

Women's Leadership Conference Ad hoc Committee Report

Submitted by Kaylee Jacobson: 2020 Committee Chair
A Review of Truman State University's Student
Government's 3rd Annual Women's Leadership Conference
Hosted February 22, 2020



Conference Components and Recommendations

Date: February 22

We determined this date for the conference by analyzing the Student Government calendar of events which include things such as Student Week, Earth Week, Diversity Week, etc, Greek recruitment, and any other major campus wide events. Because our committee was formed in November, it would have been difficult to have the event any earlier and it would have cut advertising time down as well. We determined this date at our first committee meeting before reaching out to potential speakers in order to ensure being able to reserve the SUB Georgian Rooms before the Room Lottery was due.

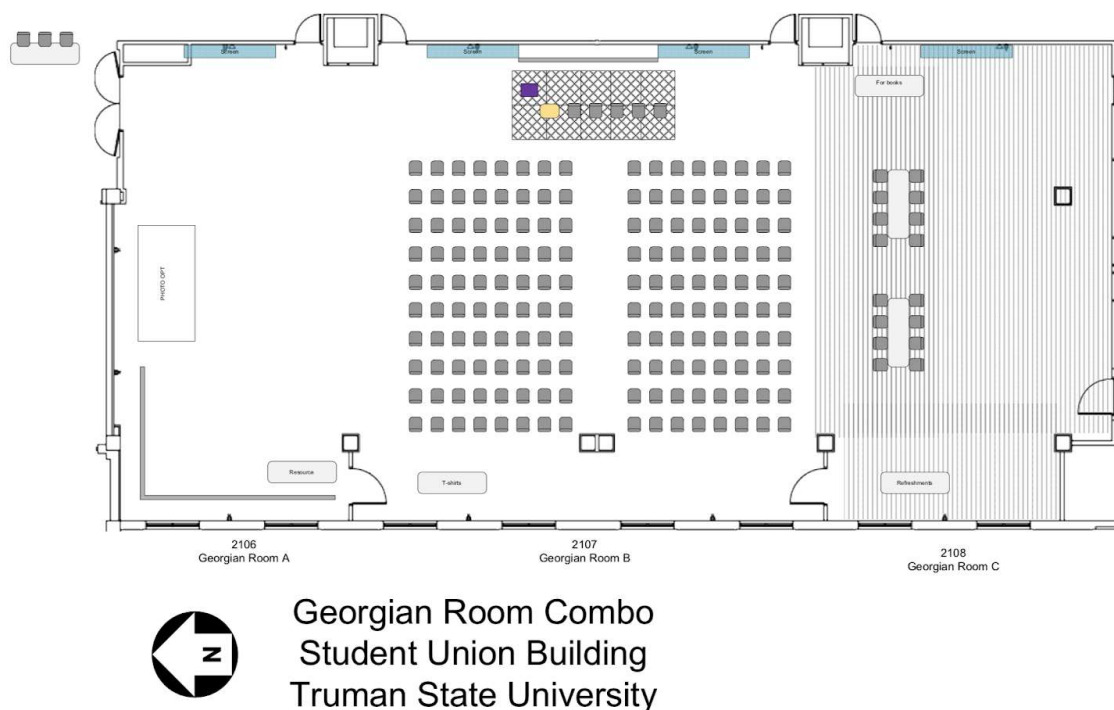
Recommendation: I would recommend having the conference on a Saturday afternoon as that worked out well for most of the speakers from out of town. In doing so, your committee will be able to save money by only providing a light lunch rather than dinner and potential hotel compensation if it were in the evening. Concerning the date, the whole spring semester is generally busy so having it early on like our committee chose to do might still be effective, but also considering hosting it in the fall is a viable option.

Venue: SUB Georgian Rooms

This venue was our committee's top choice. As such, we were intentional about setting the date of the conference so that there wasn't likely to be an annual school event that required the SUB on that date. In total, we requested SUB Georgian Rooms (Combo A, B, and C) and all SUB Conference Rooms on the third floor. We ended up utilizing all three SUB Georgian Rooms for the conference and Room 3202 for the speaker luncheon where we also allowed our speakers to leave their belongings during the conference. We did not cancel the other two conference room reservations in case we needed them for storage or an additional space. (Admittedly, our committee did not explore any alternative venues because of how quickly we received our room reservation confirmation. I strongly recommend these rooms as they are ideal for their location,

sound system, seating space, and lighting. After receiving the confirmation, I was informed that the U&I would be assigning a SUB Event Planner to our event to help us through the process of the conference setup, sodexo coordination, and event design.

