Title: How to Write a Conference Proposal

Abstract: (135 words)
How to Write a Conference Proposal
Have you ever attended a conference and thought, “I think I could present on ___ topic!” Maybe you have been deterred by the idea of actually writing a session proposal, or feel like you don’t have enough “experience” to contribute to the conversation happening during conferences. This session is designed to help you start brainstorming possible topics and collaborations with others, while also demystifying the proposal writing process. We will review common proposal language and definitions, as well as venues and opportunities for submission. Attendees will leave the session understanding how proposals are reviewed, and hopefully with increased confidence to add their voice to a future conference!

Proposal: (750 words)
How to Write a Conference Proposal

Presenting at a conference, whether for NACADA or another organization, is a great professional development opportunity for advisors. Sometimes, however, advisors are intimidated by the proposal writing process or feel like they may not have anything they are “expert” in that they could present on. The purpose of this session is to demystify the proposal writing process and give attendees the tools that they need to feel confident writing a conference session proposal.

Session Outcomes:
By attending this concurrent session, attendees will:
1. Understand the attributes of a conference proposal: session title, presentation type, abstract, and proposal.
2. Brainstorm possible topics and/or collaborations with others
3. Consider possible venues for presenting
4. Gain knowledge about how proposals are reviewed

Anyone who has ever attended a conference, whether at a local, regional, national, or international level, knows that, aside from the networking opportunities and keynote speakers, concurrent sessions and panel presentations are the heart of the conference. When done well, attendees leave a conference inspired to continue striving for excellence in their work, while also exploring complex ideas or new approaches to problems. The presenters at NACADA conferences, in particular, range from graduate students and new professionals to folks who have retired from the field but remain connected to promising practices or research around advising and student success. Despite this range of professional experience, some people opt to never add their voice to the conference conversation space because they are either not sure what they would have to present on, or are intimidated or confused by the proposal process.
This session will provide a guided exploration of the various aspects of a conference proposal: the session title, presentation types (concurrent sessions, panel presentations, poster sessions, pre-conference sessions, scholarly paper), abstract, and proposal text. Attendees will be given time to brainstorm possible topics that they might be interested in presenting on, and they will be encouraged to consider the lens they will use to present the topic (identifying intended audience). We will discuss the benefits of collaborating with others on the presentation, especially if that person has more presentation experience, or if they would provide a different perspective or approach to the topic.

Additionally, this presentation will explore some of the venues that advisors may explore to submit proposals, including affiliated state advising organizations, NACADA regional, annual, and international conferences, and other higher education or student affairs venues.

Finally, this session will describe the criteria with which proposals are reviewed (particularly for NACADA conferences) and timelines for NACADA conference proposal submissions.