

## FAQs about Hosting the FemRhet Conference

Thanks for asking about hosting the Feminisms and Rhetorics conference; we are delighted in your interest! We look forward to working with you as a co-host for the Feminisms and Rhetorics conference.

The Coalition website, [www.cwshrc.org](http://www.cwshrc.org), has a link to our call for sites . We ask that you submit a proposal, so the committee (under the direction of the Past President) can take a look at all proposals equally.

### **What are ideal sites?**

The conference is most accessible when located in an area with cheap and easy access to flights and hotels. Additionally, we prefer locations that allow Conference participants to move around easily, have access to things to do, and are affordable. (Warm weather is nice too!)

### **What are the timelines for proposals and site announcements?**

Official calls for proposals go out in the Spring of odd-numbered years (2005, 2007, 2009, for example.) and the site location will be announced at the Femrhet conference of the same year. At the 2003 conference, we announced the 2005 location; at the 2005 conference, we announced 2007, etc.

### **When are the dates for the conference?**

The specific dates of the conference are up to you; we ask that you pick a date when there will be significant availability of hotel rooms and transportation in and out of your area. (Football weekends probably aren't a good idea.)

Traditionally, the conference has been held in early to middle October. (The first one, however, was held at the end of August). The end of August date caused problems because it conflicted with the beginning of school years. The early October date has caused some problems for people who are on a quarter or trimester schedule, however. Ultimately, the dates are up to you. We ask that you try to be sensitive to other conference dates and academic schedules as much as possible.

The conference starts on Thursday morning and runs until Saturday noon; the Coalition holds a business meeting Saturday afternoon and will require space for that.

### **How should we schedule the registration deadline?**

The registration deadline must occur in the same fiscal year as the conference. Many if not all of our participants rely on funding from their universities attend the conference. As a rule, universities will not pre-register people for a conference many months in advance using money from one fiscal year to pay for another fiscal year. Fiscal years run July 1-June 30<sup>th</sup>.

### **How many people traditionally attend the conference?**

Conference registration has consistently been around 400 people. Conference attendance per day fluctuates, of course, and you should take that into consideration when you negotiate your room block with the hotel.

### **How many rooms do we need and what type of rooms?**

This is entirely up to you based on the number of people that you accept for presentations. The 2007 conference ran approximately 12 concurrent sessions running for 2 ½ days and two keynote speakers sessions during which nothing else planned.

**What kind of setup and equipment do we need (chairs, table and chairs, audio-visual equipment)?**

While the overall room setup is up to you, lecture style (rows of chairs) or roundtables have been used effectively in the past.

We do require at least one meeting room/ conference hall that can hold all of the conference participants during the keynote(s).

Required equipment in rooms includes a lectern or head table for presenters, an overhead projector and a screen. While internet access and/or LCD overheads would be lovely, we recognize the prohibitive cost of such items.

**How many meals should the conference provide?**

Mealtimes are a significant part of community building and we ask that the conference provide *at least one* meal—a luncheon or dinner—where the conference can come together as a whole. However, we encourage you include more than just that one meal—we like to eat with our friends!

You should also consider that

1. The number of meals provided should reflect the how easy it is for people to get to inexpensive food—conference participants should not be dependent on the hotel only for their meals, if they must purchase a majority of their own meals. If participants need to go off-site for food, sufficient time should be built into the schedule so that they are able to eat their meal in a fairly relaxed manner and not miss too many sessions.
2. Many of our conference participants (about 50%) are graduate students; an all-inclusive (or mostly inclusive) registration helps decrease their financial expenditures. There are ways to negotiate food costs with your conference site; you might do a buffet or a certificate program (where you only pay for the meals actually eaten).
3. Many of our attendees have dietary issues: vegan, vegetarian (no fish, fish, no dairy, dairy, etc), diabetic, gluten-free, etc. It is helpful if people have options. We encourage you to ask participants if they need such things during the registration process so you can evaluate the demand.