Recommendation: I strongly recommend meeting up with the SUB Event Planner assigned to the event multiple times as it is unlikely the initial diagram will be exactly what your committee envisioned. While the diagram provides dimensions, going into the U&I or asking the assigned Event Planner if you can see the back drop for the stage, the stage pieces, and any other visuals (such as tables, screens, chairs, etc.) prior to the event will help better plan for the overall stage setup.



(150 chairs, stairs with the railing, 4-5 chairs for the stage for panels, podium with mic built in, 2 wireless mics, U&I provided stage skirt)

Theme: “Purpose and Potential”

Choosing the conference theme was the first step our committee took to prepare for this event besides the room lottery. We wanted the conference to be about both professional development and female empowerment and felt that this theme adequately portrayed such dimensions. The

theme chosen affects the overall tone of the conference, the speakers talks, advertising, and the visuals of the conference. The conference was intended as an educational, professional, and networking based event for students, faculty, and other guests. This theme applies to all attendees wherever they are on their professional track and whatever their age may be. We ultimately selected this theme because it marketed our goals of inspiring professional growth, leadership training, and celebratory camaraderie of female empowerment.

Recommendation: Select a theme that fulfills the objective you have set for the conference, that markets well, and that applies to all potential attendees. Once your theme is chosen, be intentional about consistently using it for all advertisements and promotions.

Selecting Speakers:

Researching, reaching out to, and confirming speakers was the next big step our committee took after finalizing the theme. This process began at the end of October with the hopes that speakers would be confirmed before the start of Winter Break. With the allocated budget, our committee was aware that we would not be able to afford an expensive array of speakers. As such, we created a doc of potential speakers to reach out to, categorized by entrepreneurs, women in government, keynote ideas, and STEM, all of which fit our theme of “Purpose and Potential.” One of the main goals we had was to diversify our speaker selection to ensure typically underrepresented fields such as STEM had a panel at the conference. After dividing up the speakers and reaching out to them, we created a spreadsheet to document confirmed speakers. As confirmations rolled in, our committee divided speakers up into a keynote, three panels, and a professional development session. We accepted all speakers who confirmed their desire to speak at the conference. Attached below is a copy of the (1) speakers we originally reached out to, (2) original speaker email (email template to ask speakers if they were willing to attend the conference as a speaker), (3) speaker update email for confirmed speakers (including what style of speaking they would do: keynote, panel, or professional development, and (4) the list of our confirmed conference speakers.

- (1) https://docs.google.com/document/d/13CfYMP1IBWRh0V_yu4tzRTv2cxrDdBRFZlml_owlyj4/edit
- (2) https://docs.google.com/document/d/1uxmUWbWf3FbSux4fldBI-ustqZ5ct6JtKaEBUYu_oR4/edit
- (3) <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Iba-a3H04NODU2RYXH6bTvXeWvMCtQFurGtMg1900EE/edit>
- (4) https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/13qiKeTEBwtaL5kk1ZI24FEbF3941tMOstY0Gr_cRnb2w/edit#gid=0

Recommendation: Create an extensive list of all potential speakers that fit the objective and theme selected for the conference. Reach out to all speakers, and if you have not heard back from some after a couple of weeks, send a follow up email. We had speakers drop last minute and were fortunate to have put enough speakers on each panel that the panels still worked out. Ensure that the speakers list is diversified enough to be applicable to all attendees (cover all professional fields).

Conference Schedule

Our committee built the conference schedule around the speakers that were able to attend. In order to be cost effective, we opted to do a speaker's lunch, rather than a dinner, that would occur before the start of the conference. After a short introduction by the committee chair, the keynote speaker assumed the stage to open the conference with a discussion of the selected theme, "Purpose and Potential." Throughout the rest of the time, three panels, a professional development session, and a speed networking/mock interview session occurred. Each panel was allotted 45 minutes with a 15 minute recess in between each. The professional development session was allotted an hour. The conference lasted from 12:00 PM-5:00PM. The recesses allowed for browsing, enjoyment of refreshments, and small networking opportunities. Our committee was intentional about having no overlap of events or speakers to ensure the best turnout possible. Attached below is the (1) Conference Schedule sent to the speakers and (2) Conference Schedule used for advertisement. This advertisement schedule was attached, by QR code, to our promotional posters around campus as well.

