Section 6: Conferences

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6.1 Conference Guidelines

Site Selection Guidelines for SRNT's Annual Conference

SRNT's annual conference will be held in a city that has enacted comprehensive regulations prohibiting smoking in public. Other factors to be taken into consideration when selecting a site include:

1. Overall fit of the conference meeting space with the needs of the SRNT meeting
2. Cost of sleeping rooms and meeting space rental
3. Cities that are easily accessed from major airport hubs around the world

If the above qualifications can be met by hotels with chain-wide bans on smoking on premise and chains that have not, SRNT will give its business to the smoke-free chain hotel.

Because smoking legislation varies widely among countries around the world, the above guidelines are not mandated for regional conferences presented by SRNT chapters or sponsored by SRNT.

Guidelines for the Selection of Pre-Conference Workshops

The number of pre-conference workshops in a given year will be determined by space available in the host hotel. Workshops presented by SRNT Committees will have priority should space be limited. Workshops presented by SRNT funders (NIDA, American Legacy Foundation, etc.) will also be given priority.

Committees wishing to present a pre-conference workshop must submit a description of the session to the Board of Directors within a timeframe established and communicated by the Executive Director. If more proposals are received than can be accommodated, the Board of Directors will determine which workshops will be presented.

If additional space is available, external groups will be invited to submit proposals for pre-conference workshops, following a process developed by staff.

Proposals will be reviewed by the Program Committee Co-Chairs, the Executive Committee and staff. The selection of workshops will be based on relevance to the conference and the potential to attract a broader audience to the conference. Proposals that appear to conflict with SRNT-sponsored workshops will be reviewed by the SRNT member responsible for the sponsored session to determine the level of conflict/crossover.

Externally developed workshops offered outside of the conference, itself, are not subject to the restrictions in "Corporate Sponsorship of SRNT Conferences" guidelines.

If organizers of pre-conference workshops anticipate the need for adding sleeping rooms to SRNT's contracted block, they must make arrangements directly with the hotel.

If food and beverage will be offered as part of a pre-conference workshop, the organizers must make arrangements directly with the hotel.

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Acceptance of a pre-conference workshop does not imply the endorsement of SRNT.

Guidelines for Externally-Funded Ancillary Meetings

External funding of ancillary meetings is not subject to the restrictions in "Corporate Sponsorship of SRNT Conferences" guidelines as long as the source of funding is publicly disclosed.

Non-SRNT ancillary meetings may not be held simultaneously or in competition with conference sessions.

SRNT committees will have the 'first right of refusal' for the use of space for after-hours meetings. If meeting space reserved by SRNT is not being used, SRNT may release that space for the hotel to sell to organizations presenting ancillary meetings, as long as those organizations are not related to the tobacco industry.

SRNT will not determine which ancillary meetings will be given space and which will not; space will be sold by the hotel without interference from SRNT, although the hotel will keep SRNT apprised of meeting space being utilized outside of conference hours.

If organizers of ancillary meetings anticipate the need for adding sleeping rooms to SRNT's contracted block, they must make arrangements directly with the hotel.

If food and beverage will be offered as part of a ancillary meeting, the organizerss must make arrangements directly with the hotel.

Guidelines for Speaker Travel

(to be developed)

Guidelines for the Assignment of Complimentary Sleeping Rooms and Sleeping Room Upgrades

Complimentary sleeping rooms, as contracted with the host hotel, will be given to the following in priority order:

President
Program Committee Co-Chairs
Keynote Speakers

Sleeping room upgrades, as contracted, will be given to Board members and the Executive Director. If additional upgrades are available, the Executive Director will assign them to SRNT VIPs in consultation, as necessary, with the President and/or Program Committee chairs.

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If individuals not directly related to the program or SRNT Board need complimentary accommodation, such requests must be made to the Executive Director based on financial hardship or other extenuating circumstance. The Executive Director will consult with the appropriate individual(s) (e.g. Global Network Committee Chair or President) before responding to the person making the request.

Guidelines for Complimentary Registrations

Complimentary registration will be given to Program Committee Co-Chairs, Keynote Speakers and to the Board of Directors. All other requests for complimentary registration must be referred to the Executive Director based on financial hardship or other extenuating circumstance. The Executive Director will consult with the appropriate individual(s) (e.g. Global Network Committee Chair or President) before responding to the person making the request.

