

## Conference Support and Planning

AMCP conferences are one of the essential experiences for students to grow professionally, get ahead of the curve for their future careers, and take advantage of all that AMCP has to offer. Held twice a year in tourist locations such as San Diego or Orlando, these conferences allow students and professionals to network and learn about managed care. Though conferences are an attractive benefit of being an AMCP member, they come with hurdles to student leadership in the form of organizational difficulties, financing challenges, etc. This guide aims to share the best practices to help student leaders promote high attendance at conferences.

### Key Points

- Market the benefits of attending a conference early and often
- Assist in financing trips using unique and creative methods
- Plan ahead as a team to get the most out of each conference
- Document and promote the contributions of conference attendees

### Encouraging Conference Attendance

Below are some common reasons why members don't want to attend a conference and some solutions to address their concerns.

"It's too expensive"

- When more members from your Chapter attend the conference, the more fun and the cheaper the experience can be! Make sure to start an attendee list early (3-4 months prior) to begin building excitement around the conference.
- Hold a sweepstake to pay for registration costs for certain members. A sample contest could require each participant to participate in certain Chapter events throughout the year (e.g., P&T) and write an essay on why they want to attend the conference.
- Reach out to your dean, regional AMCP affiliate, or nearby pharmaceutical companies to sponsor attendee scholarships. Create a professional-looking sponsorship request form and reach out to your school's financial office to see if it can be tax-deductible. Many regional AMCP affiliates also offer scholarships to students attending conferences.
- Hold fundraisers early to start raising money. Consider having one E-Board member who is specifically dedicated to raising money for conferences.
- Students who proceed in the P&T competition or participate in the Chapter Leadership Academy at Annual Meetings may be eligible for partial reimbursement by AMCP.

"I'd have to miss an important class or exam"

Assign designated attendees on behalf of each class year to work with professors and deans to receive excused absences. Having a faculty advisor as your advocate helps even strict professors allow make-up exams or video recording lectures on an as-needed basis.

"This is a big thing to plan, and I have too much going on."

Assist your members by figuring out the basic logistics of group attendance (see "Supporting Your Members' Conference Experience" below).

"I'll go next time."

Say to them, "Each conference is unique, and each one you miss is just delaying the network you could be building."

## Supporting Your Members' Conference Experience

Below are some of the basic logistical considerations when attending a conference and some suggestions on how Chapter leaders can make the experience smooth for all attendees.



If you can't afford the conference hotel, book an Airbnb early (3-4 months prior to the conference). If your attendee group is small, reach out to the student pharmacist committee (SPC) or other schools to book a group Airbnb. More people = more fun! Remember that the list of attendees must be finalized prior to being able to book an Airbnb, so encouraging conference attendance should be done as early as possible!



Depending on the location, consider carpooling together as a group. Track flight prices early using Google flights or other travel sites such as Hopper. Consider all transportation options upon arrival, such as shuttle busses/uber/lyft!



Consider having 1-2 planning meetings before the conference to go through the conference agenda and AMCP 365 mobile app. Give an overview of the various opportunities (sessions, events, posters, local tourist destinations) and plan what things you definitely want to do. A good place to start are the student pharmacist education sessions and social events!

Create a one-page agenda before the conference to highlight all of the ways your attendees are contributing to the conference ("Soham is moderating XXX session", "XXX are poster locations for our members' posters", "Kristen is participating in the AMCP 5k on Weds morning"). This is a great way to show members aren't just going, but also *contributing*, which may help convince any relevant parties to sponsor next year (see "Encouraging Conference Attendance" above).

## Chapter Networking at Conferences

The best part of conferences is the people! Early planning can help attendees make the maximum number of relationships and build their network. For many regular attendees, conferences can feel like a "family reunion" that allows for meeting with friends across the nation once or twice a year.

- Post on your LinkedIn that you are attending the conference and if anyone in your network would like to meet.
- Use the AMCP 365 app to search through the list of attendees and direct message anyone who seems interesting that you would like to chat (it's not weird, that's what the attendee function is for!)
- Sign up for "a conference buddy!" Ask a Student Pharmacist Committee (SPC) member if you don't know what this is. Access the current roster of SPC members here: [Student Pharmacist Committee](#)
- Organize a Chapter networking reception one night. Invite any pharma or managed care professionals from your area. Ask them to come to "network and share with the students about their career paths." Also, ask them to invite other professionals. You may even be able to get their company to sponsor the event the following year.
- Go to the conference early or stay late so you can enjoy the location and make it more than just "work"- a great way to bond!

## Additional AMCP Resources

- Sample member sign-up sheet with agenda:  
[https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1V8OITd5v8EbL3tRpWjKeGSH\\_gV0uKsJqCvORhwasMUc/edit#gid=0](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1V8OITd5v8EbL3tRpWjKeGSH_gV0uKsJqCvORhwasMUc/edit#gid=0)
- Sample one-page agenda: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1Z6y70INs3Zqvtw3ZufHROkBLO6wrlBO5>
- Sample sponsorship request form (can be adapted for Chapter dinner, or conference scholarship):  
<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1jFfL-UTeOQEOvk5dcJgDyvpDkhxqtdy7>

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