**TIPS FOR POSTER PRESENTATIONS**

**WHAT IS MY MESSAGE?**

- You must be able to state your main point(s) succinctly.
- All visuals and text should relate to those points.
- Abstract can serve as an outline for your poster, i.e., an illustrated abstract.
- Determine specific size requirements; how things will be organized, i.e., easels versus corkboard.

**CREATING YOUR POSTER**

- Place key sections - objectives, results, etc.
- Balance the placement of text and graphics.
- Use white space creatively to define flow of information.
- Don't fight "reader gravity" that pulls eye from top to bottom, left to right (Wheildon 1995).

**GRAPHICS**

- Graphs communicate relationships quickly.
- Graphs should be simple and clean.
- Stick to simple 2-D line graphs, bar charts, and pie charts.
- Follow text guidelines for graphs.
- Use photos that help deliver your message, if a photo doesn’t deliver a message, *don’t use it*.
- Use spot art minimally to attract attention.

**TEXT**

- Minimize text - use images and graphs instead!
- Keep text elements to *50 words or less*.
- Use phrases (rather than full sentences).
- Use advanced organization.

**COLORS**

- Use a light color background - dark letters for contrast.
- Avoid dark backgrounds with light letters.
- Stick to a theme of 2-3 colors.
SOFTWARE TOOLS
- MicroSoft PowerPoint is a good, relatively easy-to-use tool for creating posters
- Adobe Illustrator and InDesign are better, but more complex and expensive.
- MicroSoft Excel can create graphics and export for PowerPoint

EDIT & EVALUATE
- Edit! to reduce text.
- If it is not relevant to your message, remove it!
- Ask colleagues for comment on drafts - invite them to critique.
- Evaluate your work:
  - Are your objective and main message obvious?
- Leave time for friendly review and editing

HANDOUTS/CONTACT INFORMATION
- Determine if handouts are allowed: prepare per conference guidelines.
- Plan where you will place contact cards/business cards for people who wish to talk with you at a later time.

MISCELLANEOUS
- Bring sturdy, clear push pins. These are often not provided. Miscellaneous colored pins detract from the professional quality of your poster.
- Check current airline rules regarding the handling of your poster as luggage, or check rules regarding conference poster shipment guidelines. Most poster carriers will not meet carry on restrictions.
- If appropriate to the conference, bring additional VUSN program materials. As you stand near your poster, you may be asked for these.
- Wear comfortable shoes!
- Look upon the experience as one of the most pleasant, low pressure ways to present your work and meet colleagues who may further your work.

ENJOY!

REMEMBER:
An effective poster is:
- Focused on a single message
- Graphics lets graphs and images tell the story and uses text sparingly
- Keeps the sequence well-ordered and obvious.