items such as t-shirts. Banquet and roundtable luncheon tickets are often priced at cost to keep these as affordable as possible. Luncheon tickets, however, may include a slight surcharge to provide for complementary meals for luncheon chairs.

Estimation of income will require an accurate but conservative projection of conference attendance. The attendance rate over the past three decades has ranged from 200 to 600 people. The estimation should be based on considerations of the registration breakdown for several conferences immediately preceding the one being planned and the geographical location of the conference. *Typically*, about half of the participants register in advance. The accuracy of the attendance estimate should be reviewed about one week after the advanced registration deadline and, if necessary, the budget should be revised accordingly. Any needs to increase or decrease expenditures should be passed along to the appropriate members of the conference planning team.

During the conference, a considerable amount of cash and numerous checks will be received from attendees registering on-site. A safe deposit box should be retained at the hotel to hold receipts until they can be safely deposited in the conference account.

## *Expenses*

Expenses include a wide range of items, most of which will be incurred in the months immediately prior to and during the conference. Most of the major expenses will be incurred after funds are available from advance registrations. However, if necessary, a start-up loan can be obtained from the Plains Anthropological Society to underwrite early expenses before conference income is available. This loan must be repaid within four months of the conference. A more detailed listing of potential expenses is presented in the following section. For hotel charges, a master account should be established which allows all approved conference expenses to be charged and paid at its conclusion. Authority to approve charges, especially those that represent changes from the hotel contract, should be limited and the hotel should be made aware of who has this authority.

## *Budget*

The budget should consist of projected income and expenses. A sample budget, without cost figures, is listed below. Once the budget is established, it should be revised periodically and should be used as a primary management tool by the entire conference planning team.

### **Sample Budget: Plains Anthropological Conference**

#### Conference team

- Travel prior to the conference
- Lodging during the conference if required\*

#### Printing

- Call for papers (abstract form)
- Miscellaneous registration materials
- Program and abstracts booklet

#### Hotel

- Morning and afternoon break services
- Kegs/catering for the Early Bird Party/other functions
- Banquet
  - Meal costs
  - Speaker costs (transportation, lodging, meals, honorarium)
- Band
- Roundtable luncheons
- Annual Board meeting (meals)
- Audio-visual equipment rentals\*\*

#### Tours

- Transportation
- Tour guides
- Admission fees, if required
- Drinking water and light snacks for extended trips
- Meals, if required

#### Commemorative Items

- Design/artwork
- Printing/production

#### Miscellaneous

- Name tags

- Office supplies
  - Equipment rentals
- \* Complementary rooms may be provided by the hotel
- \*\* Audio-visual equipment may be available for a fee or at no charge from the hotel, or rented elsewhere

### *Accounting*

The finances of the conference must be carefully managed and records kept in good order. Delegating a single individual for this task is recommended. It is advisable to utilize the talents of someone on your staff with practical or formal accounting experience. A financial account through the hosting institution may be used to handle conference funds. Funds deposited in such accounts must be restricted to use on approved conference expenses. **Any balance remaining at the end of the conference must be payable to the Plains Anthropological Society.** We have found that a conference checking account established at a local financial institution may be more convenient.

One issue that will need to be investigated is sales tax. The conference financial officer is responsible for understanding tax laws in the state in which the conference is held and organized as applicable to the Plains Conference. These should be discussed with the Plains Anthropological Society treasurer. Some of the questions which may arise include:

- As an extension of the Plains Anthropological Society, is the conference tax exempt in the host state? (This might apply, for instance, to purchases of conference supplies.)
- Must sales tax be collected? If so, what does it apply to and how will it be collected?
- If PayPal or a similar service is used, what are the terms and conditions regarding non-profit organizations, sales tax, surcharges, and/or processing fees?

Regardless of how the finances are handled, a paper ledger or digital spreadsheet must be kept that accounts for all income and all expenses. Expenses must be documented by receipts. **These records and any remaining balance must be turned over to the Plains Anthropological Society treasurer after the accounts are closed and no later than six months following the end of the conference.**

## FACILITIES

### *The Conference Center*

Although certainly not a requirement, centralization of all activities within a single facility is desirable. Early selection, at least two years in advance, of a large and well-staffed hotel and conference center is suggested. Major events at these types of facilities typically are booked well in advance. Although hotel managers may not tell you this, they generally have a fair amount of negotiating flexibility with respect to costs and services provided. If your community has more than one such facility, shop around and seek the optimum situation. (Check with previous organizers to determine if it is advisable during the negotiation stage for potential hotel hosts to contact hotels where recent conferences were held in order to determine how many rooms were

booked and the level of bar and food revenues. This usually works to the advantage of the Plains Conference due to the past liberal bar trade and few troublesome incidents.)

Although cost is important, services, meeting room space, and proximity to bars, restaurants, shops, etc. are equally important. It is not worth saving money in exchange for settling on an understaffed hotel with poor service and cramped meeting rooms and social spaces. When discussing the conference with prospective facilities make certain you tell them exactly what you need and what they should expect. **Get a written estimate with all cost schedules and dates that payments are due.**

Once a facility is selected, have them designate **at least two people** to work closely with you. These likely will include a conference or sales manager, catering manager, and/or facility maintenance supervisor. The maintenance person typically knows significantly more about the physical facility and its procedures and staff than does the conference liaison. By several weeks in advance of the conference, secure the maintenance supervisor's contact information. You will need it! It also is advisable to become acquainted with the individual in charge of room reservations. This is an area in which, for some reason, problems **always** seem to arise.

If the facility does not provide planning forms for each meeting room and session, develop these to aid in advance organization of the conference and for clear communication with the facility staff.

### *Lodging*

It is best to have the hotel book a block of rooms and there is some advantage in having all rooms in the same area of the hotel. Note: hotels typically reserve a block of rooms until a specified date (specified in the conference announcement and online). Ask the hotel for a conference CODE to post for online reservations. After that date, unreserved rooms are opened on a first-come, first-serve basis and negotiated conference rates may no longer be valid. Be sure to discuss this with the hotel before the contract is signed. Make sure that a maximum rate is set for having as many people crammed into a room as possible. They may not like this, but it is a real advantage and incentive to attend, for students on a tight budget. The conference center needs to be reminded that better room rates will ultimately equate to more attendees, more rooms occupied, and increased hotel revenue.

In certain instances it may be desirable to arrange in advance for "overflow" rooms at another hotel if the host hotel fills to capacity. The host hotel may be willing to assist with this.

Meeting rooms, registration space, a book/exhibit room, and several hotel rooms may be provided free of charge if the negotiated number of rooms are booked and bar revenues from the Early Bird Party, banquet, and/or dance meet certain amounts.