Guideline for Providing Travel Support

SRNT will pay the cost of airfare for the Program Committee Co-Chairs. Speaker travel is discussed elsewhere in this document.

In general, travel support for individuals other than speakers and Program Co-Chairs will be made available only as external funds are procured, primarily through the Global Network, Health Disparities, or other SRNT committee.

If external funds are raised in support of attendee travel, a selection process must be developed by the body responsible for procuring the funds, in conjunction with staff. The availability of funds will be promoted within the SRNT membership and, as appropriate, online, for the broader research community. Guidelines/restrictions will be clearly stated.

Selection recipients of travel support to the SRNT conference should be fair and equitable within the guidelines and restrictions associated with the funding.

Guidelines for Green Meetings

Staff will, whenever possible, work with the host hotel to minimize waste and the meeting's environmental footprint, particularly in the area of food & beverage.

Staff will, whenever possible, minimize printing and make use of recycled or other environmentally friendly products when producing conference materials.

6.2 Policy on Corporate Sponsorship of SRNT Conferences

1) The content of the annual meeting and all publications shall be determined through peer review and will maintain the highest scientific standards. To avoid any appearance of editorial control, for profit institutions shall not be allowed to fund SRNT to support any particular article or scientific session at the annual meeting.

2) Grant support for select portions of the annual meeting, such as meals, printing services, etc., shall be accepted if consistent with the remaining principles. Entities providing such support may disclose this support through the use of corporate logos, announcements and placards but not specific product advertisements. To avoid implication that SRNT endorses the corporate entity or its products, logos from for-profit entities shall not appear proximally to the SRNT logo, e.g. on the same tote bag, but might do so in conference materials where the link between SRNT and the organization is prominently and explicitly stated. Similarly, sponsors shall not use SRNT's name in promotional materials, e.g. "Sponsor of the SRNT Annual Meeting." Governmental and not-for-profit entities, except where they are promoting a specific product or service, are not subject to the restrictions on logos or use of names.

3) Participation at the Annual Meeting as an exhibitor shall not imply endorsement of the products, policies or programs of the exhibitor. SRNT reserves the right to refuse any exhibitor to the annual meeting. The charge to exhibitors shall not comprise a significant proportion of the budget for SRNT, such that the rejection of any exhibitors or exhibitors would render a financial hardship upon the Society.

6.3 Disclosure Policy for Presenters

All presenters – paper, poster, and symposia – must complete a disclosure/conflict of interest form. Those who have not submitted disclosure forms in writing in advance of the meeting will not be allowed to present.

6.4 SRNT Smoke-free Meeting Policy

Background

Health organizations have an obligation to support smoke-free policies by holding conferences only in jurisdictions that protect the public from exposure to tobacco smoke. C-Change, the American Public Health Association, the National Cancer Institute and others have enacted policies requiring that their conferences be held only in smoke-free jurisdictions. Convening meetings and conferences only in smoke-free jurisdictions allows SRNT to economically support those jurisdictions that have chosen to protect the public from tobacco smoke exposure, helping to make progress toward eliminating the suffering and death due to tobacco use.

Policy:

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SRNT recognizes that secondhand tobacco smoke (SHS) is an important preventable cause of death from cancer and other illnesses, and that many Americans, both adults and children remain at significant risk from SHS exposure. In order to reduce cancer and other serious health hazards caused by SHS exposure and support jurisdictions from adopting smoke-free policies all meetings and conferences organized and/or sponsored by SRNT shall be held only in locations that have a comprehensive smoke-free law, unless specific circumstances justify an exception from this policy. In addition, SRNT will make every effort possible to locate its meetings in hotels that have adopted a 100% smoke-free policy (e.g., recent examples include Westin and Marriott hotels in the United States).

What is meant by "smoke free" jurisdiction?
A smoke free jurisdiction refers to a city, county, state, or country wide region where the law explicitly prohibits smoking indoors within all public facilities including schools, government buildings, conference facilities, restaurants, bars, retail outlets, transportation venues, etc.

Exceptions to the smoke-free meeting policy
The SRNT smoke-free meeting policy addresses meetings and conferences organized or sponsored by SRNT that involving 20 or more attendees. The policy excludes meetings in which SRNT is not the sole or primary organizer or sponsor. However, SRNT should encourage the organizers of such meetings to hold their meeting or conference in a smoke-free jurisdiction. For any meetings with more than 20 people, exceptions to the smoke-free policy will need to be approved by the SRNT Executive committee.