- (1) https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1_VtHqJCOKTw2TgsCYNrmed2bCJsCIBHwcPH_EZ2-bHw/edit#gid=0
- (2) <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nEFQYXWdF3DviHL-FTppGJg0JTJRiN0zZnBpa2PKI7U/edit>

Recommendation: Waiting to build the schedule until all speaker confirmations are in is the best route to ensuring that all that are able to attend are included. Our committee reached out to confirmed speakers to let them know that as soon as all confirmations were in, they would be receiving a conference schedule. After reserving the SUB Georgians Rooms and the upstairs conference rooms for the whole day, we were allowed significant flexibility concerning the timing and order of such events.

Conference Aesthetics and Activities

1. Resource Table

- a. We laid out provided resources from the Career Center that conference attendees could take with them. The display was categorized into three groupings (had 30-40 copies made of each)
 - i. Interviewing: included “Ace the Interview,” “Virtual Interviewing dos and don’ts,” and “30 second commercial”
 - ii. Networking: included Linkedin Step-by-Step and “Networking and Linkedin”
 - iii. Etiquette/dress/tips and tricks: “Email and letter etiquette,” “Dress for success,” and “Job and Salary Negotiation”
2. *She is Power* Table: Our committee as the owner, Ms. Schlichting, if she would be willing to sell her shirts at the conference. We loved that all the profits go to a non-profit organization to help women and girls and thought not only her mission to empower women but her entrepreneurship in starting her own business perfectly represented our theme “Purpose and Potential.” I highly recommend having something like this at future conferences as she was able to talk about her non-profit mission and conference attendees were given the opportunity to buy shirts and participate in that mission.
3. Quote Wall: We used the black dividers in the SUB to hang string. We then hung quotes of empowerment that fit our color scheme by clothes pins. Attached is the document of the quotes used. Pictures featured below served as inspiration.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1v7hUQ5PbKpur4TvqgH5EZnElT5b36DhNlGiXcftafl0/edit>



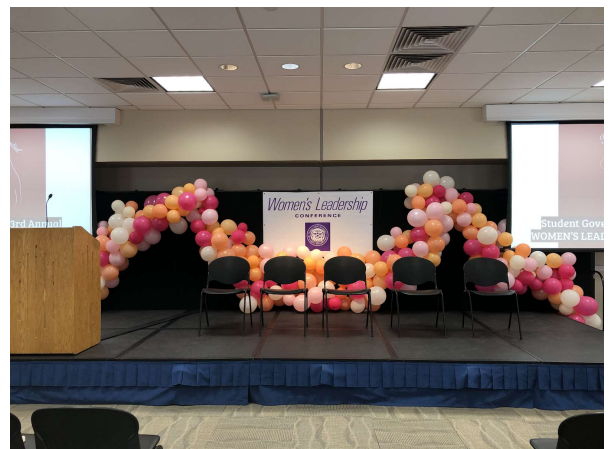
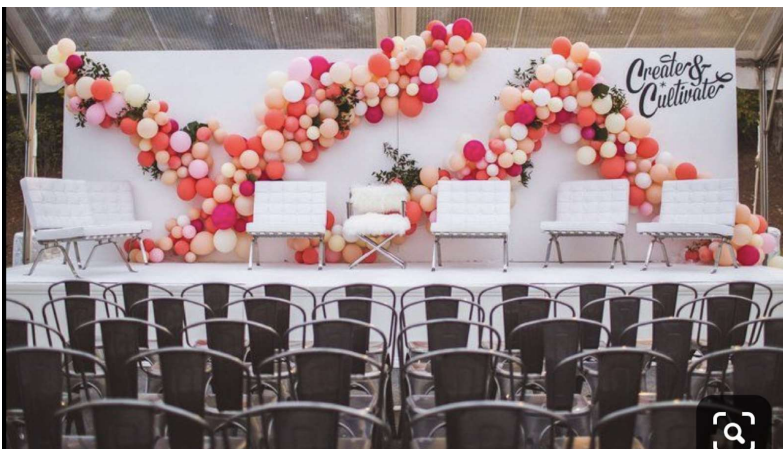
4. Photo Op: We used the ropes from the U&I to be on either side of the photo op. Unfortunately, the WLC photo op we ordered did not come in before the conference. As such, we used a makeshift balloon arch photo op to match the balloon wall on the stage.

