ANNUAL MEETING SLOT ALLOCATION POLICY

This document and its process are used to determine the number of scientific sessions allocated to each Section, SPIG, Caucus and Forum. This process was created in 2013 after a review of survey results and comments from APHA staff and program planners. Survey results from the past few years indicate that the size of the Annual Meeting is adversely affecting the experience of our attendees. Attendees feel that the meeting is too large and the quality of the sessions is inconsistent. The meeting continues to grow without taking into account use of the meeting space and the quality of the sessions.

This new session allocation policy addresses five goals:

1. To create a process that is fair and transparent among the Sections, SPIGs, Caucuses, Forums and other groups.
2. To optimize the use of the meeting space so that it is more manageable for staff, planners and attendees.
3. To reduce the number of sessions this allows program planners and staff to focus on the quality of sessions not quantity.
4. To encourage collaborative, cross-component planning of sessions.
5. To increase the attendance in each session.

TWO STEP PROCESS

To reach our goals above the allocation process is broken into the two steps. The first is determining how many sessions are allocated to each member group. The second is how those sessions are distributed across time slots.

1. Session allocations
   We recognize that each component has a different set of data. One formula was created for Sections and Special Primary Interest Groups and another for Caucuses, Forums and other groups.
   - Section and SPIGs Formula (see page 2)
   - Caucuses/Forums Formula (see page 3)

   There are a number of groups that do not fall under the clear category of Section, SPIG, Caucus or Forum. These special cases were treated differently depending on the data available and the group’s needs.
   - APHA Sessions - All APHA departments were allocated the same number of sessions they originally were allocated in the previous year. Staff will be encouraged to decrease the number of sessions in an effort to provide higher quality.
   - Student Assembly - The student assembly is a unique component as all student members are automatically given membership in the Assembly. The allocation of their sessions was based on attendance history.
   - Film Festival - The film festival receives one session per time slot. There are now 12 time slots with the addition of the Monday General Session.
   - HIIT Tech Center - The Tech Center is also in a unique category. Their allocation was based on attendance history.

2. Session distribution
   The next step is to look at the distribution of the allocated slots. It was decided that no group should have more than 5 sessions at any given time slot. Sessions should be spread out across the 12 time slots to reduce overlap on session content and to keep the number of sessions at any one time to a limit. Components that are unhappy with their assigned time slots can bring their concerns to the conventions department. However, no change is guaranteed once sessions have been scheduled.

RECEIVING ADDITIONAL SESSIONS
Groups are allowed to add one session to their original allocated number. This additional session must be a co-sponsored session. Generally the caliber of presentations is higher when the components collaborate. Components who collaborate on a session must determine which group is allocated the additional session. This means that groups have the ability to collaborate more than once as long as they only claim one session as theirs. Requests for additional sessions must be made in writing to donna.wright@apha.org and must include proof of collaboration in the form of a transferred abstract or written communication.
TIME SLOT ALLOCATION FORMULA

Sections and SPIGs
We looked at three key factors in allocating slots for Sections and SPIGs;
1. Membership - A large membership is an indication of the components representation within APHA and most likely within the field.
2. Registration – More sessions should be allotted to groups with high attendance.
3. Abstract submissions - The number of abstracts submitted to a particular component indicates the public health community’s interest in that field or topic.

Step by Step process
1. Use the previous year’s spreadsheet as a template for entering information. Be sure to add any new groups or remove disbanded groups.
2. The first column is the previous year’s session allocation. This should be the number they were originally allocated not the number of sessions actually held.
3. In the purple columns update the membership number for each group. Ask membership for the most current report. The “% of members” column will change as the numbers are updated.
4. In the orange columns update the number of registrants from each group using the report from J Spargo’s system. Again, the “% of registration” field will change as the numbers are updated.
5. In the green columns update the number of abstracts submitted to each component using the report from the Confex system. The percentages will change here as well.
6. The spreadsheet will automatically update to show the average of all three percentages; percent of membership, percent of registrants, percent of abstracts submitted.
7. The number in step 6 is used to determine the final number of sessions allocated to a session. It will be the percent of sessions allocated to the group based on a predetermined number of sessions allowed.
8. The column titled “# session per formula” is a formula which includes the grand number of sessions that we would like to allocate. If you click on one of the cells you will see a formula similar to “600*I2.” The first number is the number of sessions that APHA has determined should be allocated. This should be changed each year in order to reduce the number of sessions. Change the number in the first cell and then drag down the formula to change all cells.
9. The column titled “change” indicates the difference between what was allocated the previous year and what the formula says should be allocated for the next year. In some cases this number can be really big. No group should gain or lose more than 3 sessions. In order to make that change you need to hand type in the final number into the grey column. Use the following to determine how many sessions to actually add or take away.
   • If the results of the formula were the same or a difference of 1, the calculated session allocation did not change.
   • If the difference between the 2013 allocation and the formula was 2 or 3 sessions, the group gained or lost only 1 session from what was allocated in 2013.
   • If the difference was 4 or 5 sessions, the group gained or lost only 2 sessions.
   • If the difference was 6 or more points, the group gained or lost 3 sessions.
   • We also decided that no group should have more than 5 sessions per time slot. Since there are now 12 time slots, no group can have more than 60 sessions.
10. If the last step was done correctly than the column named “Difference from XXX Allocation” should only be a negative or positive 1, 2 or 3.
11. The last column in bright orange is for informational purposes. It allows us to see how many sessions a group actually held as well as how their attendance was. This doesn’t play into the formula but is useful to see.
TIME SLOT ALLOCATION FORMULA

Caucuses
Since membership data for caucuses can be inaccurate or non-existent we felt that historical data and session attendance were the best factors to use. Each year, APHA hires room monitors to count the number of attendees in each presentation. Attendees have a better experience when sessions have a higher attendance.

Step by Step process
1. Use the previous year’s spreadsheet as a template for entering information. Be sure to add any new groups or remove disbanded groups.
2. Delete the attendance history from the meeting 3 years prior. Keep the attendance data from the previous year.
3. Add in the attendance data for the meeting that has just ended. First, count the number of sessions that were actually held. Not the number that was allocated but the number of sessions they actually had.
4. Then count the sessions had less than 20 attendees and add to the “Sessions with less than 20” column. The percent in the next column will change automatically and an average for the two percentages will be calculated.
5. Use the information below to determine the actual number of sessions to allocate to each Caucus.
   a. Groups with an average attendance of 0%-19% receive the same number of sessions that they received the past year. They had good attendance which indicates that they were allocated the correct number of sessions.
   b. Groups with an average of 20%-24% lost 1 session from last year.
   c. Groups with an average of 25%-49% lost 2 sessions and
   d. Groups with an average of 50% or more lost 3 sessions.
   e. This follows the same principle used for Sections and SPIGs in that no group should gain or lose more than 3 sessions. Since one of our goals is to decrease the number of sessions, no caucus was granted more sessions.

Forums
Per the agreement with each forum when they were established, they are allowed to receive 2 oral sessions and 1 poster session. This policy was not well enforced in the past, but moving forward we will adhere to the policy.