

**DATE:** April 28, 2010  
**TO:** TCCTA 2011 Convention Section Chairs  
**FROM:** Carole Hawkins, Assistant to the Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Suggestions for Planning Section Meetings

1. Begin now! You undoubtedly have given a great deal of thought to the kind of programs you would like to arrange for your section meetings. Information about your programs will be published on the TCCTA Web site soon after it is submitted. The sooner you submit your programs, the sooner members can make plans to attend and we can target your speakers for TCCTA Online interviews and your peers for email marketing!

2. Consult with colleagues. It is not intended that a single individual assume the sole responsibility for planning the programs, selecting the topics, and choosing the speakers. Sharing these responsibilities may require some additional planning, but should result in broadening interest in the program and improving the quality of the section meetings overall.

3. Establish objectives. An effective section meeting should be designed to achieve clearly understood objectives. Examples of objectives: (1) to convey new information on subject matter, (2) to present new methodologies of teaching, (3) to challenge and inspire, (4) to entertain, (5) to offer CEUs when applicable.

4. Remember the audience. Keep in mind the wide differences in teaching situations and geographical settings for the TCCTA members who will hear your program. A talk geared to stimulate thinking primarily by teachers at the large, urban colleges might be regarded as a total waste of time by teachers from the smaller, rural campuses. Similarly, a program dealing with a highly-specialized area of a discipline may have little value to teachers of broad survey courses.

5. Assess available resources. It is a mistake to plan meetings with little attention to the resources of the city in which the convention is to be held. Frequently, faculty from universities in the area are available at little or no expense. Private industries and government agencies located in the convention city are also good sources of program speakers for some sections.

Highly respected and nationally-prominent speakers are often available through the courtesy of publishers or discipline specific industries, at no expense to TCCTA. Care must be taken to assure that the program does not become a forum for a “sales pitch” by an author. Most publisher representatives are aware of the necessity for discretion, but it would be a good idea to emphasize the point. Section chairs who make arrangements for authors or industry representatives to speak should ensure that the presenters have a clear understanding of the nature of the meeting. Section meetings are designed to enhance the knowledge and teaching effectiveness of those who attend; they should not promote speakers’ products or services.

6. Select the topic. Once the objectives have been determined and the resources assessed, a specific program topic should be chosen.

It is unwise to select a topic so broad in concept and content that it cannot reasonably be considered during the time allotted for the meeting. Items to be considered in selection of a topic might include the following:

- Will the topic appeal to all the faculty who teach in the discipline?
- Will the information be useful to the intellectual development of those who attend?
- Will it be possible to obtain a speaker for the selected topic who is recognized as knowledgeable on the subject?
- Will a program based on the topic help improve effectiveness in the classroom?

7. Choose a speaker. (Or a whole panel of speakers, if you prefer!) Just remember that you're operating on a limited budget of \$100. Submit any vouchers for expenses no later than February 4, 2011.

If an honorarium is to be paid to a speaker, the section chair should confirm the amount to be paid in writing. Please note that **NO HONORARIUM OR TRAVEL EXPENSES MAY BE PAID TO ANY MEMBER OF THE PROFESSIONAL STAFF OF ANY COMMUNITY OR TECHNICAL COLLEGE IN THE STATE OF TEXAS.** (It is assumed that such an individual would be attending the convention anyway and that he or she would be willing to share his or her expertise with colleagues in such a manner without the necessity of remuneration.)

8. "Field trips" are strongly discouraged. Section chairs are urged to plan programs which will not require travel outside the convention facility. "Field trips" pose a variety of problems: Charter transportation is very expensive (and private transportation raises serious issues regarding liability insurance); logistics of coordinating events away from the convention location are difficult, even under ideal circumstances; exhibitors complain that convention participants cannot visit the exhibits when they are away from the convention site for several hours; some members object to programs away from the convention location and the fact that "field trips" almost always interfere with other convention activities; the possibility of inclement weather is a real threat.

With rare exceptions, suitable programs can be planned which will be of interest and benefit to those in attendance. Please plan programs utilizing outstanding speakers or panels discussing timely topics—without the necessity and inconvenience of having participants leave the convention site.

9. Complete all forms. The Section Chair is responsible for completing forms and emailing them to the State Office by the stated deadlines. Programs which are not submitted to the State Office in time cannot have articles included in the *Convention Messenger*, consideration for TCCTA Online promotional interviews cannot be given, and meeting space cannot be assigned. Important deadlines are as follows:

- June 15, 2010: Program and Publicity Form due
- July 1, 2010: Speaker biographies, presentation abstracts, and headshots are due
- August 1, 2010: Audio/Visual Form due

10. Ask questions. If you have any questions or need help with any problems, don't hesitate to contact the State Office.

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