Presenting at a Professional Conference

University Research and Creative Achievement Day has two primary goals: to model for CCSU students the experience of attending, and presenting at, a professional conference in their field; and to showcase the research achievements of the student population here at Central.

As a way of sharing new ideas and research, scholars in their disciplines convene in a “conference setting” to present new work. Usually, these conferences are large affairs with hundreds or thousands of delegates and many panels taking place at the same time; they also feature several keynote lecturers and shared meals.

In hosting this event for students and their faculty mentors, CCSU’s URCAD has scaled this down considerably for our students, although we will have panels and poster presentations from a wide range of majors on this campus. When we receive the conference abstracts and titles, we organize a lunch-time poster session for all posters to be displayed at once, and afternoon panels of three to four like-minded scholars (in terms of theme and discipline).

For the afternoon panels, each student will “read” (while looking up from time to time, engaging the audience with eye contact and verbal asides) a 15-minute paper, which equals about a 6-page document, double-spaced, using Times New Roman font, size 12. These presentations allow students to share some of the work they have done in their classes or in research settings with their advisors and other students. If you're sharing a paper longer than 5 or 6 pages, you probably want to edit it down to something that can be presented effectively in the time allowed. After each student presents his/her work, there is time for the audience members (ranging in number from about 3-20) to respond with connections, further thoughts, and questions. There will be a moderator to introduce all of the panelists and to run the Q&A portion.

Generally, it helps to have a handout for your own presentation, containing your name and email address, the title of your paper, an overview of your thesis, key quotations you interpret to support your thesis, a list of questions to consider further, and a list of Works Cited.

Dress should be business casual: slacks or skirt, a nice shirt, sweater, or jacket. Keep it simple and professional. You do not want your audience to be distracted by your attire. The entire day begins with the “key note” presentations of the four senior prize winners for 2016, the graduate student prize winner, and the winners of the Elihu Burritt Research Award. After that, we will move to the poster session and lunch buffet. Following lunch are the break out sessions featuring paper presentations on a similar topic. Each break out session is about 60-75 minutes (enough time for three-four presentations and then the discussion period afterward.) We will design and circulate a conference program with contributors’ names, paper titles, presentation times and locations, so you know where to be and when. You may want to save this program for future documentation of your involvement in the profession. You certainly do not need to attend every session
throughout the day, but you will be glad you did if you find time to see what other students are working on as well.

Thank you very much for participating in this exciting event. We hope you learn some things and meet new people, but mostly, that you have fun throughout the day, having solidified what you most likely already believe: That scholarship is often most rewarding when it is shared with other people.