### *Food, Beverages, & Social Events*

The food and beverage arrangements should be well hashed out prior to signing a contract with the hotel. These issues can get a bit confusing with respect to percentage versus fixed rates on food/beverage bills. A list of past issues you need to be aware of are:

- 1) diverse menu of good food at the banquet
- 2) large room for the Early Bird Party which can stay open late with noise and beer
- 3) extended closing hours for the lounge, if allowed by law
- 4) adequate coffee, beverages, snacks, etc. for morning and afternoon break services
- 5) adequate room and beer if a dance is held in the hotel
- 6) a suite or two, away from other guests, for late night parties after the lounge is closed

### *Meeting Rooms*

The facility must have sufficient space and equipment for concurrent activities at all times. A large ballroom will be required for the Early Bird Party, banquet, and dance. Paper and poster sessions normally occur in at least four to six rooms, one of which is quite large. Each room should be well ventilated and equipped with a computer, projector, remote pointer, microphone, projection screen, podium, podium light, extension cords, ample seating, drinking water, and session schedules posted outside the door.

The medium by which papers will be presented need to be clearly stated in the conference announcement and online. For example, "Paper presentations need to be in Microsoft PowerPoint 2010 or an earlier version." Also, organizers must decide if digital presentations will be accepted at the conference. This information must be clearly stated in the conference announcement and online.

In 2010, organizers asked presenters to mail in CD/DVD/jump drives of their presentations no later than the Friday before the conference. The media were returned to the authors in their registration packets. The impetus for the deadline was that organizers wished to enjoy the conference as much as possible and not spend time running around looking for presentations to load. Most of presenters found the deadline suitable and were glad to have their presentation done prior the conference. The 2010 organizers found it advantageous to require the digital presentations be received before the conference for other reasons, including:

- all presentations received by the deadline were loaded, saved, and opened on laptops to ensure compatibility
- presentations received by the deadline but not compatible with Microsoft were re-exported from a Mac and ready to use at the conference
- presentations were placed on the appropriate laptops (labeled by meeting room) in a desktop folder (labeled by session/symposium), before the conference; thereby virtually eliminating time wasted loading presentations during sessions/symposia

The security of equipment in the meeting rooms must be considered. It may be necessary to post a room monitor in each room between sessions (e.g., over the lunch hour). (Do not expect the facility staff to provide security for equipment in unmanned rooms.) Arrange to have a secure room available for overnight storage of equipment. This room also may be used for equipment taken down between sessions and/or over the lunch hour. (Remember that this requires additional set-up and take-down time each day.)

Prior arrangements should be made to post large-print session schedules every morning and afternoon outside each meeting room. This may involve printing session schedules in large print and posting them on an easel or attaching them to the wall or other surface where they can be easily read outside each room. Last minute changes (e.g., paper cancellations) may be noted on these.

Other spaces required include: a book/exhibit area, registration and information area, poster room, roundtable luncheon facility (if applicable), space for the Board of Director's meetings and the business meeting.

### *Special Needs for Smaller Communities*

Conferences held in smaller communities without the benefit of a conference hotel and attached conference facility will be confronted with a number of problems. Such conferences have been pulled off successfully but require additional planning and effort. Because of the extra logistics needed for a smaller town conference, it is advisable to, if possible, use the services of a University Conferences and Institutes office. These departments efficiently handle conferences and non-profit programs for the university and state, even though they may cost additional money. They normally have the infrastructures for desktop publishing of announcements, bulk mailing, conference planning and scheduling, and know the ins and outs of their community. However, there are certainly some things that the organizers are better suited to—such as contacting individuals and organizations for cash and in-kind donations and knowing how the Plains Conference is organized. Below is a list of considerations for the small community organizers.

- 1) Do not attempt to compete with a home football game weekend. Typically all lodgings are booked and innkeepers are unwilling to offer conference rates during these weekends knowing that football fans will pay more.
- 2) Rather than being able to block rooms in one hotel, you will be faced with contacting several hotels. Get price quotes, phone numbers, and confirmation of blocked rooms from them. Rooms should be blocked at least one year in advance. Try to get the rooms as near the conference headquarters as possible and arrange for efficient shuttle service.
- 3) The most successful small community conferences have used local university student unions for meetings. If possible, reserve **all** of the Student Union meeting space. You may have to pay for use of these facilities, as would no doubt be true with any conference center not associated with a conference hotel. This can run into several thousands of dollars. In much the same way that hotels operate, student unions typically have staff dedicated to facilitating conferences, although a staff member from Conferences and Institutes and one of the conference organizers should be on hand throughout the conference to handle problems. Also, you may pay the university for use of computers, audio-visual equipment, etc.
- 4) A large expense will come in the form of shuttles to and from lodgings, conference headquarters, conference events, tours, and the airport. At least one year in advance

reserve many vans for the week of the conference. Arrange for and schedule safe drivers for the vans. Many extra costs can be covered by donations from local business.

- 5) Schedule the Early Bird Party at a bar in a hotel in town rather than at the university, because of most university's restrictions on liquor. Try to select the most centrally located hotel. Arrange to have several kegs (4 – 6 is a rough estimate) on reserve and keep it open as late as local law allows. The worst possible disaster at a Plains Conference is an Early Bird Party that runs dry. People do not forget such an infraction easily!
- 6) The conference facility, because it is not a hotel, needs to have certain amenities. These include places to sit and chat, rooms for breaks, in addition to rooms for four to six concurrent sessions holding 50 – 150 people, plus rooms for books, posters, and meetings of other groups.
- 7) One problem that may be encountered in a university setting is the availability of parking. Because the Plains Conference is in the fall when school is in session, obtain visitor parking permits and try to get parking spaces reserved on campus by the campus police.

## **PROGRAM**

### *Notification, Abstracts & Symposia*

At least two calls for papers and overall conference announcement need to be issued. Post online the call for papers at the same time as the announcement is made in the *Plains Anthropologist* (usually the first issue of the year in February). That call should minimally list: conference dates and location (city, state/province, conference facility and hotel), length of abstracts, deadlines for paper and symposia abstracts, chairs and contact information, and information about the Student Paper, the Native American Student Award, and the Distinguished Service Award.

The deadlines for submission of abstracts and symposia vary with conference date. It is good to set dates several weeks prior to when you absolutely need to have things in hand. Typically symposia proposals should be in hand by early to mid-August with paper and poster abstracts due about two weeks to a month later. Remember that many potential participants are unable to prepare and submit abstracts and recruit student participants during the fieldwork season or before the start of the academic year. Abstract lengths vary from 100 – 200 words. They normally are requested as an email attachment or submitted online at the conference website.

Lead authors of conference presentations must be Plains Anthropological Society members, and this information is to be included on the abstract submission form and on the Call for Papers. It is left to the discretion of the conference chair to handle special circumstances of non-anthropologists presenting at the conference.

### *Paper Types & Acceptance*

Presentations fall into several categories: contributed and symposia papers, research reports, and posters. Contributed and symposia papers and research reports usually are 20 minutes. The length of the poster sessions varies. If poster sessions are scheduled for 2 – 3 hours (rather than a whole half day), presenters tend to man their stations. Post online and in the spring and summer announcements the poster requirements (abstract deadline, size). Provide poster presenters with chairs for rest.

