

Adrian Tinsley Program for Undergraduate Research General Guidelines for Oral Presentations

(Please note: Time restrictions for oral presentations at conferences may vary from those indicated below. Please consult specific instructions for the conference you are attending)

The purpose of this document is to provide you with **General Guidelines** for giving an oral presentation at the ATP Spring or Summer Symposium, NCUR, or a professional conference. As these general guidelines may not be directly applicable to your specific project or to your discipline, it is expected that you will **consult extensively** with your mentor on the presentation format that is consistent with your discipline.

Oral presentations are organized into “sessions” with a common theme. The size of a session can vary depending on the conference. At the BSC symposium, a session may include only 3 speakers. At a professional conference, a session may have 10-15 speakers. All speakers are expected to be present at the time their session begins, and to remain for the entire session. Remember, the time that your session begins may be quite different from the time of your oral presentation. For example, your session may run from 2:00 to 3:30 PM, and within that session, your presentation may be scheduled for 2:45 PM. But you should arrive 5-10 minutes before 2:00 PM to meet with the session “moderator” who will confirm that you are present. If you will be using PowerPoint, you should also use this time to make sure your computer platform is working properly and that your presentation materials are loaded onto that computer. Each oral presenter will be introduced and the title of your talk will be read by the moderator for your session. Again, the maximum length of your presentation varies, depending on the conference. Typically, NCUR presentations are 15 minutes in length with 5 minutes for questions. Your moderator will signal you a few minutes before your talk should end. If you try to go over the maximum time allotted, the moderator will end your talk by interrupting you to announce that your time is up. Thus, the maximum time limits for oral presentations are always strictly enforced!

General Outline: The following general outline for your oral presentation may not be applicable to all students, so be sure to consult with your mentor for the proper format used in your discipline. Although the exact format is up to you and your mentor, the following information is recommended:

- **Title:** Your title will be read by your session moderator. If you are giving a power point presentation, your first slide should contain your title, name, and department.
- **Abstract:** The abstract is a summary of the paper (150 words max). The abstract must contain the following summary statements: background, thesis statement or goal(s) or the key question(s) to be answered, significance (to your discipline or to society), your research or creative methods, your key results and findings, and the significance of your research findings. Since abstracts are often published separate from the paper, you cannot refer to any figures, tables, or citations in your paper.
- **Introduction:** Your Introduction should describe the research question you wish to answer (the project goal, hypothesis, thesis statement, or question), and a list of objectives (the specific steps you need to take, or the questions you need to answer, or what you need to learn or accomplish in order to reach your project goal, hypothesis, or question). Your introduction should summarize the current understanding of knowledge in the field, and on work directly related to your project. You may also want to include an outline of what will be presented and discussed in the body of your presentation.

- **Significance:** What is the significance of your research question? Although you should be able to explain the expected impact on others within your academic discipline and on society in general, the broader potential impact may very well be speculative.
- **Research Methods** or **Experimental Methods (not required in all disciplines):** If time allows, you may choose to describe the specific methodology used in your research, or describe the detailed experimental or instrumental methods and/or techniques you employed.
- **Results and/or Discussion:** In this section you should present and interpret your research findings, or your creative or artistic work. In some disciplines it is strongly recommended that you use tables, figures, diagrams, pictures, or equations to supplement your oral presentation. You should explain either why this information is important to your work, and discuss the relevance of this information in providing an answer to your research question. If relevant, you should compare and contrast differing viewpoints or approaches. Any problems or inconsistencies must be discussed.
- **Conclusion:** This section is typically a factual summary of how your research work supports (or does not support) your hypothesis, or whether your work has provided an answer to your research questions. It may be helpful to restate your specific project goals and objectives, summarize the main points or significant findings, and include a final statement to pull everything together.
- **Future Plans (optional):** If you intend to continue your work, what do you propose to do next and why?
- **Acknowledgments:** Be sure to thank any individuals who helped you with your research (such as your mentor!), or who provided you with materials or information. If you received financial support from ATP or another granting agency you are required to acknowledge that support.
- **Literature Cited/Bibliography** or **Footnotes (optional):** In general, for oral presentations a summary of your Bibliography or Literature Cited is not required.

Other Recommendations:

If you plan to use power point to supplement your oral presentation you should always bring your power point file on some kind of external storage device. Please note that access to the network drive or to the internet is never guaranteed. An unlucky momentary crash of the network could leave you standing at the podium without your visual aides.

Finally, **practice, practice, practice!**