

## **January 2007 – NAKPEHE Variable Pricing Option Task Force**

### **Report to the NAKPEHE Board of Directors**

#### Background Information

Shortly after the 2006 NAKPEHE Conference in San Diego, President Finkenberg created a task force to explore the feasibility of variable pricing for the annual conference. Task force members included Camille O'Bryant, task force chair, Jimmy Ishee, Carolyn Mauck, Bill Sparks and Jackie Lund. This group conducted all of its "business" via electronic mail.

The first thing we did was to make sure that we understood the charge of the task force. We all agreed that our charge was to "explore" the "feasibility" of "variable pricing" for the annual NAKPEHE Conference.

The second thing we did was explore what it "costs" to host the NAKPEHE Conference. Determining actual "cost" for running the conference is a "moving" target because the cost depends on the conference location, the number of people in attendance, and any reduction in meeting room rentals based on meeting or exceeding the contracted "room block" with the hotel. All these variables aside, members of the task force agreed that the catering and the A/V needs of the conference were the most "expensive" components of the conference.

We took some time discussing the issue of "feasibility" of variable pricing. The consensus of the task force was that there would be a number of logistical "headaches" associated with keeping track of who paid what and for which day. Also, each day would "cost" NAKPEHE a different amount to run the conference. Some days need more meeting room spaces and A/V needs than others. There is also one day (Thursday) of the conference that typically only has one "reception" in terms of catering costs.

See the attached excerpts from email transcripts for additional information.

The third and final thing we did was identify "similar" national organizations in size and purpose and try and find out the structure and registration fee options for their annual conferences. Camille chose organizations based on those that were national, held their conferences in a 3 – 4 day format, had peer-reviewed journals, and hosted at least one meal/reception function as part the conference registration fee.

The following table contains information about conference registration fees for regular/professional members of the respective organizations and graduate student members of the respective organizations. It also contains the extent to which we were able to determine if people had the option to register for 1 day and if the registration fee included any meals or receptions.

Organization	Length of Conference	Professional Member Early	Professional Member Late	Student (early/late)	1 day "option"	Meals or Receptions Included?
NAKPEHE	3 days	\$200.00	\$270.00	\$100/\$135	No	1 reception 3 "meals"
NASSS	3 days	\$120.00	\$150.00	\$30/\$35	\$60.00	Coffee breaks
NASSH (240 regular members)	3.5 days	\$160.00	\$200.00	\$100/\$160	No	2 hot meals, 2 receptions
NASSM	3.5 days	\$275.00	\$375.00	\$100/\$125	No	2 receptions 2 luncheons
NASPSA	3 days	\$200.00	\$220/\$240	\$110/\$140/\$160	No	1 reception 1 banquet

Only 1 of these five organizations, NASSS, offered a "single" day conference registration fee. NASSS also had the "least" expensive registration fees overall. This makes sense in that NASSS does not include any meals or receptions in the cost of the conference. The other five organizations appear to have "comparable" registration fees to NAKPEHE. They also include a comparable amount of meals and receptions. I might add that NASSH tends to host their conferences on university campuses which may contribute to a decrease in catering costs for campus dining as compared to "chain" hotel catering services.

#### Recommendations to NAKPEHE Board of Directors

- ◆ At this point in time, the task force does NOT recommend the creation of a variable pricing option for conference registration. The "costs" in terms of confusion about who pays what and for which days along with some type of monitoring process to ensure that people are not eating or participating in meal functions could detract from the unique networking and collegial atmosphere that occurs during the meals and receptions at the NAKPEHE conference.
- ◆ The task force does recommend that the NAKPEHE leadership continue to monitor the choice of conference locales that have the potential to keep the conference registration fees as "affordable" as possible.

Attachment #1 – Email Correspondence in April 2006

I think one price solves many, many problems and only creates very few. To me the few it creates are worth the ones it solves. If we create a situation where attendees can fly in one day present a paper and pay a reduce fee, it may attract a few more folks, but is that the kind of conference we want?

Thanks.

Jishee

Jimmy H. Ishee, Dean  
College of Health Sciences

-----Original Message-----

**From: Mel Finkenberg** [<mailto:mfinkenberg@sfasu.edu>]

Sent: Tuesday, April 04, 2006 10:17 AM

To: Camille O'Bryant

Cc: jllund@bellsouth.net; bill sparks; Ishee, Jimmy

Subject: Re: NAKPEHE Task Force - RE: variable pricing for national conference

Well stated. I'm willing to guess that if we recommend (and receive approval) for a variable pricing structure, the only attendees on Saturday will be those who must be there (presenters, Board members, etc.). I'm not convinced that this is in our best interest.

Mel

**On Apr 4, 2006, at 9:57 AM, Camille O'Bryant wrote:**

Hi all,

Thanks to Bill, Mel and Jackie for their responses. I would like to add a few more thoughts...

So far it seems like we are on the same page in terms of our "charge"...

Jackie asked me how many people came to the conference, but did not attend the entire conference...I didn't keep specific stats, but can make a guess based on number of people in attendance at the Saturday sessions. There were nearly 120 people at the Homans luncheon on Friday and barely 60 at the Sargent luncheon on Saturday. I had to schedule a lot of sessions on Thursday in order to accommodate people who had abstracts approved... So, it seems like Thursdays and Fridays are the "bigger" days for the conference and Saturday is the "lowest" in terms of attendance.

I also agree with Mel and Jackie about the logistics of keeping track of who paid for what...when and where. The "easiest" thing to do - if we have some type of variable pricing - would be to include "days" on the name tags. Using a database and mail merge program to print out the name tags would make this "task" relatively simple. The tricky part would be to have someone "checking" at the doors to functions and such for the name tags. Honestly, the biggest cost of the conference is the meals. The next biggest cost is A/V...that is with bringing our own data projectors.