Very rarely does a situation arise when all papers cannot be included at the conference. If it becomes apparent that the conference has too many papers, fair and objective criteria need to be developed for rejection.

### *Sessions & Session Chairs*

The number of sessions will vary with the number of papers and posters. It is not uncommon to have 25 – 30 sessions divided into five or six concurrent sessions on the two and one-half day conference. Most symposia organizers chair their own sessions or provide chairs and discussants. Other sessions will need to be organized by the conference planning team. Sessions are best organized by topic, temporal period, or geographic region. Although it is not entirely possible, attempt to avoid having related or similar topical sessions run concurrently. Sessions usually run from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday and from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Saturday. Breaks should be scheduled for mid-mornings and mid-afternoons.

### *Developing the Program Schedule & Program Booklet*

The Plains Conference should consist of several morning and afternoon sessions. Four to six concurrent sessions normally are scheduled for both the morning and afternoon for Thursday and Friday. Morning sessions are scheduled for Saturday. On occasion, evening sessions can be scheduled, especially if it is a single session and does not conflict with other events. The average number of presentations for the conference are around 150. To help with the production of the program, consider the following suggestions.

- Determine how the abstracts should be submitted (email or website submission) and the layout of the program. Abstracts are mandatory for all symposia, papers, and posters. The abstract for papers and posters should include title, author(s), author's institutional affiliation, email address, mailing address, and should not exceed 100 – 200 words in length. Symposia abstracts should provide a symposium title, list of contributors, names of discussant(s), and an abstract. All abstracts should be submitted in a standardized format. A standardized abstract form should be mailed to all members via the spring issue (May) of the *Plains Anthropologist*. An online form should also be available—to submit on the conference website or email.
- Take the size of the program and font point size into consideration—printing small might save costs by reducing the total number of pages but may be difficult for conference attendees to read, especially if one is in a dimly lit room.



- Suggest someone to chair the general sessions and make sure there is no conflict with their time. If no one comes to mind, consider asking the first scheduled presenter in the session as chair. Do not schedule the session against a session/symposium of the chair's primary research interest.
- Provide guidelines for each chair, such as how to monitor time, how to work lights and sound (contact facility management if necessary), etc. General session and symposia papers should not exceed 20 minutes in length. The 20 minutes includes the chair's introduction, the talk, and relinquishing the podium for the next speaker. Be sure the hotel provides drinking water and glasses for each session.
- List all meetings, with the locations, dates, and times. Meetings of the Board of Directors typically are scheduled for Wednesday evening and following the business meeting. During the business meeting, the treasurer and editor reports are presented, results of board elections are announced, invitations to host future conferences are delivered, and other open business is conducted.
- One conference program is provided for each registered attendee. Additional programs may be offered, depending on availability, at a cost determined by the conference organizers.

## EVENTS

Without a conference guidebook, previous organizers found their best guide to be past conference experiences and the announcements from prior conferences. Even with the conference guidebook, these two items provide useful information. All of the following with \*\* need to be set by late winter/early spring before the conference to be ready for announcement online and in the spring issue or in the separate mailing that arrives before the deadline for paper abstracts.

### *Banquet\*\**

The banquet is almost always held on Friday evening of the conference. Judging from the numbers of past conferences, anywhere from 25 – 50% of the registrants attend the banquet. This no doubt depends on the speaker, the topic, the restaurant or hotel banquet room, menu, and cost. The banquet needs to be planned well in advance—perhaps shortly after booking the hotel. This includes notifying the speaker. One problem that some conference hotels might present is limited banquet room capacity and limited ability to serve hundreds of people. Another facility issue to resolve is the ability for a speaker to use digital media and audiovisual equipment. The choice and quality of the meal is an important one, as is the decision about whether or not to have a buffet style or table serving. Sometimes, much of this will be at the whim of the hotel or banquet facility, but should be negotiated early so all parties involved understand what they are getting. Menu diversity is desirable with options for beef, chicken, fish, vegetarian, and gluten-free entrées. Color coded tickets that can be displayed on the table help the servers. A precedent set by many conferences has been the presence of wine (red and white) in carafes on the tables—

this raises the price of the dinner, but has become an established practice. It is important to learn from the banquet facility when they need a final count to determine when to stop selling banquet tickets.

Over the years, banquet costs have included an honorarium and travel for the speaker. In 2010, banquet speaker expenses totaled \$2,000, including honorarium, registration, banquet ticket, hotel room, and travel costs. The expenses of the banquet speaker should take into account several considerations, including distance of travel and mode of transportation. If the hotel provides a complimentary room during the conference consider giving it to the banquet speaker.

If the budget permits, other costs will include two banquet tickets for each student participating in the student competition (as of 2010), award winners, and *possibly* others (conference organizers or special guests). Seating at the reserved table(s) seems to present some pre-banquet jitters. Typically the speaker, conference host(s), honorees, Board officers and their partners are seated at the reserved table(s). It is advisable to work these specifics out before the banquet.

#### *Roundtable Luncheons\*\**

Conference roundtable discussions are on Thursday or Friday. Some conferences have held two sets, one on Thursday and one on Friday. Table topics can either be selected by the host(s) or solicited during conference announcements. Individuals that you wish to moderate need to be contacted prior to the conference. The roundtables need a separate room with the capacity for the number of tables or an area that will be away from crowds. Depending on the topic(s) selected, anticipate needing one or two people to moderate the lunches. Secure a quote from the facility (restaurant, hotel, etc.) for a set luncheon or buffet price. The price for the luncheon also needs to include the price of the roundtable moderators' and staff meals. Also, more informal, off-site lunches at local restaurants have been arranged on a pay-as-you-go basis.

#### *Tours\*\**

Many hosts schedule tours of local sites, museums, labs, and other places of interest to attendees. Most tours are a short distance from the conference headquarters. Open houses often are scheduled at various facilities around town. Conference organizers need to begin talking to facilities and site managers no later than the spring before the conference. You should start notifying possible tour sites/people once you know you are hosting the conference. Work with each place to find out their requirements and arrange transportation and other logistics (e.g., drinks, lunch or snacks).

Depending on the distance is from the conference headquarters, and the nature of the tour, you may need to have someone on hand to answer questions, handle emergencies, find lost children and make head counts for buses coming and going. Transportation for the tour can be a major cost unless you have access to alternatives. If you do not already have sufficient transportation available, you will need to reserve this well in advance (the previous year)—and get a cost estimate and/or contract early on.

### *Pre- and Post-Conference Workshops and Tours\*\**

Occasionally, Plains Conferences will sponsor pre- and post-conference workshops. These activities may be done in such a way that people provide their own transportation and lodging and attend the workshop on the way to or from the conference.

The workshop organizers should do the planning and provide cost estimates to the conference organizers so that they can be included in the summer announcement. Workshop organizers should also be responsible for seeing that conference organizers have sufficient lead time to put information in conference registration materials and online. Plains Conference organizers, unless they are coordinating the workshop/tour, need not provide staff for these events.