Below is the design of the intended photo op that can be used for future Student



Government's Women's Leadership Conferences as it is not theme or color specific.

5. Resume Review and Speed Interview Session Tables: This section of the conference was hosted by Truman State University's Career Center. The Career Center loaned high top black tables for networking throughout Georgian Room C. We had two rectangular tables set up for the review and interviewing.
6. Stage Set UP
 - a. Balloon Wall: Our committee selected a balloon wall kit that fit within our color scheme to be the main decorative piece on the stage, as it was both cost effective and visually appealing.
Inspiration:



- b. Banner: Our committee invested in a generic Student Government's Women's Leadership Conference Banner so it can be used for future conferences no matter the theme or color scheme. We pinned the banner to the black dividers that were provided for the back of the stage.

7. Notebooks/Journals: We bought 150 “3x5” spiral bound notebooks from Staples to hand out to conference attendees to take notes. Our attendance did not reach 150 and as such there are quite a few extra notebooks that can be used for future conference events.
8. Speaker Wall: Instead of doing a typical printed program, we opted to do an online program that guests scan a QR code to access. We worked with the Outreach Team (we got their contact through our U&I Event Coordinator) to design speaker printouts of their professional pictures with a short bio listed on them. The QR code was attached to the far left upper corner of each print. The link for the speakers printout is attached below.
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1CPZt9LPu0Uqi4EV1WqofJLxD1a2Q3y_/view

Recommendation: Making the speed networking and resume review services available between breaks rather than their own session might be more effective. Considering the aesthetics of the conference, it was helpful for our committee to create a joint Pinterest board to share ideas of activities, designs, and color schemes.

Advertisement/Social Media Initiatives

One of the first steps our committee took was reaching out to our Student Government PR Chair to create a facebook event page. This allowed us to create QR codes on things like posters and slideshows that people could easily scan to find more details concerning the conference. Listed below are different advertising/social media initiatives our committee took with our PR chair to ensure the conference was well known on all platforms.

1. Stickers: We ordered 300 3x3 circle stickers from stickermule with the intent of using 150 for advertisement purposes (handing them out at tabling) and 150 at the conference (a portion handed out loosely and a portion put on the notebooks). I recommend working closely with the treasurer and our advisor to get a better understanding of the price of stickers for the budget as it is not uncommon for them to have a coupon.



2. Posters: We ordered enough posters to include all buildings and residence halls on campus. We used publications to create a poster based off the material we sent them. We used the silhouette as a simplistic and bold representation of female empowerment and professional development. Since we used the lighter pink mixed with a darker pink for the stickers, we decided on the maroon for the posters. The QR code linked on the posters brings viewers to the online social media schedule posted on the Facebook Event Page. This design was also used for the enlarged poster hung outside of the SUB Georgian Rooms on the day of the conference. We emailed publications to ask them to fit their design to a 19x23 size poster to be printed by printing services. We then simply tacked the poster to a foam board to keep it upright on the easel by the registration table.



3. Snapchat filter: For the day of the conference, our committee decided to work with the PR chair to create and offer a snapchat filter for the SUB. Due to the issues we had with our original photo op, we did advertise the snapchat filter as well as we could have.



4. Social Media Schedule: This is the schedule we used on our Facebook page, Instagram page, Career Center advertisement, and organization advertisement. We also had publications model the schedule to fit an 11x17 print out that printing services printed for us. We used this print out on an easel next to the enlarged poster print out so conference attendees could look at the schedule to know which panels/sessions they wanted to attend and the times on those as well. Our committee also had this schedule up on the screens in

STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESENTS THE 2020 WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE SCHEDULE OF EVENTS	
12:00 to 12:30	KEYNOTE ADDRESS Dr. Janet Gooch
12:45 to 1:30	GOVERNMENT PANEL DISCUSSION Local & State Government Leaders
1:45 to 2:30	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Ms. Jenni Nuhn
2:30 to 3:15	STEM PANEL DISCUSSION Leaders in STEM Occupations
3:30 to 4:15	SPEED NETWORKING Career Center
4:15 to 5:00	COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PANEL DISCUSSION Leaders in Education, Non-Profit, & Business
PARTNERING WITH THE CAREER CENTER ALL EVENTS ARE HELD IN THE SUB GEORGIAN ROOMS ON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2020	

the SUB Georgian Rooms during the extent of the conference when no presentations were occurring.

