



# ACSP

Connecting educators,  
researchers and students

June 19, 2017

Professor Paulo Pinho  
Secretary General, AESOP

Dear Professor Pinho and AESOP Executive Committee Members,

ACSP is investigating ways to strengthen our interaction with AESOP and other international organizations, including through joint conferences. We are delighted to learn through Zenia Kotval that you share our interests. This letter is intended to open up the possibility of further collaboration between our organizations and to clarify our perspective on several key issues.

We hope we can assure you that it is our intention to avoid any interference between our own conferences and joint AESOP-ACSP conferences. Although we have at times held a conference in the same year as a world congress, we have never held our own conference in the same year as a joint AESOP-ACSP conference, and we intend to follow this practice. A listing of ACSP conferences shows that joint conferences were held in Oxford, England (1991); Toronto, Canada (1996); Leuven, Belgium (2003); Chicago, Illinois (2008); and Dublin, Ireland (2013).<sup>1</sup>

We hold our own conferences at hotels rather than on university campuses for a number of reasons. The main reason is that our conference attendance numbers are now so large – from about 75 in 1980 to 1,200 in 2016 -- that it is challenging to secure a local host university with sufficient capacity for lodging in a city with reasonable flight connections. In addition, we have typically held the conference in the fall season to accommodate North American faculty schedules. Most of the faculty from our member universities work on 9-month contracts with many obligations during the summer months that make conference attendance during the months of June through September challenging. Hosting a conference at a member university while students are in session is not feasible for the amount of space the event requires. Our practice has also been that we hold several meetings concurrent with the standard conference proceedings, such as our governing board and journal editorial board meetings, adding to the challenge of finding sufficient space to accommodate our needs. Finally, ACSP negotiates with hotels for meeting space and sleeping rooms several years in advance of the conference to achieve favorable financial arrangements.

ACSP maintains primary control over the operations and logistics of our conferences, even though we use hotel space. We will share a few details about our conference logistics. Prior to 1999, a member-university local host did all the conference management (for example, securing the hotels for sleeping rooms and meeting spaces; creating the call for abstracts; receiving abstracts; photocopying and distributing abstracts for review; communicating the decision for the abstract to all authors; scheduling the abstracts for a preliminary program, maintaining all

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<sup>1</sup> ACSP Conference Listing: <http://www.acsp.org/page/PubsArchiveConf>

changes to the program; creating the final program). Due mainly to the growth in conference attendance, starting in 1999, we made several changes. ACSP continues the tradition of member university local hosts. Recent history has the local host school providing a conference theme and creating locally focused sessions and mobile tours for the conference. The local host school also provides about 50 student volunteers who work eight-hour shifts to earn complimentary registration. ACSP works with the local host's recommendations for preferred hotels and opening reception space. Even though ACSP has had a contract association manager for many years, the Governing Board has oversight of the conference budget. The National Conference Committee guides the significant decisions of the event and schedule of presentations. The contract management group that we hire serves ACSP alone as a client and provides dedicated service. The staff contract director guides and coordinates the efforts of the local host, the conference hotel, conference volunteers, abstract management and review; conference schedule management; all conference registration management, all logistical requirements, conference year-round marketing and promotions, and conference budget, accounts payable/receivable management. In addition, it has become necessary to implement on-line technology for abstract submission (more than 1100 abstracts); conference registration (1100-1200 people but closer to 2000 financial transactions); mobile app technology for personal conference schedule management and social engagement.

In regard to the flexibility that we have in the timing of our conferences, we currently have several constraints in the short term. ACSP has typically held the conference as early as mid-September and as late as the first week of November, with a preference for approximately mid-October. Recommended hotels provide bids hoping to host the ACSP conference providing several choices of Thursday-Sunday options. The conference manager (used to be Donna Dodd and now a dedicated person is coming on board) determines the best offer from several different hotels for the dates of the available space, the rates and financial concessions offered by the hotel, and the amount of space the hotel can provide. ACSP currently has hotel contracts confirmed through 2021, negotiated in advance based on bids from hotels offering a combination of favorable dates, available space, and financial concessions:

2017 in Denver, Colorado, October 12-15  
2018 in Buffalo, New York, October 25-28  
2019 in Greenville, South Carolina, October 24-27  
2020 in Toronto, Canada, November 4-8  
2021 in Miami, Florida, October 21-24

We offer a brief summary of key issues with regard to how our conference budget typically works. Historical evidence allows for a fairly predictable conference budget. The ACSP Governing Board expects the conference to net a significant profit. The conference manager researches anticipated expenses and predicts attendance. A financially successful conference comes from judicious expense management and a larger number of faculty registration collections than students. Student registration fees are currently subsidized by faculty registration fees. Even with faculty attendees paying higher fees, additional revenue sources (for example, sponsorship, advertising sales, exhibit sales, abstract submission fees) are necessary to offset conference expenses and generate the anticipated profit. Conference contract management fees have typically been part of the conference budget.

We hope that this letter is helpful to AESOP by explaining some of the ACSP considerations. And we hope that we can continue to explore how we might address the shared concerns of our two organizations, and to find ways to again work together in holding joint conferences.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Lois Takahashi", with a long, thin horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lois Takahashi  
President