### *Poster Sessions\*\**

With the popularity of the poster paper format it is important for conference organizers to consider this section. Poster sessions need to have sufficient space. It is important to work with facility management on the method(s) of presentation (taped/pinned to walls, easels, display boards, or tables). The conference call for abstracts will need to specify the maximum size of a poster. Posters are set up and dismantled by the presenters although supplies may need to be provided by the conference organizers. Purchase of supplies and ensuring security of the room may be necessary. Organizers will need to have a person assigned as a troubleshooter for the poster sessions to make sure that the participants have what they need.

There is no additional charge, beyond registration, for poster presentations. Perhaps the most important thing to remember for both the poster sessions and the book/exhibit room is they tend to be loud and crowded at times. Try to place them away from ongoing sessions. Also, work with facility management to regulate the heating/air conditioning system.

### *Book Displays & Exhibits\*\**

Organizers need to contact publishers (e.g., local/regional university/state historical society presses and other major publishers) and anyone else who may wish to exhibit at the Plains Conference (e.g., local/state/provincial archaeological societies, quality used book dealers, equipment sales, specialized laboratories) in advance of the conference. A letter should be sent to all potential exhibitors early to encourage them to participate and provide information on cost, dates, time location and so forth. Publishers often need a year's advance notice to plan their attendance. Obtain lists of potential publishers and exhibitors from previous conference organizers, the Society of American Archaeology, and/or the American Anthropological Association. An announcement, with organizer contact information, should be included in the conference call for papers and available online.

Cost to exhibitors has been \$30.00 to \$60.00, price varying by table length. Organizers need to secure a room which can be locked or guarded during off hours. Displays/exhibitions traditionally have been open all day Thursday and Friday and Saturday morning. In some cases, publishers have sent fliers and display copies of books but not attended the conferences. Plan in advance how these will be displayed and what will become of the display copies (e.g., present to volunteers, students, etc.). Some organizations will plan to jointly share a space. Be sure to find

out in advance how much space each exhibitor will need. It is useful to place large-print placards for each exhibitor at their space/table prior to set-up on Wednesday or Thursday morning. Be sure one of the conference staff is available to answer questions and check in on the book/exhibit room during the conference.

### *Registration\*\**

In order to determine registration fees, estimate all costs and figure a projected budget based on various configurations of student advance, student on-site, regular advance, and regular on-site registrations. The registration estimate needs to incorporate free registration given to volunteers if desired. Announcement of registration fees and the registration form need to be posted online and mailed out with the conference announcement in the spring issue of the *Plains Anthropologist* or as a separate mailing. Be sure registration forms and instructions are clear regarding different rates and deadlines for advance versus on-site (full) registration fees. Registration should begin when the announcement is mailed and posted online, with the deadline for advance registration set by the organizers.

The registration desk needs to be set up and all packets stuffed before the Early Bird Party. Times for the desk usually are Wednesday from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. and 8:00 – 5:00 p.m. on Thursday and Friday. The organizers need to have two sets of lines, one for people who have advance registered and another for those wishing to register on-site.

Prior to the conference, contact the Plains Anthropological Society treasurer and Board president to inquire as to whether the Plains Anthropological Society will require a table, near the registration desk or in the book/exhibit room, for membership renewals and journal back issue sales. A board for posting messages also may be useful.

Registration staff varies depending on organization but at least four to six people normally are required. At least one person who is knowledgeable about the facilities and conference organization should be present at the registration desk at all times for troubleshooting.

### *Conference Packet*

Packets need to be stuffed prior to the conference with material for all attendees, as well as specific items for individual pre-registrants, such as receipts, name tags, the conference program, banquet tickets, tour information and/or tickets, roundtable luncheon tickets, lists (and reviews) of nearby restaurants and bars, freebies from local merchants, and so on. For on-site registrants, generic packets may be prepared prior to the conference. Items for making name tags for on-site registrants must be on hand at the registration table. On-site receipts are requested so plan accordingly. Some registrants are amenable to receiving an itemized receipt in the mail/email after the conference.

*A Greener Conference.* Conference organizers may create a designated recycling area at or near the registration table. Especially at the end of the conference, attendees may wish to return their name tags and/or other items received in the conference packet. These items may be re-used by future conference organizers, passed along to the host(s) for re-use, or donated to another good

cause. Also, consider working with the conference center on placing recycling containers for cans, bottles, paper, etc. in break areas and meeting rooms.

### *T-Shirts & Other Promotional Items*

Some organizers have had people on-site to produce and sell conference t-shirts and other items (mugs, pins, hats), and therefore dispense with putting order forms in the conference announcement. However, should organizers decide to have people pre-order t-shirts, they will have to select a logo, find a company to print the t-shirts, and get cost estimates. Generally, t-shirt sales run less than 50% of the number of conference participants. (Check with previous organizers for estimates.) If the organizers have t-shirts made before the conference, there should be a contract to have the t-shirts ready at the conference given approximately one-months' notice of the order.

In 2010, the State Historical Society of North Dakota (host) created a Plains Anthropological Society logo based on the cover of early issues of the *Plains Anthropologist* (see below). The logo was used on an embroidered cap. The logo is available in digital formats and has been archived with the other conference materials at the University of South Dakota. Organizers are welcome to re-use the logo. Future organizers may consider sharing popular designs/logos that are not specific to a particular city, host, or year.



Logo created by the State Historical Society of North Dakota (2010) for the 68<sup>th</sup> Annual Plains Anthropological Conference.

### *Board Meetings*

The Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors meets Wednesday evening during the Early Bird Party and again immediately following the business meeting. Organizers may provide board members with drinks and hors d'oeuvres, or dinner. (This is appreciated during the typically long Wednesday evening meeting!) The second meeting is shorter and allows the newly composed board to get acquainted, select officers and appoint committee chairs. Both of these meetings need to have reserved rooms that will seat about 15 people. Coordinate with the Plains Anthropological Society president for specific details before the conference. Information on the board meeting needs to be included in the spring conference announcement and online.

### *Annual Business Meeting*

The annual business meeting is scheduled for early Thursday or Friday evening. The business meeting may last from one to three hours depending on the amount of material to cover and the need to discuss controversial subjects. If the business meeting is the same day as the banquet, it is a good idea to start the meeting as early as 4:00 p.m. so as not to run into the banquet. The president moderates the meeting and sets the agenda. Business meeting attendance is variable but it is wise to have it in a room large enough to accommodate up to 300 people. A podium, microphone, projection screen, projector, and computer may be needed.

### *Dance*

If there is a dance, it is usually held Thursday night or following the banquet on Friday. Starting around 8:00 or 9:00 p.m., the dance may continue as long as the hotel or local law permits. Some conferences have contracted with a local bar that has a band hired with the guarantee that they will sell enough beverages to make it worthwhile for them to close the facility to the public and not charge a cover. The 1996 conference promoted several local entertainment options. More frequently a band is hired to perform at the hotel conference center. The type of band is a difficult issue. A good band plays a variety of music—blues, rock, country probably are safe bets. It is a good idea to consult with students. They normally have a better handle on the local music scene than do middle-aged conference chairs!

