The Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture
Conference Proposal Guide

<u>Welcome</u>

Thank you for your interest in co-sponsoring a conference with the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture.

The Institute's mission is to support, produce, and advance scholarship focused on early American history and culture. An important part of that mission is the sponsorship of conferences. Each is meant to serve as a forum for the rich variety of scholarship on early America. We invite scholars of early American history and culture from any institution to propose topics and organizing themes for one of two yearly conferences:

- the annual (June) conference, meant to highlight work from junior as well as senior scholars
- a topically focused conference, usually held in October

The Conference Proposal Process

Conference proposals are reviewed and selected by the Conferences Committee of the Omohundro Institute Council.

Once a proposal is chosen by the Conferences Committee, the applicants should formally constitute a Program Committee. The Program Committee determines all content for the sessions as well as plans all logistical details and arranges funding for the majority of the conference. The OIEAHC does not determine the scholarly content of the conference at any point. The OIEAHC's involvement is limited to promotion, registration and administrative and organizational assistance.

The Conferences Committee reviews proposals with the following considerations in mind:

- That the proposal reflects an ambitious intellectual agenda.
- That the proposal reflects a reasonable commitment of resources necessary for co-sponsorship of a conference.
- That the likely Program Committee be constituted so as to advance the intellectual mission of the proposed program.
- That the Program Committee reflects the diverse composition and interests of the community of early American history and culture scholars.
- That the OIEAHC welcomes proposals from organizations interested in holding conferences in Williamsburg, Virginia – our home base. Ideally, the OIEAHC would like to hold conferences in Williamsburg every other year or every third year, depending on conference proposals.

All conference proposals should be made via the OIEAHC website. Please contact Conferences Committee Chair Simon Newman at Simon.Newman@glasgow.ac.uk if this presents a problem.

Division of Responsibilities

Collaboration is Key

Each conference is a collaboration between the Omohundro Institute staff and the conference Program Committee and requires the work and input of many people.

We encourage any individual or group interested in proposing a conference to consider the commitment of time and enthusiasm, as well as fiscal resources, necessary for a successful conference. The Institute will provide technical assistance, organizational and administrative services, and other forms of helpful support. We are proud to dedicate a substantial number of staff hours and talent to conference assistance each year.

Responsibilities of the Omohundro Institute

Once a conference proposal is accepted, organizers can rely on the Omohundro Institute to help with many often time-consuming tasks. We stay in close contact with conference organizers throughout the process.

The Omohundro Institute provides the following services:

- Publicizes the Call for Papers
- Logs all submissions received
- Creates and maintains the conference web pages and program
- Publicizes the conference via our mailing lists, website and social media outlets

- Monitors all conference registrations and payments for ancillary activities
- Hosts one evening reception (costs borne by the OIEAHC)
- Hosts at least one day's worth of refreshment breaks (as above)
- Provides name badges and conference packets

Academic Responsibilities of the Program Committee

Once a conference proposal is selected, the shape and content of the program, including the text of the Call for Papers, is entirely up to the Program Committee.

The Omohundro Institute may offer recommendations regarding the suggested makeup of panels and papers (see below) but does not mandate any aspect of the academic content.

Timeline

Approximately thirteen-fifteen months prior to the conference, the Call for Papers (and panel proposals) is issued by the OIEAHC using the Program Committee's description of the conference. The deadline for all proposals is usually eight months before the conference. All submissions are made electronically and logged in to the OIEAHC database by OIEAHC staff. Program Committee chairs are responsible for acknowledging the receipt of the proposals and for informing all those who submitted of the Committee's decisions.

Please note that the OIEAHC does not reimburse individual Program Committee members for travel or general expenses incurred during the panel/paper selection process. The Institute does pay for a meal at the end of the selection process to thank the committee for their work.

OIEAHC Recommendations

When selecting conference panels and papers, we have found the following practices most often result in conferences with great intellectual value as well as strong collegial exchange.

1. Proposals that advance innovative thinking based on fresh and comprehensive research should be given precedence over more well-worn topics. Moreover, the program committee should give consideration to the intellectual and social diversity of the Institute membership at large when constructing the program.

2. For a traditional panel format, panels should encompass two or three papers, coherently organized around a common theme or theoretical problem. Presenting more than three papers leaves too little time for questions and discussion. In addition, single paper proposals should be considered, and combined into panels if possible.

3. The Committee should consider alternate and fresh panel formats, such as plenary sessions or pre-circulated papers, when planning the program.

4.   Panelists are encouraged to submit proposals that include commentators and moderators, but the program committee should determine the overall configuration of panels as it sees fit.

5.   As a general rule, in the interests of the widest possible participation, 1) scholars should only make one appearance in a single conference and 2) scholars should be discouraged from participating two years in a row in the same capacity. For example, an individual scholar may give a paper one year and a comment the next, but not two papers in sequential conferences.

6.   The panelists should be required to provide a copy of their paper, in the form it will have when it will be read, to their commentators at least a month prior to the conference. The program committee may wish to recommend variable page counts for papers in sessions of varying size.

Logistical Responsibilities of the Program Committee

Organizers may wish to form a subcommittee to oversee logistical arrangements as this can be a time-consuming set of tasks. The Program Committee is responsible for securing conference funding or in-kind donations to cover the following needs:

- •   meeting rooms
- •   book exhibit space
- •   student assistants for both program chair and OIEAHC
- •   one conference reception
- •   one day's refreshment breaks

The Program Committee must also secure sufficient hotel space for the attendees, including a block of dorm accommodations or other inexpensive housing for rent by graduate students.

