2027 Annual Conference Call for Proposal and Speaker Guidelines

Audience

The Annual Conference hosts over 450 professionals from business schools based all over the world. Professionals attend the event from all functions and levels within graduate business schools. Most attendees work in admissions, marketing, and program management, and sometimes student services and career services. Some attendees will be new to the industry and/or their role while others may have been in the industry for over 20 years. Attendee roles range from operational to managerial to strategic.

Successful CFP submissions are those with well-defined topics that are clearly targeted to a specific segment of the attendees. Successful proposals will reflect the specific topical area, level of experience and scope of role and responsibility of the attendee for whom the session is intended.

Format of a Concurrent Session

Annual Conference concurrent sessions are 60 minutes in-length. It is important that the session grabs and holds the attention of the audience. Presenters should keep in mind that attendees are attending multiple sessions and networking events each day. The most successful sessions are interactive, relevant to the challenges faced by GME professionals, and able to demonstrate how lessons learned can be adapted to benefit each attendees' unique situation. Successful proposals should include specific learning outcomes and actionable take-aways that will be presented during the session.

The format of each session depends on the content and preference of session presenters. Previous formats that have been executed and which have worked well are:

- **Panel of Schools:** a common challenge/opportunity is addressed in different ways by several schools. A panel allows the audience to benchmark 2-4 best practices from a variety of schools. School variety should include a mix of geography, size, public vs. private, program formats: FT, PT, EMBA, specialized masters, online, etc. as applicable to the topic.
- **Roundtable Discussion:** the audience shares best practices with each other in small groups. This is best achieved when there is a common activity in which all engage; for example, a case study, a set of questions to be answered, etc.
- **Interactive Workshop:** a facilitator leads the discussion, has prepared questions to stimulate discussion, interacts with the audience and puts into practice a concept learned.
- **Expert Led Presenter:** the topic requires an in-depth description and framework that is best provided by an expert in the subject.

A goal of each session should include ways to draw on the experience and examples of several schools in order to make the lesson(s) from the session applicable to our dynamic audience. This might include featuring several schools in one session, allowing an opportunity for the audience to share their input, or other creative solutions.

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Questions to Consider

Who is your intended audience? What is their expected level of knowledge of the subject? What do you want them to know by attending your session? What are the key session take-aways? These questions help you distinguish between the "need to know" (what they really must know to succeed) and the "nice to know" (what your secondary learnings might be). One of the important considerations to keep in mind is that adults are motivated to learn when the subject is directly relevant and useful. Your responsibility is to include relevant information for your intended audience that reflects their experience and level of knowledge.

What are the three or four key points you wish to share with the session attendees? The most successful sessions are interactive, allowing everyone to ask questions and share their experience and insights; the time you will have to introduce key issues is quite limited (i.e. 20 for a 60-minute session). By homing in on the three most important ideas, as well as their supporting points, you will distinguish between the need to know and the nice to know and accomplish what you have planned for the session with ample time at the end for Q&A.

What do you want them to be able to do differently when they return to their campuses? Thinking through this question will determine the level of information you'll try to share with them, as well as the way you'll do it. For instance, to be able to ride a bike at the end of the session, attendees would need lots of in-session practice to reach that goal. If, on the other hand, they only need to know what a bike looks like, visuals and more general information would be enough.

What is the best way they can learn what you wish to share with them? Going back to the analogy, unless attendees really need to be able to "ride that bicycle," you should consider the different ways people prefer to learn: listening, seeing, discussing, or reading. You might consider incorporating multiple modes of learning into your presentation. For instance, you might present an issue (auditory), include a handout or slide of the key points (visual), as well as allow ample time for discussion and questions (verbal).

What are some interactive activities you might include in order to create a lively learning environment? A simple way to increase interaction is to turn a "lecture" into a "conversation" by simply asking open-ended "what if" questions, asking for opinions on a given topic or situation or for additional information. If you note the feedback on a flipchart, you will increase both interaction and energy level as well as learning.

You might also consider dividing a large group into smaller discussion or workgroups. A spokesman for each group could share the results with the whole group at the end.

Final Session Structure Instructions

Every moderator or session lead will be tasked with stating the purpose and learning objectives during the introduction of the session at the Conference. At the conclusion of the session, the moderator or lead will be tasked with wrapping-up the session, including restating the learning objectives and listing the key take-aways from the session.