5. Facebook Bio Introductions: Our committee coordinated with the PR Chair to introduce each of our speakers on our facebook event page. We used the speaker bios and professional pictures that individual speakers sent to us. Attached below is the Facebook Event Page link

<https://www.facebook.com/events/820924561693436/>

6. Online Speaker Biography Program: While we used a speaker wall instead of a typical printed out program in order to be both more cost effective and conservative with paper, we worked with our PR Chair to design an online program that contained speakers' full bios and pictures. We used a QR code on the main screens and on individual speakers' pictures on the speaker wall so conference attendees could scan the code to the online program. The QR code is attached below: [Preview attachment Speaker PDF.pdfSpeaker PDF.pdf18 MB](#)



7. All School Email Blurb: One of the ways our committee was able to let the whole student body know about the conference was through the all school email Student Government sends out. We put our advertisement blurb in the February all school email. Quoted below is the conference summary we sent out:

WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Student Government is hosting Truman's 3rd annual Women's Leadership Conference on February 22nd in the Student Union Building from 12-5 pm! This year, with emphasis on professional development and networking, our theme is "Purpose and Potential." Partnering with the Career Center, the conference will

consist of Women in Government, STEM, and Community Development panels, a keynote speaker, a professional development session, and a speed networking session. A mock interview and resume review team from the Career Center will be hosting a session during the speed network activity where conference attendees will have the opportunity to try out speed interviewing and receive feedback on one's resume. We strongly encourage bringing your resume to utilize this resource, especially with the Career and Graduate School Expo occurring the week following the conference. The dress code for the conference is business professional, as there will be a few networking opportunities throughout the day. We will also be providing finger foods and refreshments during the conference. All are welcome to attend and we look forward to sharing this educational experience which aims to inspire professional growth, leadership training, and celebratory camaraderie with you! Check out our Facebook event [here](#).

8. Organization Email/Contact: Our committee reached out to all major female organizations on campus with the request to send a couple of representatives to talk about the conference. We also sent an email to all campus organization presidents describing the event and requesting that they share the details with their organization. Attached below is (a) what we sent the organizations and (b) list of all campus organizations. (I recommend emailing our advisor to get a complete list of president emails)
 - a. https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rpO7yFZh3zWRshfDIr504nl3aZ1SoS9Zirn_kY68-tCc/edit
 - b. https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1YReS821i0dtj0lftB9RJIOydN0NjlElv-a_t6KNfraU0/edit#gid=0
9. Tabeling: Our committee, with the help of student government volunteers, tabled five times over the span of the two weeks prior to the conference. We tabled in the SUB and handed out candy, stickers, and conference information. I recommend creating a sign in the future about “free candy and free conference” to draw people over to the table more.

Catering

For the Speaker/Committee lunch, we ordered Sodexo Catering as the event demanded (because of being in the SUB). We did the box lunches which included sandwiches, potato salad, chips, a cookie, and a drink (soda or water). This was both cost efficient and easy to serve. In order to ensure all speakers could partake in the lunch, our committee asked them individually in the update email if they had any food allergies.

For the conference itself, we ordered cookies and unsweetened tea for refreshments. Additionally, the Career Center, who partnered with us, provided Sodexo catering as well with grapes, cheese and crackers, cookies, and lemonade. The food was incorporated into etiquette training and provided guests with easy finger foods. We placed these orders a couple weeks before the conference.

Recommendation: If you provide a speakers' lunch, reach out to them early to ensure you include any dietary restrictions they might have. If you have any changes to your sodexo order, it is very easy to stop by the sodexo office for them to change that.

Career Center Partnership

Our committee decided to reach out to the Truman State University's Career Center for help in putting on the 2020 conference. Working with Jenni Nuhn, our committee partnered with the Career Center, with them offering free resources for the resource table, food for refreshments, advertisement on their social media, tables for networking, mock interview and resume review teams, and a professional development talk led by Ms. Nuhn. This was one of the best decisions we made concerning the conference and I strongly recommend any future chairs to reach out to the Career Center for partnership or assistance in the future.

