RECE: Organizational Structure & Conference Planning Process

A brief overview

Background. The reconceptualist movement in early childhood education gained momentum in the 1980s with conversations among scholars around the world who were concerned about the dominance of psychology and child development theory and drew from an array of more critical, feminist, postcolonial and postmodern perspectives and research in their work.

The first Reconceptualizing Early Childhood Education Conference (RECE) was held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1991. Since that time, twenty-seven conferences have been held, largely at academic or higher education institutions in locations across the U.S.A., in Australia, Norway, Denmark, New Zealand, Hong Kong, Palestine, UK, Ireland, Kenya, and Canada. Recent meetings have drawn participants from over 25 countries.

For more information, see background history and conference locations on www.receinternational.org

Organizational structures and governance in relation to conference planning

RECE conferences incorporate principles of inclusivity and attempt to promote a non-hierarchical structure. There is a somewhat informal set of procedures for conferences. For over 28 years, most of the work or decision-making about future conferences has been done at an annual “business meetings.” Business meetings are attended on a voluntary basis. Due to conference venue changes, attendants at business meetings include both experienced long-term RECE conference attendees, as well as people new to RECE.

Conference site selection, program chairs and committee members and other governance issues are discussed, proposed, and often decided at the annual business meeting. However, with RECE conference attendance growing, in 2015, a steering committee was formed to meet and make decisions, as necessary, between annual business meetings.

The steering committee is comprised of recent host committee chairs, and several others representing long-term knowledge of RECE. It reviews proposals for hosting conferences and comes to a decision, as necessary, for approval by the next business meeting. In addition, several subcommittees focus on specific issues including website and communications, inclusion, fundraising, scholarships, and awards.

Procedures for selection of conference sites and program chair and program committee

At each business meeting, one or more locations and program chairs are proposed for future conferences. At the annual business meeting, preliminary proposals for conference sites are presented, preferably two years in advance, and, if possible, discussed in some depth.
A two-year window for proposal and planning gives host committees time to think about, and to reserve lodging, conference presentation space, and develop or refine a budget. Similarly, themes for conferences are discussed, most typically one year in advance when program chairs for the next annual conference are nominated and determined, typically by vote of those in attendance. Those attending the business meeting are also encouraged to volunteer as members of the program committee, or as proposal reviewers.

At times, multiple sites are proposed for RECE conferences at business meetings. If that is the case proposals for each site are referred to the steering committee. The steering committee reviews all proposals and comes to a conclusion about the venue. Feedback is given to all teams submitting proposals, with encouragement to resubmit, if interested.

**RECE conference site selection**

Universities and groups interested in hosting a RECE conference should follow the steps outlined below:

**Step 1:** Develop a preliminary proposal. The proposal includes:

- site for conference
- potential budget, including estimate of registration fees
- host committee capability (leadership, supporting team members) and organization
- knowledge of ways to organize a conference consistent with RECE traditions, and past practices (e.g., in the past, and as examples, one presentation per person, no keynotes, registration fees that are on a sliding scale)

**Step 2:** Present the proposal to the business meeting two years before the proposed conference date and, if chosen, provide more detailed information at the business meeting one year prior to hosting the conference.

If there are competing proposals for hosting a conference, the steering committee reviews proposals and comes to a decision. The steering committee presents their decision and reasoning to the business meeting.