Guidelines for Poster Presentations
ENGR 310

Posters presenting technical or scientific projects are a unique communication problem. Generally, the reader of a poster will spend no more than about 30 seconds looking at your poster before deciding whether to explore the topic in more depth or move on. Plus, your readers will be at least 5 feet away from your poster. Thus, posters need to catch the reader's eye, give the reader information about how to read the poster (what is the sequence of information?), and present the information in an interesting and readable manner.

Below are some basic guidelines:

- Content
  Be selective—you can't include everything. Save the details for your conversation or for an accompanying handout. Your poster does not serve the same purpose as a full-blown paper; rather, it should serve as an appetizer.
  Try to tell a story that answers the following questions: Why is this work important? What are the goals of the work? How did you perform the work? What did you discover? What do your discoveries mean, and how do they address your goals?
  Imagine yourself as the audience—what would you want/need to know?
  Rely more on visuals and less on text. Limit the amount of content in any one area of the poster. However, avoid complex graphs, charts, and schematics.

- Organization
  Make the sequence evident to the viewer. Readers of print materials (like your accompanying paper) know that they should read the paper from front to back and each page from top to bottom and left to right, but posters can be read in different ways.
  Begin with a conspicuous title and use section headings that people can relate to (for example, Abstract, Introduction, Results. . .)
  Introduce the viewer to the main idea an Abstract that gives a snapshot of your story. People will not have the patience to read your entire poster to get the gist—your poster is likely competing with other posters for people's attention.

- Design and Layout
  Make text readable from 6-8 feet (at least 1" high).
  Use upper/lower case, not all caps (except for the title).
  Use visual aids, but don't overdo.
  Use color to highlight, emphasize, show organization.

- Mechanics, grammar, and style
  Use language appropriate for your viewers.
  Be careful about using jargon and acronyms.
  Edit carefully for spelling, punctuation, and capitalization errors—these errors will make your poster appear unprofessional!