Please note: The Conferences Committee may request a detailed picture of likely funding sources before making a decision on any proposal.

Conference costs

Conference costs can vary widely, depending on the availability and costs of meeting spaces on campus, etc. In the past, Program Committees have found financial resources from a variety of departments and interested organizations on their campuses.

At this time, no registration fee is charged for any OIEAHC conference. However, persons at the rank of associate professor and above are asked to make a contribution toward defraying the expenses of the annual meeting.

Lodging needs

The Program Committee is responsible for securing sufficient hotel space for conference attendees, preferably at favorable conference rates. We strongly suggest that the conference rate be made available to attendees up until one month before the conference.

The Program Committee is also responsible for finding inexpensive lodging options for graduate students to rent during the conference. In the past, organizers have reserved dorm rooms for this purpose with great success.

Under no circumstances should the Program Committee enter into a written contract that guarantees a minimum number of sales. The OIEAHC does not contract with hotels for the sale of a specific number of rooms.

Transportation

The Program Committee should consider the transportation needs of attendees when reserving meeting rooms and hotel blocks. Not all attendees will be able to walk even relatively short distances and so the Committee should ensure that cabs or shuttles will be available in such cases as well as parking. Any instructions regarding the latter should be included on the conference program website.

Catering and coffee breaks

The Program Committee should leave sufficient time between sessions for attendees to relax and socialize. Usually, this means a break of 30 minutes if on-site catering is available or 45 minutes if guests are expected to leave the meeting area. We do not suggest the latter unless the area immediately surrounding the meeting space has a good variety of coffee shops.

If on-site catering is used, then the Program Committee must ensure that sufficient coffee, tea and water is available as well as some snacks. Moreover, the Committee should ensure that there will be a team whose job it is to set out and replenish these offerings as well as clean up after each break. This usually means hiring a professional catering company. Costs for one day's worth of these breaks should be factored into the Committee's budget. The OIEAHC will pay for another day's worth of such breaks.

Receptions

Similarly, the Program Committee is responsible for arranging and paying for at least one evening's reception during the conference while the OIEAHC is responsible for arranging and paying for another. There is no charge to attendees for these receptions and it is traditional to offer wine, beer and sodas as well as some small hors d'oeuvres. The use of appropriately sized rooms -- often at the conference hotels -- can also incur additional costs. Again, the Program Committee should be prepared to factor all such costs into their budget and fundraising.

Book exhibit and registration desk space

The OIEAHC and other purveyors of scholarly books on early America typically exhibit their offerings throughout the conference in rooms adjacent to the conference meeting rooms.

Wherever the space, it must be locked at night. The Program Committee should ensure that such space is available.

In addition, open space and a minimum of two average-sized conference tables (6 feet) as well as 3-4 chairs should be ready for use as a registration desk. The OIEAHC will staff the desk and attend to all registration issues but relies on the Program Committee to ensure that the space and the tables/chairs are available.

Website Responsibilities of the Program Committee

Images

While the OIEAHC assembles all registration materials and the conference program website, the Program Committee is asked to help find relevant images for use on the site and in any conference related materials. The images must be free of charge to use though they will of course be attributed to the appropriate lending organization in all OIEAHC materials.

Guides to the area

The OIEAHC encourages organizers to provide information on local attractions, restaurants (with price ranges), maps and other topics that attendees might find of use.

If the Program Committee would like to organize some extra-conference trips to museums or local historical sites, etc., either before the start of the conference or after the final session, then they are encouraged to do so. Typically, there are extra charges for such excursions (for instance, for bus hire) and the attendees pay for them via the OIEAHC registration system.

Conference Proposal Overview

Required documents

General guidelines

Before you start the proposal process, please be sure that you have the latest version of your browser (Internet Explorer, Firefox, Chrome, Safari, etc.) installed.

Please follow these guidelines when submitting the required documents.

- Name all files according to the conventions given.
- Use double-space and paginate all documents.
- Submit all files in either MS Word (.doc, .docx) or PDF (.pdf) format.
- Submit the proposal components (abstract, methodology, C.V.'s and outline of expected funding resources) as separate files: do not group the documents into one PDF.
- Ensure that all files are less than 1 GB.

Please be aware that any new files you upload to a section will automatically replace any older files you submitted previously: multiple versions of the same file will not be saved.

Required documents

- Brief abstract, 350 words maximum, describing the proposed conference topic, venue and dates, and potential or confirmed sources of financial support
  (File name: your last name_abstract)
- Brief discussion, 350 words maximum, outlining methodological or historiographical issues (File name: your last name_method)
- One-page C.V. for the primary applicant. If a team of applicants is proposing one conference, then please combine all the C.V.'s in one document.
  (File name: last name of primary applicant_cv)
- Outline of expected funding sources and the relevant application and notification deadlines. (File name: your last name_funding)

Recommended document

A letter from a Dean, Provost or other person who can make decisions regarding expenditures, that specifies institutional funding either granted or pending.

<u>Contact Us</u>

For problems with the website or for questions concerning likely expenditures, please contact Martha Howard at martha.howard@wm.edu or call 757-221-1115.

We look forward to reading your conference proposal.