**What else should we consider?**

1. Our attendees range in age from 18 to 81, so you need to think about issues related to age. For example, accessibility is becoming more of an issue for us, as are the availability of child-care or breastfeeding rooms. We encourage you to ask participants if they need such things during the registration process so you can evaluate the demand and adjust accordingly.

2. We ask that you provide a gender-neutral or unisex bathroom. This allows everyone access to a safe restroom space. One way to do this is to provide information on the locations of single-stall restrooms or unisex restrooms. Another way is to convert a bathroom (the easiest one is the men's because we tend to be a female intensive conference) into a unisex bathroom.

### **What kind of support does the Coalition provide?**

The Coalition provides a number of different types of support.

1. Seed money: The Coalition will provide you with \$1000 seed money, to be returned after the completion of the conference.
2. Advice: The executive committee and advisory board will also provide support and/or off-site assistance and work, if possible. Many of us have hosted the conference before and we are happy to answer any and all questions.
3. Bank Account: The Coalition will help you open a bank account in the Coalition's name in order to process the money from registration, bills, etc.
4. Off-site work: If you request it, the Coalition will help you with work that can be off-site. This might include generating a list of plenary/keynote speakers, making contact with people, reading proposals, helping generate a book list, soliciting for goodie bags, etc.
5. Assistance with insurance information, if need be.

We are also happy to add to this list.

### **What are the Coalition's requirements?**

The Coalition requires you

1. List the Coalition of Women Scholars in Rhetoric and Composition as a co-host
2. Use the official Feminisms and Rhetorics website ([femrhnet.cwshrc.org](http://femrhnet.cwshrc.org)) as the conference website. (How this will occur can be discussed once the conference site is determined.)
3. Split the profits with the Coalition 50/50
4. Provide a room to hold a business meeting on Saturday afternoon
5. Represent the Coalition and the Conference in a positive manner

### **What kinds of budgetary items should we consider?**

The budget from the 2007 conference included items such as

AV (overhead trans/screens)  
Bank Fees  
Thanks you items/tips  
Food, 20% tax, 18% tip,  
Use of a conference planner for pre-post events and Clinton library reception  
Transportation to/from off-site events  
Printing (program, signs, buttons, maps)  
Conference Insurance  
Registration Costs (handled by the city-see note below)  
Credit Card Fees (2.5% of all credit card transactions)  
Conference Badges and add'l info packets  
Miscellaneous office supplies—paper, pens, electric cords, thank you cards, etc.  
Conference Reimbursements for canceled registrations and plenary speakers  
Web design/support  
Honorarium for speakers

(Please note that you must have insurance for the conference!)

### **How many people should be on the planning committee?**

The more the better! Putting together a conference is an incredible amount of work and many hands will make it a pleasurable experience. We do not recommend you do this without departmental support in the form of course release(s), and student labor.

**What else might be helpful for us to know or think about?**

*If you are holding this off-campus:*

You might consider consulting with a conference planner, especially when negotiating the room block and the food amounts. They do this for a living and understand how to talk to the hotel people. It is good to have someone on your side; obviously it is not in the best interests of the hotel to help *you* get the best deal. A conference planner is also useful if you want to arrange a Wednesday night or Saturday afternoon/evening event.

Your city or town may also have a convention planning center that can be very useful to you. The 2007 Fem Rhet conference registration was handled entirely by the city Tourism board for three dollars per registration—they took credit cards, checks, po's; returned registration fees; deposited the money into the conference account; settled up with the credit cards, (don't forget to add in that 3% cc fee!), ran name tags, created welcome banners for the airport, and manned the registration desk. This was invaluable help and significantly decreased the work load.

*If you are holding this on your campus:*

You should see if you have a conference planning office which can help you arrange the conference, deal with registration, room scheduling, etc. Most planning offices will negotiate a per-attendee fee depending upon the services that they provide.