

MARY BALDWIN COLLEGE
CAPSTONE FESTIVAL
2009

GUIDELINES FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Congratulations on your selection to present a poster at the Capstone Festival on Thursday May 14, 2009! Here are some guidelines to help you prepare a high quality presentation. An example of the form that the judges will use when evaluating the poster presentations is also included.

LOCATION AND SET-UP

Poster presentations will take place in Hunt West, beginning in the early afternoon. You may set up your poster any time after 8:00 a.m. on May 14. All posters should be in place by 12:00 noon. If this timing poses a problem for you, contact Dr. Peggy Ankney, the session chair, well before the day of the Festival. All posters will be pinned onto vertical wallboards. Posters can be 48" x 48" or smaller. Do NOT create a poster that will be too heavy to hang. See the "Suggestions" section below for additional information.

You should be present and standing near your poster for the entire period of the poster session. Be prepared with a short explanation aimed at fellow students and general community members and be ready to answer their questions. You may wish to bring copies of a short abstract and/or a reproduction of your poster for distribution to audience members. If your poster is based on a paper, have a copy of it on hand for reference.

JUDGING AND AWARDS

The judging team will circulate individually during the presentation sessions. When a judge comes to you, greet him or her and give a short summary of your project that includes information about your general area of study, the specific question(s) you addressed, methodology (how you went about answering the questions), and conclusions. Then be prepared to answer questions. The judging team will include people who are not knowledgeable about your particular field, and you will be evaluated on how well you are able to make your project understandable to this type of educated non-specialist audience.

A number of special awards will be made at the concluding Celebration, but you should remember that it is also a significant achievement to be nominated for and participate in the Festival.

HELP SESSIONS

Two optional workshops are available to help you prepare. Please read these guidelines completely before you attend. Advance registration is not required for the information session, but please let Dr. Ankney know if you plan to attend the poster preparation session (pankney@mbc.edu).

General Information Session. Lydia Petersson and Tracy Deem, Tuesday, March 24, 2009 from 12:15-1:15 p.m. in Miller Chapel and Wednesday, March 25, 2009 from 4:00-5:00 p.m. in Miller Chapel. You are invited to attend either session.

Poster Preparation for Capstone Participants. Dr. Peggy Ankney, April 8, 2009 from 4:00-5:00 in PSC 101.

GENERAL SUGGESTIONS FOR POSTERS

A poster provides a succinct summary of a project and its findings rather than a cut-and-paste version of the thesis. For example, the poster's methods section should not be as detailed as the thesis, but a summary of the methods used. Key information should be understandable quickly; the reader should not need to stand and read the poster for 20-plus minutes to know what is going on. If the audience member wants to know more, the presenter should be able to answer his or her questions.

SIZE: Posters should be readable from at least four to five feet away. They should be no more than 48" x 48" but should be as large as possible within those constraints. They can be created as single large sheets or as individual sheets of paper mounted together on poster board backing.

PRODUCTION: You will be contracted regarding options for printing your poster. Plan on the possibility that you will encounter a printing problem or want to revise your material after you see what it looks like once it is printed.

FONT: Use the largest font size possible. There should be *no 12-point font anywhere on your poster*, other than perhaps bibliographic information or footnotes. Preferably, your poster should be *completely readable* from a distance of six feet.

GRAPHICS: Use pictures or other graphics in place of text wherever possible. Leave some white space on the poster. You may number the panels to help readers follow the flow of information. Otherwise, go from top left down to bottom left, to top middle and down, etc.

COLOR: Color can be an effective tool when used judiciously. Some color backgrounds can be found on the web.

TITLE: Your title should include the full title of the project. Your name should be listed in smaller letters below. You may include the name of the academic department and a MBC logo as well.

INTRODUCTION: Your introduction should be no more than one paragraph that outlines the research topic addressed. What does a reader of your poster need to know to understand the context of your project?

For science posters: Clearly outline the background information that will frame your research. End the introduction with a hypothesis, or have a separate box that clearly states your hypothesis

For social science/humanities/posters: What is the historical/cultural/ literary context of your research project? What specific aspect of the larger context did you research?

METHODS: Clearly state how you conducted the research for your project.

For science posters: Describing your methods is especially important. Use the terminology and conventions of your field.

For social science/humanities posters: Mention the types of resources you used to investigate your topic. If you relied heavily on certain primary sources, mention those (briefly). If you took oral histories or did surveys, mention how those were collected.

RESULTS/FINDINGS: The term “results” is typically used in science and “findings” in social sciences/humanities.

For science posters: Clearly and briefly state your results. Include important results that are relevant to the hypothesis you posed. If you have many graphics, consider including only a selection to emphasize a central conclusion. Results that are tangential to your conclusion or very similar to other included graphics can be mentioned in the poster text but not necessarily presented.

For humanities/social science posters: What has your research revealed about your topic? Present the findings with short text statements, accompanied by pictures, if possible. Try to make your text as clear and BRIEF as possible - highlighting what you think is important for a reader of the poster to know.

CONCLUSIONS: What has your project contributed to the larger body of academic work in your discipline? Why is your project interesting/important?

FUTURE DIRECTIONS/FURTHER WORK: Mention briefly the type of future projects or research that you or future MBC students might want to pursue as a result of your results/findings. What new questions arose during your research that would require more investigation to answer?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: These can be in relatively small type. Thank the people who helped you with your project.

Useful websites:

<http://www.swarthmore.edu/NatSci/cpurrin1/posteradvice.htm>

<http://writing.engr.psu.edu/posters.html>

If you have additional questions, consult further with your advisor and/or nominating faculty member about the conventions for presentations in your discipline. You may also contact Lydia Petersson (lpeterss@mbc.edu) for general questions about the Capstone Festival or Dr. Peggy Ankney, session chair, (pankney@mbc.edu) for questions about the poster sessions.

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JUDGES' EVALUATION FORM

Presenter's name: _____

Criterion	Does not meet → Meets highly				
1. Creativity	1	2	3	4	5
2. Challenge	1	2	3	4	5
3. Execution	1	2	3	4	5
4. Communication	1	2	3	4	5

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Description of Evaluation Criteria

The application of criteria will vary according to presentation category and subject, but a highly rated project usually inspires responses such as the following from the judges.

1. Creativity

- The premise or research question is original and/or posed creatively.
- The project made me think about the material in new ways.
- The approach and execution seemed fresh and original.

2. Challenge

- The material was selected, composed, or approached at an impressive level for at this stage of scholarly or artistic development.
- The project engaged the field beyond the apprentice level.

3. Execution

- The presenter appears to have been rigorous in searching for answers and approaches, working within an appropriate set of disciplinary and/or instructional constraints.
- The project's goals, methodologies, and conclusions are intellectually coherent.
- The artistic approach was well conceived and executed.
- Visual materials are attractive, well executed, and accurate.

4. Communication

- The presenter made the project understandable to a non-specialist, making appropriate adaptations in language without sacrificing content.
- The presenter was able to make the shift from student to expert.
- The presenter answered questions clearly and concisely. Appropriate recognition was given to related areas of interest and concern raised by questions.
- The performer or artist was able to orient the non-specialist listener/viewer and highlight the significance of the work.