## **AWARDS**

### *Distinguished Service Award*

The Plains Anthropological Society Distinguished Service Award recognizes lifetime achievement in Plains-related anthropological research, teaching, and scholarship. A Board committee solicits and reviews nominations for this award. The recipient is selected one year in advance of the actual presentation. Presentation of the award is at the banquet. The Board may ask the conference organizers to arrange for a free room and banquet tickets for the honoree and partner). Historically, the person(s) who nominate the recipient or the Board committee make arrangements for the presentation. Be sure to allow adequate time on the banquet agenda. The award may not be given annually. For current information contact the Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors for the name of the Distinguished Service Award Committee Chair or go to [www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org](http://www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org).

### *Native American Student Award*

Native American anthropology students enrolled in Plains colleges or universities are invited to apply for the Plains Anthropological Society Native American Student Award. Each year, the Plains Anthropological Society seeks to award one or more grants of \$1,000 each to outstanding Native American students of anthropology. The award may be used for books, tuition, room, or board, with the money administered by the student's department. The award recipient is announced at the banquet. For current information about the Native American Student Award contact the Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors for the name of the coordinator or go to [www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org](http://www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org).

### *Student Paper Award*

The Student Paper Awards are intended to provide encouragement and recognition for students to present and publish professional quality papers. Full or part-time, undergraduate or graduate students are invited to participate in the annual Student Paper Award. A student will present a paper at the annual Plains Conference. As of 2014, the winner will receive a cash payment of \$200 for an undergraduate and \$300 for a graduate student and the winning paper will be considered for publication in the Plains Anthropologist. For current information about the Student Paper Award contact the Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors for the name of the competition coordinator or go to [www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org](http://www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org).

Students must provide a copy of their paper to the committee chair by the set submission deadline (available in the conference announcement and online). The chair is responsible for distribution of the papers to the committee. The papers must be presented orally at the conference and heard by the selection committee. Therefore they must not be scheduled at the same time or in conflict with activities in which members of the selection committee are involved. Commonly, the student papers are scheduled during a single session. This facilitates judging and avoids many conflicts. If the committee selects award a recipient(s), formal presentations are made at the banquet. Awards are not always made. Contact the Plains Anthropological Society president to find out who currently chairs the Student Paper Award selection committee. Coordinate with the committee chair in advance of the conference—find out if there are any other perks for participants in the competition, such as free banquet tickets, exhibitor books, t-shirts, etc.

## **POST-CONFERENCE REPORT**

### *Bookkeeping*

A final duty of the conference chair(s) is to provide a written account of income and expenses associated with the conference to the treasurer and Board of Directors of the Plains Anthropological Society. Since the Society has non-profit status, it is important to remember that all income is collected for a professional purpose and that the funds are spent for a designated purpose. While it is not required or always expected, most conferences make a modest profit. This profit is used by the Society to help with other expenses, such as the journal. The final accounting by the conference chair(s), therefore, may indicate a profit. Preparing a summary budget also is very helpful for anyone planning to host a future conference, as the relative and actual costs of various parts of the conference may be used to prepare a working budget.

At a minimum, the accounting of the conference should provide an itemized list of all income (actual cash—do not include in-kind contributions or donated contributions) and expenditures. A clear bookkeeping system must be established during the early planning stages and maintained until all bills related to the conference are paid. The designated bookkeeper should be authorized to write checks, provide receipts, and issue refunds.

An **Itemized List of Income** should include the following:

- number of advance registered students and advance registered regular attendees
- number of on-site registered students and on-site registered regular attendees
- cash contributions and donations
- number of banquet and roundtable luncheon ticket sales
- t-shirt sales
- tour ticket sales
- book/exhibit room reservations

A **List of Expenses** should include the following:

- guest speaker expenses, such as travel and honorarium
- hotel costs (the hotel normally will itemize a master bill for you, however, to make sure of this, request it early in the negotiations), including:
  - rooms billed to the master account
  - banquet costs
  - roundtable luncheon costs
  - restaurant or bar bill (excluding the Early Bird Party)
  - kegs/catering for the Early Bird Party
  - morning and afternoon break services
  - audiovisual/equipment rental
  - miscellaneous
- audiovisual/equipment rental if not included with the hotel costs
- office expenses (e.g., phone bills, postage, supplies, name tags, etc.)
- t-shirts
- program preparation (including design/artwork) and printing
- pre-conference expenses (e.g., travel for conference chairs, etc.)
- band for the dance
- commemorative items
- miscellaneous (anything else not included above)

While it is not necessary to include donated time and services in the final budget, it is very helpful to future conference chairs to account for these in the summary budget. It also is helpful to note the number of volunteers and approximate number of donated hours. Volunteers may receive free registration for a specified amount of donated time.

All expenses must be documented with a receipt. Do *not* rely on canceled checks as appropriate receipts, because checks to the hotel, for example, may include more than one type of expense. *Request itemized receipts for all expenses.* If you are using a University Endowment Association as your “bank,” they often require original receipts to prepare checks. It is therefore necessary to make a copy of each receipt so that you can retain this information for the summary budget.



## *Refunds*

This category includes two types of refunds: those that the conference is responsible for giving and those due to the conference/chairs. The first type of refund primarily includes refunds to advance registrants who must cancel their trip to the conference. Determine a deadline for refunds due to cancellations before conference announcements are made, and enforce the deadline. A handling fee may be assessed for cancellations after a specified date. Remember that the main income for the conference comes from registration fees, so you cannot afford to make many last minute refunds. However, there may be exceptions to the deadline and each conference chair should use their best judgment to determine the exceptions. Exceptions are made in situations such as family emergencies.

Refunds due to the conference or the chair(s) may be more difficult to determine. However, it is important to stipulate, in writing, a delivery date or quality of a product when ordering important items such as the program, t-shirts, number of kegs at the Early Bird Party, or the banquet menu. For example, when you order t-shirts, come to terms with the company on the number of shirts, color(s), sizes, and the date when the order will be complete. If the company does not deliver per your agreement, you should be due a refund. It may make things stressful for you as a conference chair but at least the conference is not charged for something which is not available.

