2023 AASHE Conference & Expo
October 29 - 31, 2023 | Boston, Massachusetts

Call for Proposals Submission Packet
Introduction
The Call for Proposals provides a way for you to share your experience, knowledge and skills in higher education sustainability at AASHE’s annual conference.

Review and acceptance of proposals will start after the submission deadline of July 14. All proposals must be submitted electronically through AASHE’s Call for Proposal Submission Form. We strongly recommend you review this packet, the submission template and consider best practices for building your session. These resources provide you with all the information you need to submit a successful proposal. Please email conference@aashe.org with any questions.

Why Present with AASHE?
- **Demonstrate thought leadership:** Gain recognition for your successes by sharing your experiences and lessons learned on the largest stage for sustainability in higher education.
- **Advance the higher education sustainability movement:** From engaging attendees with your sustainability story to empowering others with insight, tools and solutions that have helped you, your participation will enhance the community’s sustainability knowledge, skills and competencies.
- **Strengthen your skills:** Each presentation is an opportunity to refine your presentation skills and to experiment with new audience engagement techniques.
- **Build community:** Sharing your work is a great way to make connections and find partners within the AASHE community. It encourages increased peer-to-peer learning, networking and collaboration to support a stronger campus sustainability community.
- **Save money:** Accepted presenters receive a discount applicable to the cost of a full conference registration.

Program & Submission Structure
Submitters will select a session type, topic area, competency area and session level for their submission. All proposals will go through the review process described below. **Up to four presenters may be associated with a proposal.** Please read the criteria that inform the review process as you put together your proposal.

Session Types

**Field Reports (45 minutes)**
Field reports provide a great way to spotlight innovative and high impact approaches for advancing sustainability based on the real-world experiences of higher education sustainability leaders.

**Learning Labs (3 hours)**
Learning labs provide in-depth learning experiences focused on advancing sustainability-related competencies or skills. They allow deeper dives into specific topics than provided in a field report and should include significant opportunity for audience interaction.

**Networking Meetings (1 hour)**
Networking meetings are an opportunity for regional networks and other affinity groups (e.g., zero waste managers or community college representatives) to convene, network and discuss issues that are relevant to the group. They are interactive in nature and, besides a brief introduction to start the conversation, should not include a formal presentation.
Focus Areas

This year, we are particularly seeking proposals that focus on following subjects, which are based on specific needs and interests expressed by members of the AASHE community, particularly the Conference Content Task Force:

- **Gaining influence** - this may include: expanding the scope of responsibility of sustainability staff; securing or enhancing support from campus leadership; finding allies and building a stronger base of sustainability advocates; forming or strengthening coalitions; collaborating with other departments (e.g., DEI, procurement, marketing) or external actors (e.g., government, business, civil society); strengthening sustainability governance structures; or effective facilitation and stakeholder engagement.

- **Campus decarbonization** - this may include: renewable energy; building electrification and efficiency; financing options; electric vehicles; air travel reduction efforts; or behavior change programs.

- **Sustainability assessment and reporting** - this may include: successful approaches for collecting sustainability data; effective dissemination of sustainability data (e.g., through reports or dashboards); new metrics or assessment frameworks; or strategies for leveraging sustainability data/recognition to make change.

- **Racial equity and social justice** - this may include: equitable hiring practices; campus labor rights, just procurement or investment strategies; support programs for marginalized groups; affordability issues; combating white supremacy and eco-facism; Indigenization and decolonization, or non-extractive community partnerships.

- **Communications and storytelling** - this may include: avoiding greenwashing; articulating a positive vision for the future; reaching beyond the choir; social media strategies; or expanding the visibility of higher ed sustainability generally.

- **Mental health and wellness** - this may include: maintaining motivation and avoiding burnout; overcoming or managing eco-anxiety; or developing and strengthening personal resilience.

You will be asked to select the focus area that best characterizes the subject of your proposal. **Proposals that don’t relate to one or these focus areas will still be considered but are less likely to be accepted.** If none apply, please select “Other”.

**Session Levels**

All submitters self-identify their proposals as introductory, intermediate or advanced. AASHE defines each level as follows:

- **Introductory** - Material covered is foundational in nature and sessions are designed for attendees who have no prior background or are just starting in the domain of practice presented in the session.

- **Intermediate** - Material is designed for participants who have a working knowledge of the topic and a few years of experience in the domain of practice.