Will holding the meeting at a smoke-free facility satisfy the policy?
No. It is not sufficient for a meeting or conference facility itself to be smoke free. Rather, to satisfy the policy, it must be located in a jurisdiction, city, county, state, or country that has a comprehensive smoke free policy. This is because the purpose of the SRNT policy is to recognize the contribution of jurisdictions that protect the public and employees from SHS, not simply to protect the health of those who attend the meeting. If for some reason it is deemed impossible to locate a meeting in a smoke free jurisdiction every effort should be made to at least locate the meeting in a smoke-free hotel within the smoking jurisdiction (e.g., a Westin hotel located in Latin America).

When will the smoke-free meeting policy go into effect?
In order to provide adequate time to develop implementation tools and to conduct appropriate staff training, the policy shall go into effect on January 1, 2007. However, meetings and conferences for which arrangements for a location have already been completed are exempt from the policy.

6.5 DRAFT Recommendations for a Policy on Organizing and Sponsoring Regional Conferences

Introduction

SRNT mission is to "stimulate the generation of new knowledge concerning nicotine in all its manifestations - from molecular to societal." In pursuing this mission SRNT has three main aims:

1. To sponsor scientific meetings and publications fostering the exchange of information on nicotine and tobacco.
2. To encourage scientific research on public health efforts for the prevention and treatment of tobacco use.
3. To provide a means by which legislative, governmental, regulatory and other public agencies can obtain expert advice and consultation on nicotine and tobacco.

As indicated in the SRNT bylaws "while the Society is incorporated in the United States, the intent is to be international in scope in order to foster productive interactions among colleagues from different countries and to facilitate the exchange of information on world issues." In order to achieve this vision, SRNT has established the Global Network Committee (GNC) and has sponsored multiple functions in connection with its annual meetings as well as through regional conferences.

Context: SRNT Role in Global Tobacco Research

Considering the aggressive nature of the global tobacco epidemic, SRNT recognizes the substantial role of research in reducing the global impact of this epidemic. In order to promote tobacco research globally, collaborative networking must be established in all regions of the world. SRNT mission to generate new knowledge provides a unique opportunity for the Society to play a role addressing this global tobacco epidemic. Demonstrating its global commitment, SRNT includes in its board a member representing Africa, Asia, Oceana, and Latin America, and has established the Global Network Committee (GNC). The GNC aims to enhance the overall mission of SRNT by actively promoting and encouraging sustained global involvement in tobacco control science through:

(1) Enabling and increasing the cultural and geographic diversity of SRNT membership and conference attendants;
(2) Promoting cross-border research collaboration, networking, and mentoring;
(3) Promoting the communication, dissemination, and adoption of tobacco control science among all regions of the world, especially in low- and middle-income countries;
(4) Contributing scientifically to the implementation, enforcement, and evaluation of international agreements and other internationally focused, evidenced-based tobacco control programs;
(5) Fostering tobacco control science capacity building, including identifying and seeking resources to fund research; and
(6) Develop training opportunities, including the possibility of developing "school sessions" similar to those used by other organizations (e.g., IBRO) that could be used to disseminate knowledge, initiate research partnerships and motivate young professionals to be involved in research on nicotine and tobacco.
[7] Organizing functions, such as pre-conference workshops, to address issues related to global tobacco research and to showcase research activates in low and middle income countries.

Policies on Regional Conferences

An important component of promoting SRNT global scientific agenda is to convene regional conferences and workshops that foster networking and exchange of information. This ad hoc committee was established to develop recommendations for policies relevant to organizing regional conferences under the auspices of SRNT or co-sponsored by SRNT. The issue of developing SRNT national and regional Chapters, while relevant to this ad hoc committee, will be addressed by a separate ad hoc committee. It is expected that recommendations for both committee would be considered in context by the SRNT board.

Recommendations for SRNT Involvement in Regional Conferences:
The following set of recommendations was developed to assist the SRNT board in establishing a policy for governing SRNT involvement in regional conferences.

1. SRNT-sponsored conferences must be scientific in nature and be built around evidence-based research. The scientific agenda must be developed in coordination with SRNT board and be consistent with SRNT¹s mission as a scientific society.