## *Archival Documents*

**Upon completion of the conference, the organizer(s) shall send one copy of the program and other significant documents (e.g., conference announcements, host report, etc.) to the Plains Anthropological Society Archives housed at the University of South Dakota Library, Special Collections and Archives of the I.D. Weeks Library (see Plains Anthropological Society website or a copy of the *Plains Anthropologist* for contact information).**

**Appendix A:**

**Past Plains Conferences**

**PLAINS ANTHROPOLOGICAL CONFERENCES, 1931 – 2014**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>	<b>Chair(s)</b>
1	Aug 1931	Vermillion, SD	W.H. Over
2	Sept 1932	Lincoln, NE	E.H. Bell
3	Sept 1936	Mt. Vernon, IA	C.R. Keyes
4	Sept 1940	Norman, OK	F.E. Clements
5	Nov 1947	Lincoln, NE	J.L. Champe
6	Nov 1948	Lincoln, NE	J.D. Jennings
7	Nov 1949	Lincoln, NE	M.F. Kivett
8	Nov 1950	Lincoln, NE	A.C. Spaulding
9	Apr 1951	Lincoln, NE	P.L. Cooper
10	Nov 1952	Lincoln, NE	C.S. Smith
11	Nov 1953	Lincoln, NE	E.M. Davis
12	Nov 1954	Lincoln, NE	W. Mulloy
13	Nov 1955	Lincoln, NE	D.J. Lehmer
14	Nov 1956	Lincoln, NE	R.P. Wheeler
15	Nov 1957	Lincoln, NE	W.R. Hurt, Jr.
16	Nov 1958	Lincoln, NE	H.W. Hamilton
17	Nov 1959	Lincoln, NE	R.L. Stephenson
18	Nov 1960	Norman, OK	J.B. Wheat
19	Nov 1961	Lawton, OK	M.E. Tong
20	Nov 1962	Lincoln, NE	W.R. Wedel
21	Sept 1963	Ft. Burgwin, NM	P. Holder
22	Nov 1964	Lincoln, NE	W.W. Caldwell
23	Nov 1965	Topeka, KS	T.A. Witty
24	Nov 1966	Lincoln, NE	T.F. Kehoe
25	Nov 1967	St. Paul, MN	E. Johnson
26	Nov 1968	Lincoln, NE	P. Holder
27	Nov 1969	Lawrence, KS	A.E. Johnson
28	Nov 1970	Tulsa, OK	W.F. Weakly
29	Oct 1971	Winnipeg, MB	W.M. Hlady
30	Nov 1972	Lincoln, NE	D.R. Henning
31	Nov 1973	Columbia, MO	D.R. Evans
32	Nov 1974	Laramie, WY	G.C. Frison, G. Ziemans, S. Ziemans
33	Nov 1975	Lincoln, NE	F.A. Calabrese
34	Oct 1976	Minneapolis, MN	A.W. Woolworth
35	Nov 1977	Lincoln, NE	C.R. Falk
36	Nov 1978	Denver, CO	I.K. Hagar, B.E. Rippeteau
37	Oct 1979	Kansas City, MO	F.A. Calabrese, A.E. Johnson, W.R. Wood
38	Nov 1980	Iowa City, IA	D.C. Anderson
39	Oct 1981	Bismarck, ND	L.L. Loendorf
40	Nov 1982	Calgary, AB	R.G. Forbis
41	Nov 1983	Rapid City, SD	L.J. Zimmerman, R. Alex
42	Oct 1984	Lincoln, NE	F.A. Calabrese
43	Oct 1985	Iowa City, IA	D. Anderson
44	Nov 1986	Denver, CO	A. Johnson, W. Tate
45	Nov 1987	Columbia, MO	W.R. Wood, T. Majewski
46	Nov 1988	Wichita, KS	D.J. Blakeslee

47	Oct 1989	Sioux Falls, SD	L.A. Hannus, R.P. Winham
48	Oct 1990	Oklahoma City, OK	S.C. Vehik, M.W. Foster, J.L. Hofman
49	Nov 1991	Lawrence, KS	M.J. Adair, W.B. Lees
50	Nov 1992	Lincoln, NE	F.A. Calabrese, P. Bleed, J.R. Bozell
51	Oct 1993	Saskatoon, SK	H. Epp, Z. Pohorecky
52	Nov 1994	Lubbock, TX	E. Johnson
53	Oct 1995	Laramie, WY	J. Francis, M. Kornfeld, M.L. Larson, M.E. Miller, C.A. Reher
54	Oct 1996	Iowa City, IA	W. Green, J.A. Tiffany
55	Nov 1997	Boulder, CO	D.B. Bamforth
56	Oct 1998	Bismarck, ND	F. Swenson, F. Schneider
57	Oct 1999	Sioux Falls, SD	L.A. Hannus, R.P. Winham
58	Nov 2000	St. Paul, MN	(jointly with Midwest Archaeological Conference) M. Dudzik, S. Anfinson, R. Clouse, B. Koenen, K. Breakey, P. Emerson
59	Oct 2001	Lincoln, NE	J.R. Bozell, T. Thiessen, P. Bleed, L. Wandsnider
60	Oct 2002	Oklahoma City, OK	K. Buehler, R. Drass, M. Duncan
61	Oct 2003	Fayetteville, AR	M. Kay, K. Kvamme, J. Kvamme
62	Oct 2004	Billings, MT	B. Coutant, M. Keller, H. LaPoint, L. Peterson, G. Smith
63	Oct 2005	Edmonton, AB	J.W. Ives
64	Nov 2006	Topeka, KS	B. Hoard, M. Adair, M. Wood
65	Oct 2007	Rapid City, SD	M. Fosha, J. Haug, B. Williams, R. Fox
66	Oct 2008	Laramie, WY	M. Kornfeld, M.L. Larson
67	Oct 2009	Norman, OK	K. Buehler, M. Duncan
68	Oct 2010	Bismarck, ND	A. Bleier, P.R. Picha
69	Oct 2011	Tucson, AZ	M.N. Zedeño, S.M. Clements
70	Oct 2012	Saskatoon, SK	E. Walker, M. Kennedy
71	Oct 2013	Loveland, CO	J. La Belle, C. Johnston
72	Oct 2014	Fayetteville, AR	J. Kvamme, K. Kvamme, M. Kay

**Appendix B:**

**Student Paper Award**

## STUDENT PAPER AWARD

Full or part-time, undergraduate or graduate students are invited to participate in the annual Student Paper Award. You will present your paper at the annual Plains Conference. The winner will receive a cash payment of \$200 for an undergraduate and \$300 for a graduate student and the winning paper will be considered for publication in the *Plains Anthropologist*. For current information on the Student Paper Award information contact the Plains Anthropological Society Board of Directors for the name of the competition coordinator or go to [www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org](http://www.plainsanthropologicalsociety.org).

### *Who Qualifies for the Award?*

- You must be enrolled as a full or part-time student.
- You may be enrolled as either an undergraduate and graduate student.
- You must indicate your intent to participate in the competition when submitting your abstract to the conference program organizer(s).
- You must present your paper in the student paper session. Papers presented in other organized symposia are not eligible.

### *How Do I Apply?*

To be eligible for the award:

- 1) Register for the conference

***On the abstract form, note your intention to enter the Student Paper Award competition.***

Deadline: [mm/dd/year]

- 2) Submit an electronic written version of your paper AND an application form to the chair of the student paper award committee who will distribute them to the committee members.

Deadline: [mm/dd/year]

Application Form:

[Adobe Acrobat Document](#)

[Word document](#)

**Note:** If you cannot submit an electronic copy, please email Student Paper Award coordinator to make other arrangements to send it via post (with an earlier deadline).