- **Advanced** - Material is designed for participants who have a detailed knowledge of the topic and specific experience applying or using this knowledge in a professional capacity over a long period of time.
Tips for Preparing a Successful Proposal

- **Start with your audience in mind.** Consider what you can offer that is likely to be relevant and useful to attendees and structure your proposal so as to make clear what they will take away from your session or program.
- **Engage the audience.** Consider best practices for building your session as a collaborative experience which taps into the expertise of the participants and leaves them feeling energized and inspired.
- **Focus your proposal on something specific** (e.g., the findings of a particular research project; a valuable skill or competency; or an especially successful initiative). We rarely accept proposals that provide a general overview of an institution’s sustainability efforts.
- **Highlight the unique or novel aspects** of your proposal while still demonstrating relevance to other institutions. For example, if you are proposing a session about your institution's green fund, be sure to describe any special features that distinguish your green fund from other green funds and that might be useful for other green fund administrators to implement.
- **Go deep!** Many of our members are seeking advanced, in-depth content.
- **Be provocative.** We appreciate proposals that thoughtfully challenge conventional wisdom.
- **Emphasize the impacts** of your research or initiative (e.g., on sustainable behaviors, carbon emissions, or operational costs). Proposals that demonstrate significant real-world impact tend to be reviewed more favorably.
- **Describe the evidence** you will be using to support your presentation. We especially value presentations that are well supported with evidence and/or empirical research.
- **Find partners** from other organizations. Proposals that offer insights from multiple institutions engaged in similar work tend to be well received. Posting a message to the [AASHE Member Community](https://www.aashe.org) can be a good way to find potential partners.
- **Avoid sales pitches.** All sessions must be educational in nature. **Proposals that sound like advertisements of a product or service will not be accepted.** If you are a supplier of products or services, be sure your proposal focuses on a relevant topic, concept, or idea – not one of your products or services. In addition, we strongly recommend including a campus representative as a presenter to help make the content applicable to participants.
- **Let AASHE consider your proposal for alternate formats.** Proposals that offer more flexibility have a better chance of being accepted in some form.
- **Become an AASHE member.** We give preference to submissions featuring people associated with AASHE member organizations and **we don’t accept proposals submitted by or featuring non-member businesses** (except as a benefit associated with sponsorship). Learn more about [AASHE membership](https).
- **Review the submission fields** and prepare your text in advance. Use this [template](https://www.aashe.org) to draft your proposal and remember to use a character count to make sure you don't exceed the character limits.
- **Read the review criteria** (below). To be accepted, your proposal will need to score well on at least several of them.
Proposal Review Criteria

All complete proposals will be reviewed by AASHE staff. Our primary goal is to ensure that conference sessions include a well-balanced mix of high-quality programs that will meet the diverse interests of the AASHE community. Complete proposals will be reviewed and evaluated using the following criteria (note that we don’t necessarily expect proposals to be strong on every criterion):

- The proposed session provides **broadly applicable lessons, tools and ideas**.
- The proposed session introduces **new, high-impact and solutions-oriented** research or initiatives.
- The proposed session equips attendees with **new or enhanced skills**.
- The proposed session promotes **active learning** and makes effective use of audience engagement techniques.
- The proposed session reflects and/or contributes to **racial equity and social justice**.

Important Dates & Deadlines*

- **Call for Proposals submission period closes**: July 14, 2023
- **Proposal review**: July/August 2023
- **Acceptance/decline notifications**: second half of August, 2023
- **Presenter Registration Deadline** (and presenter discount expires): September 15, 2023
- **Conference Dates**: October 28-31, 2023

*Schedule and deadlines subject to change.

Create a Proposal

All proposals must be submitted electronically through **AASHE’s Proposal Submission Form**.

- Review the submission fields and prepare your text in advance by using this **template**.
- Remember to use a character count to make sure you don’t exceed the character limits.
- You can save an incomplete proposal and come back later to submit it prior to the deadline.

Changing Your Proposal

To make changes to your proposal before the submission deadline, use the link provided in the email confirmation you received when submitting the proposal. If you make any edits to your proposal, **you must re-submit the updated proposal for it to be considered**. No changes will be accepted to proposals after the deadline. If your proposal is accepted, you will be able to make **minor edits** to your session as long as they don’t change the overall focus.

Presenter Policies

If your proposal is accepted, you will need to agree to presenter policies. These policies clarify our expectations for presenters and help us deliver an exceptional educational experience. Among other things, they specify that presenters grant AASHE an irrevocable, royalty-free, non-exclusive and perpetual license to share presentation materials. Presenters will receive a discount off the applicable registration rate, as described on the **Rates and Categories webpage**. The specific amount of the discount varies based on membership status and student status.