2. The organizing group of any SRNT-sponsored regional conference must support SRNT¹s mission (as indicated above) and adhere to SRNT policies and roles and regulations, as stipulated in SRNT bylaws and policy documents.

3. If a conference is organized by an SRNT chapter, then the main SRNT would not share in any financial profits or liability. If SRNT co-sponsors a regional conference or provides support and permission to use its name or logo, a specific plan must be developed as part of the planning process to address any potential SRNT liability and this should be considered by the SRNT Board when reviewing requests for approval.

4. SRNT policy on Conflict of Interests Regarding Receipt of Funds from External Organizations should be strictly followed. The policy provides specific guidelines related to receiving funds from external organizations, including pharmaceutical companies, government agencies, local businesses, charitable foundations and any other organization outside SRNT that might provide support for conferences. Under no circumstances should funds from the tobacco industries or organizations associated with that industry be accepted by organizers of any SRNT-sponsored or co-sponsored conferences. The organizers must disclose sources of funding (committed and anticipated), and are expected to submit periodic updates on new funding or fund-raining activities.

5. In regions or countries where an SRNT chapter already exists, it is expected that the official chapter will be the immediate organizing entity rather than SRNT. The chapter would be responsible for implementing SRNT policies on regional conferences and would coordinate specific details with the main SRNT board as needed.

6. Unless otherwise authorized, organizers must not present themselves as representing SRNT to any other groups, organizations, or governmental agencies. Only the board or its designate(s) may represent SRNT. If members are organizing a chapter conference, they represent that chapter of SRNT rather than the main SRNT.

7. Organizers must be members of SRNT and members of SRNT must be included in the Program and Scientific Committee. In regions where there is no chapter of SRNT at least one member of the GNC should be involved in the program committee.

8. A registration fee must be charged to members and nonmembers using SRNT guidelines and in a manner that gives SRNT members a reduced fee advantage. Information on how to become an SRNT member should be provided to those interesting in applying for membership.

9. A proposal that includes details on the planned conference, its theme, budget, the experience of the conference organizers in organizing similar meetings, and sources of support must be submitted to SRNT before the launch of the meeting. The agenda for the conference might be reviewed by the SRNT GNC, if needed, to provide inputs and recommendations on the balance of the content of the program and its consistency with SRNT mission.

10. Recognizing that regions differ in their priorities, research activities, and available capacity, it is expected that the content would vary accordingly. Regardless of the type of research represented (e.g., basic science vs. policy-related research), minimum requirements must be met. A balance of basic, clinical, and population research should be encouraged.

11. A written report on each conference and its finances will be expected of any SRNT-sponsored regional conference. This report must be submitted within three to six months after convening the conference.

12. The use of SRNT's logo should adhere to SRNT guidelines and the "Policy on Conflict of Interests Regarding Receipt of Funds from External Organizations."

Levels of SRNT Involvement

It is recognized that level of SRNT involvement in organizing or co-sponsoring regional conferences will vary depending on the purpose of the conference, the organizers, and the presence of other co-sponsors. In all cases, guidelines stipulated here must govern SRNT involvement. It is expected that the GNC committee and the board representative from the host region will be representing the SRNT Board in the planning activities. Financial arrangements must be negotiated directly with the SRNT Board.

The ad hoc committee discussed three possible venues where SRNT may be involved:

1) Conferences organized by SRNT or its official chapters. SRNT-organized conferences are governed by existing Society policies. Guidelines for conferences that are organized by SRNT chapters will follow similar procedures as SRNT annual conference.

2) SRNT may contribute to or co-sponsor regional conferences that are organized by groups of SRNT members or other regional societies. Levels of involvement within such conferences will vary from providing direct financial contribution to providing permission to use SRNT name. SRNT involvement must, in all cases, adhere to its guidelines, as stipulated in this and other policy documents.

3) SRNT through its Global Network Committee may be involved in coordinating capacity building functions. The aims of these functions would be to disseminate knowledge to facilitate research partnerships on nicotine and tobacco. The shape of these meetings may vary and would be guided by additional policies. Similar initiatives conducted by other organizations have been highly successful in capacity building. One example is a program sponsored by the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) Visiting Lecture Team Program (VLTP).