***Entrants are responsible for conference registration. Submitting a paper to the committee will not register you for the conference!***

### *Competition Guidelines and Tips*

- A panel of three judges, including the editor of the *Plains Anthropologist*, chooses the award recipient.
- The award is based on both the oral presentation and written version.
- The written version of your paper will not be the same as the oral presentation.

- There is no page limit on the written version of the paper, but please do not include material that is not part of the subject you will be presenting at the conference--an entire chapter of your thesis, for example.
- About 15 pages double-spaced is a good length to aim for. The written paper should follow stylistic guidelines for *Plains Anthropologist* manuscripts (see “information for authors” inside the back cover of a recent *Plains Anthropologist*).
- You will have 20 minutes for the oral presentation. If you wish to take questions from audience, then limit yourself to a 15 minute talk.
- You are encouraged to use audiovisual materials, but you must do a spoken presentation.
- The paper may not be co-authored.
- The paper must be based on your own research.
- You may present a paper that has been submitted for publication.
- The Student Paper Awards Committee reserves the right to make no award or multiple awards depending on the quality of papers submitted for the competition.
- The committee's decision is final.

### *Student Paper Award Evaluation Matrix*

The research, written paper, and oral presentation all are important. No paper will be considered for the award if it receives fewer than 30 points in any of the following three categories.

- Research (maximum of 100 points/10 points for each aspect)
  - Research question shows originality and thought
  - Project is placed into a context of previous research
  - Research methods are appropriate, ethical, and logical
  - Data gathering identifies all variables and minimizes bias
  - Data are accurately gathered, recorded, and summarized
  - Data set is appropriate to the question
  - Conclusions are logical and well supported by the data
  - Project leads to recommendations for future research
  - Implications of the project are clearly identified and logical
  - Research contributes to Plains anthropology
- Written Paper (50 points/10 points each)
  - Paper is written in article format (not a dissertation chapter or contract report)
  - Paper is clear, concise, and original
  - Paper clearly explains each of the research aspects listed above (question, research context, methods, results, and conclusions)
  - Paper is well organized and logical
  - References are complete, correct, and relevant
- Presentation (50 points)
  - Presentation is well rehearsed; speaker is thoroughly familiar with the material, speaks audibly, maintains eye contact with audience, and conveys an enthusiasm for the subject (30 points)
  - Slides, overheads, and other audiovisual aids are easy to see, relevant, and appropriate in number (20 points)

### *Tips for a Successful Entry*

1. Ask a colleague or professor to read your paper and listen to your presentation. Try to incorporate their suggestions into the final product.
2. Your written paper and presentation will not be the same. The presentation must "cut to the chase" or you will run out of time. The written paper is the place for listing the details of your data.
3. Carefully proofread your paper and check the bibliography. Don't try to sound important by using big words, unnecessary jargon, or long sentences. Just express your ideas simply and clearly. Remember that all sorts of Plains anthropologists must be able to understand your ideas.
4. Time your presentation. Nothing is more disastrous than finding yourself only halfway through when your time is up. Practice what you will say. Change any words or phrases that you tend to trip over.
5. Don't overload the slide tray. A few eye-catching slides or overheads are more effective than a mind-numbing race through dozens of images. Remember that different people respond best to different kinds of information. Let your visuals (or audios) reinforce what you are saying. A simple graph is worth 1000 words. Complicated graphs, charts, and tables do not work well. Don't copy these out of your written paper, but make new ones just for your talk. Try to keep what is on the screen related to what you are saying. If you proceed to another topic, then proceed to another visual.
6. If you are not used to using audiovisual aids, practice beforehand. Go through your slides to make sure none are upside down or backwards. Know how to place your transparencies so they project correctly. Sometimes it works best to have someone place the transparencies for you as you speak.
7. If you are nervous, remember almost everyone in the room has felt the same way, especially the first few times out! People attend your talk because they are interested in what you have to say. You won't find a friendlier audience anywhere! Visit the room before your session begins so you can get a feel for the podium, screen, etc. Recruit some friends to occupy seats around the room so you can practice making eye contact. If you can remember to smile, it will help both you and the audience relax.
8. Have fun! This is your chance to show off your research to people who care about it!

### *When is the Grant Awarded?*

The award winner is announced at the Plains Conference banquet. Every student in the competition will receive two free banquet tickets, so please join us at the banquet.



**Appendix C:**

**2013 Membership Survey**

Following the October 2013 Plains Conference, the Plains Anthropological Society of Board of Directors conducted an online survey of members. The results may be of interest to conference organizers for planning purposes.

**1. Membership type.**

Type	Number of Respondents	Percent of Survey Sample	Category Percent of Overall Membership (N=880)
Individual	196	85%	75%
Joint	10		
Student	24	10%	22%
Life	12	5%	4%
	241 <sup>a</sup>	100%	101%

<sup>a</sup> Column total is 242, but this includes an error in Survey Batch #2. The error could occur in any of the four categories.

**2. Affiliation.**

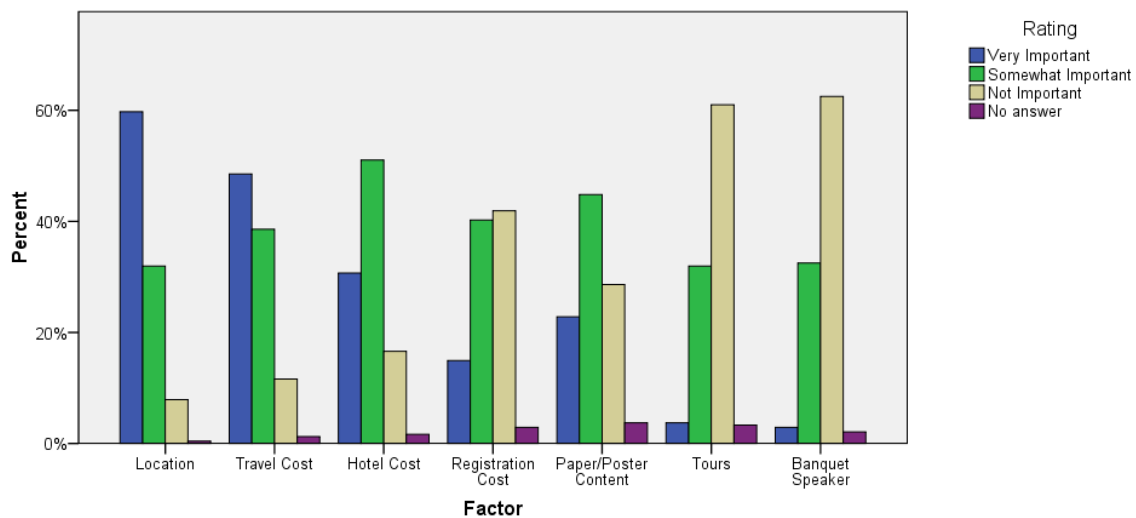
Institution Type	Number of Respondents	Percent of Respondents
University	104	43.2
Museum	11	4.6
State Agency	27	11.2
Federal Agency	13	5.4
Private Contractor	57	23.7
Retired	13	5.4
Non-Profit	4	1.7
Other	12	5.0
Total	241	100.6

