

2021 Watson Conference
What Am I Doing Here? When Conference Acceptance
Doesn't Mean Conference Inclusion
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The following are some of the barriers I thought I'd come up against, versus what I really experienced:

The Fear	The Reality
Getting accepted/presenting nerves	Presenting to an empty room
Finding money to attend	Hundreds of dollars of debt
Answering questions during the Q&A	Verbal MMA during the Q&A
Autoimmune energy deficiency	Don't worry, you're not invited
Saying the wrong thing	Being consistently insulted
Not fitting in	My body and name won't/don't fit

The following are some ideas for eliminating the difficult reality that is conference attendance for many:

Free

- Allow ALL to celebration of acceptances, publications, awards without attempts at behavioral modification through correction in public and private spaces.
- Introduce graduate students, junior faculty, others to people you know at conferences.
- Consider antiracist language in Calls for Proposals (CFPs). Who are you including/excluding?
- Revisit how we list accommodations on conference websites.
- Assure that all meetings are open to those in attendance.
- Avoid social meetings held by special invitation that don't welcome "walk-ins."
- Respect the work that has been done by conference presenters by listening, responding thoughtfully, and offering critical feedback that extends research questions. My presentation isn't your office.
- Consider and then re-consider conference locations for safety and comfort of BIPoC.

Requires Labor

- Request sponsorships from publishers, hotels, and various vendors make significant amounts of money from registration fees and basic consumerism.
- Train moderators who also work as facilitators at each panel to protect presenters from aggressions and microaggressions disguised as questions.
- Request questions on index cards to avoid surprises for presenters – to be managed by moderator/facilitator/speaker.

Requires Money/Sponsorship

- Wave registration fees for attendance or ask sponsors to pay a number of fees.
- Offer book stipends created in partnership with publishing companies.
- Seek marked discounts on hotel accommodations e.g., “If we have X attendees, __ number of rooms will be free or discounted.”
- Scholarships and fellowships for flight stipends. (More of these)
- Offer course releases, ample recognition on Retention, Tenure, and Promotion packets for faculty members committed to large conferences that do not have money to pay organizing contributors. I understand this is university specific.