

Pittcon Short Courses 2020

Final Report

Chair: Amit Ghosh
Chair-elect: Melinda Stevens
Office coordinator: Valarie Cassidy

1- Worked well:

Given the circumstance of Covid19 this year, I feel Short Courses went very well and we had a good selection of Short Courses for those attended Pittcon 2020.

A- Two NEW items for Short Course were tried this year and had good success.

1-An Exploratory New Short Course Committee reviewed and graded the proposals for current, in-demand and popular topics. Experienced instructors were chosen in cases of overlapping topics. Collectively, we have reduced weak, duplicate and concerning Short Courses. This helped the attendees focus on quality Short Courses for their needs, taught by proficient instructors. Out of 128 Short Course proposal received, the review committee accepted 85 (66%) and rejected 43 (34%).

2-Two Short Course webinars were offered:

(a) *Analytical Data treatment using the Excel Analysis Tool-Pak* by Mark Stauffer on September 19, 2019 at the cost of \$99 per attendee. A net income of ~\$1000 was achieved from about 29 attendees.

b) *m-HPLC Method Development Made Easy* by Michael Dong on November 15, 2019 at the cost of \$199 per attendee. A net income of ~\$1000 was achieved from seven students.

Comments – Experience from the two short course webinars indicates keeping a lower cost will likely attract a higher number of attendees. More the number of advertisement flyers sent, higher will be the number of attendees.

B- Final Short Courses Program

Eleven courses were cancelled because of low enrollment.

Six courses were withdrawn

Total of 68 short courses were offered

Used a total of 15 rooms for courses and one for the Short Course office

The following table shows a comparison between 2018, 2019 and 2020. It can be seen that although we had fewer courses in 2020, we had higher attendees per course ratio.

Year	Rooms Available	Rooms Used	# of Courses	Total Attendance	Attendance/ # of courses	#CW Student Aides
2018	24	22	93	896	9.6	10
2019	21	16	76	902	11.9	10
2020	19	16	68	830	12.2	10

C- CWS and students:

Short Courses was assigned four CWS: Miller D., Sarver J., Ghosh S. and Miller N. They adapted well and assumed their duties with minimal direction. There were challenges with handful of attendees and those were addressed with ease.

We had requested the use of two students each morning and afternoon, with the exception of Wednesday and Thursday afternoons. All were dressed appropriately, were courteous, and handled their duties with efficiency and professionalism. They also had great personalities and were fun to have them in Short Courses.

I think that this was an appropriate number of both CWS and students. There is usually a rush of people checking in for their courses in the morning between 7:30 and 9:00 and in the afternoon between 11:30 and 1:00 but we never had more than one or two people waiting in line.

D- Short Course Office and classroom configurations:

The configuration of the office, and classrooms were reasonably good, except some of the rooms were larger than needed.

E- Audio-Visual, AVPG, Communication Tech, Meeting Coordination, PIE, Experient and Treasurer;

I would like to thank the following groups for their superb support, (a) Audio-Visual, (b) AVPG (Mark Black and his group) (c) Communication Technology (John Sember & his group), (d) Meeting Coordination, (e) Pie, (f) Barbara from Experient and our treasurer's office.

2- Suggestions for improvements for future years:

A- Refreshments:

Refreshments were provided for a mid-morning and mid-afternoon break. Refreshments should be ordered based on the number attendees every day and that can be accomplished only after getting the list of total attendees each day (AM & PM).

B- Online surveys:

This year the survey was online and formatted to force attendees to complete the survey to receive their certificates. The concern is surveys should not be mandatory. Additionally, surveys should not be part of receiving the certificate. *Suggestion is to have the survey process discussed with the Short Course Chair. It is very important that the survey questions need to be reviewed by the Short Course chair before launch, to provide assistant to the following year's chair.*

C- Short Course Catalogue, Short Course Publications and Webinar advertisements:

For strengthening the importance and reputation of Short Course it is important that the Short Course Catalogue, Short Course Publications and Webinar advertisements be reviewed with the Short Course Chair/Chair-elect before these are published. Timely publications of these documents are very important too.

D- Miscellaneous items:

Reduce the number of international instructors to control higher expenses due to more expensive airfare, longer hotel stays and meal expenses.

Do not suggest international instructors for 1/2-day courses. Financially, those are tough unless, the cut off for number of paid attendees are more than 15.

Send multiple reminds to the instructors to make their hotel and flight reservation through Pittcon links. *If not followed, Pittcon will not cover additional expenses.*

Instructors teaching multiple short courses *should* teach consecutive days to control hotel and meal costs.

Try reducing half-day short course in the afternoon of the last day.

Compared to renting a big copier/printer, a small tabletop copier/printer will be financially smart.

3- Survey from attendees & Instructors:

As of writing this report the surveys were not available.

4- Time Line – Short Courses:

Pittcon 2021 is about 1 week later than Pittcon 2020 so; most of the tasks should be similar to 2020 time line.

Early May: prior to call for proposals the following must be approved:

- Approval email notification letter
- Rejection email notification letter
- Instructor agreement form
- Pricing for courses
- Pricing for honorarium for instructor(s)

Late May and Early June: Call for proposals send out multiple times

- Emails to previous presenters
- Pittcon web site
- To those indicating interest
- Press releases with approved flyer

July 1: deadline for submitting proposals

Mid July: Review and Selection of Short Course Proposal (similar to Program group)

- Acceptance and Rejection letters sent out.
- Any course modification, day/date change request letter sent out
- Determine, with Meetings Coordinator, how many rooms are available/needed
- Determine rooms that will need computer set-ups

August:

- Approval of cover for Short Courses brochure
- List of Short Courses categories to registration
- Start making preliminary room assignments

September:

- Preliminary Short Course program put together
- Decide on Survey format plus questions for attendees and instructors

Early October:

- Chair approved Short Courses brochure goes out
- Reply to request forms for signs, housing, CT, AV equipment, office layout, refreshments, security needs, student aids

November: Information sent to instructors

Early to mid-February:

Approval of final Short Course program

February/day after early registration ends:

Final decision as to which courses to cut because of low registration – 3 or less (the break-even point is 4/course)

Instructors who were teaching more than one course – if the enrollment in one course was sufficient, they were given the opportunity to teach the class with only 3 students but with no honorarium for that class

Emails were sent to each instructor indicating that either their short course was confirmed for 2020 or that it would not be offered at Pittcon 2020. If their course was approved, they also received information on housing, expenses, and travel.

An email was also sent to each instructor if his or her course fell into the category of teaching without an honorarium.

5- Time Line - Webinars:

Decide on number of short courses, dates, times and call instructors for proposal and availability. Sign up with the web-hosting platform.

Analytical Data treatment using the Excel Analysis Tool-Pak by Mark Stauffer at the cost of \$99 per attendee was a popular one.

Timely advertisement of an approved webinar flyer is important. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, “Webinar” is lecture style presentation with a Q/A session. “On-line course” is recorded session where users can go at their own speed. So, calling it a webinar is more meaningful.

6- Summary:

I want to Thank Pittcon 2020 President, Dr. Jane Chan for trusting me with the Short Course Chairmanship. Thank you Jane for your superb support with two new initiatives this year. I hope these will benefit Pittcon notably in the coming years.

I like to thank Valarie for her professional office support, communication with the instructors and attendees.

Melinda Stevens was incredible chair-elect and I like to thank her for all her support in the Short Course committee and also during the conference week. I think she will have an equally successful Short Course program in New Orleans for Pittcon 2021.

Respectfully submitted,

Amit Ghosh

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Pittcon 2020
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