**3. How often do you attend the Plains Anthropological Conference?**

Frequency	Number	Percent
Annually	48	19.9
Once Every 2-3 Years	49	20.3
Depends on Location	131	54.4
Never	13	5.4
Total	241	100.0

#### 4. How do the following factors affect your decision to attend the Plains Conference?

Factor	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important	No answer
Location	144	77	19	1
Travel Cost	117	93	28	3
Hotel Cost	74	123	40	4
Registration Cost	36	97	101	7
Paper/Poster Content	55	108	69	9
Tours	9	77	147	8
Banquet Speaker	7	78	150	9

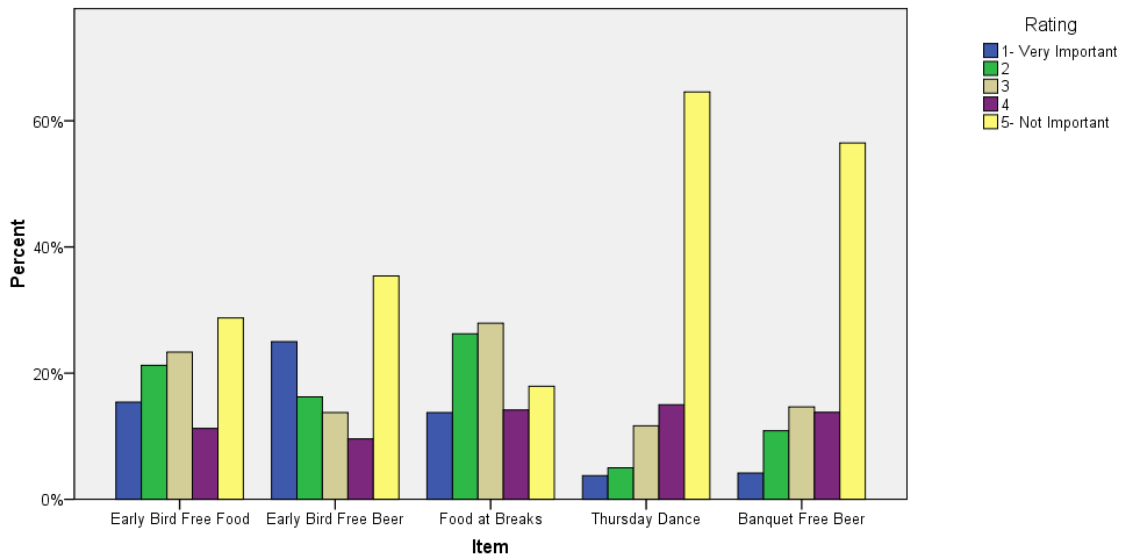


#### 5. What range of conference registration fees do you think is appropriate?

Amount	Number	Percent
\$100-\$125	140	58.3
\$125-\$150	79	32.9
\$150-\$175	15	6.3
\$175+	3	1.3
No answer	3	1.3
Total	240	100.1

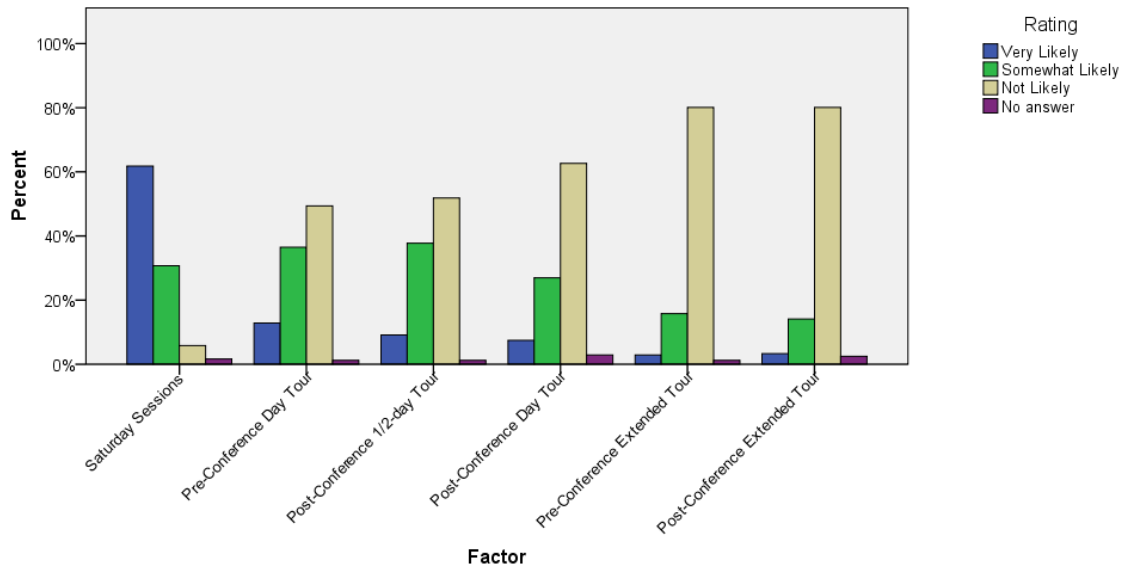
**6. Conference organizers can keep registration costs to a minimum by eliminating certain conference features, such as open bars or a free Thursday night dance. Rate the importance of each of the following items (1 = Very important to 5 = Not important).**

Event	1	2	3	4	5	No Answer
Free food at the Early Bird Party	37	51	56	27	69	1
Free beer at the Early Bird Party	60	39	33	23	85	1
Food at the morning and afternoon breaks	33	63	67	34	43	1
Thursday night dance	9	12	28	36	155	1
Free beer at the banquet	10	26	35	33	135	2



### 7. Which event(s) are you likely to attend?

Factor	Very Likely	Somewhat Likely	Not Likely	No answer
Saturday poster/paper	149	74	14	4
Pre-conference day	31	88	119	3
tour				
Post-conference half-day tour	22	91	125	3
Post-conference day	18	65	151	7
tour				
Extended pre-conference tour	7	38	193	3
Extended post-conference tour	8	34	193	6



**8. Would you attend a “working lunch” to meet with students, provide information about your school/company/organization, and/or collect resumes from students?**

Response	Number
Yes	138
No	101
No answer	2

**9. Which of the next three Plains Anthropological Conferences are you planning to attend?**

Location	Yes	No	Unsure	No answer
Fayetteville, Arkansas	106	64	67	4
Iowa City, Iowa	110	33	91	7
Lincoln, Nebraska	136	18	84	3

**10. To what extent do you think the Plains Anthropological Society benefits from joint conferences held with other organizations?**

Answer	Number
Not at all	17
Somewhat	152
A great deal	70
No answer	2