Major Misc. Purchases

- "Purpose and Potential" Stickers
- Balloon Wall Set and Prep Kit
- Mini Notebooks/Journals
- Posters
- WLC Photo Op
- WLC Banner

Budget Attached Below:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/16P7yD7VkpZikK8hLMORJK5uxRL4y-0q19903dg2V8KY/edit#gid=0>

Moderating/Conference Script

We divided up moderating each of the three panels among our six committee members. Essentially, we introduced the panel and how it relates to our theme of "Purpose and Potential" and then read off individual speaker bios. Two committee members then went back and forth asking the pre-planned questions our committee had come up before opening questions up to the audience. Attached below is the full conference script.

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1mnLnKPl68OCbfs16Ws4n1KF_v_7aCBM1LJkujwHMqNg/edit

Survey Responses:

Attached is the survey we sent out to conference attendees:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1T7pBtXOMTx0BBpZ-Bh20Yo1klQGrzz_brs2Oglj-XWo/edit

Themes from the Survey Responses:

One of the major themes for future improvement was better advertisement. A couple suggestions included fliers, connecting with department heads or deans, attending more organizations and classrooms to advertise in person, chalk about it, and including more information in the advertisement process of who will be there.

There was continuous feedback from the panel suggestion section on the survey encouraging adding more speakers to future panels. This was especially prominent for the Community Development Panel who ended up only having two speakers after a number of confirmed speakers dropped close to the conference date. This is an unforeseeable challenge but one that should be a reminder to constantly be in contact with confirmed speakers and allow for as many speakers as possible on each panel.

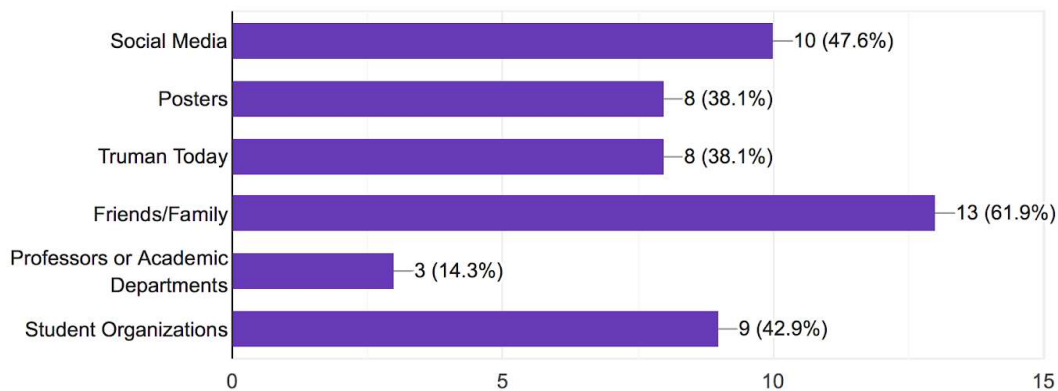
Topics conference attendees want to potentially see in the future include: navigating sexism in the workplace, how to self-advocate, more information on supervisory positions, discussing finances, women in academics, and minority representation.

Quotes from Survey Responses: (Anonymous)

- *"One thing that I know kept some people I know from attending was the dress code- since it was a come and go thing, people had other things going on during the day that they were dressed casually for and didn't want to go home and change into professional clothes to go to a session. Also, directly involving organizations could help increase attendance, like maybe a session about organizational leadership or something like that with presidents of different organizations, or students leading research teams etc. so that some of the topics are relevant to current issues students might have, or to underclassmen who are looking to be leaders in college, as opposed to all career based."*
- *"The speakers and their shared insights really made the difference on my enjoyment of the panels. I liked the prompted questions and giving them time to share their stories. Speed networking was intimidating but also allowed me to talk to the panelists and get my resume reviewed."*
- *"I think it was a great idea. I thoroughly enjoyed the quotes, photo booth, pictures of presenters, etc. I think it was ran extremely well. However, I think it needs to be advertised better."*

How did you hear about the conference?

21 responses



Overall Conference Thoughts/Constructive Criticism

For future conferences, the greatest downside of the 2020 conference was low attendance. Our goal was around 150 attendees and we only had about 60 guests throughout the whole conference time period. I think this could be improved with more aggressive advertising, speaking at more groups, contacting organizations earlier to see if there is a way for them to incentivize their members to attend, and loosening the dress code.

The conference was quite successful concerning the visual layout, the networking sessions, and the panels. Once again, my committee and I highly encourage future chairs to reach out to the Career Center for partnership in hosting the conference. One last recommendation is reaching out to the Advancement Office, who works with alumni, to see if any of them could be potential speakers or provide any names of potential speakers.

Conference Pictures:







