

SVP Programs Report

June 2014

The SVP Programs is charged with overseeing ICSB conferences. The World Conference in Puerto Rico (2013) was a programming success but unfortunately had relatively low attendance. They were able to turn a profit (\$63,000 although does not appear to include the fee paid to ICSB) due to a tremendous amount of volunteer work (valued in their report at \$62,740). The GW-ICSB Global Entrepreneurship research and Policy Conference continues to grow. The ACSB held their 1st Annual ACSB Asian SME Conference in Seoul in October and was well-attended. The 2015 ICSB World Conference will not be held in China, so a new venue will be discussed at the board meeting.

My charge this year was to study the past conferences and come to the board with observations and recommendations.

1. Observation: the affiliates exert tremendous effort in hosting the conference. However, attendance has been erratic. Listed below are the reported attendance figures for the last six conferences:

Year	Location	Reported Attendance
2008	Canada	572
2009	Korea	595
2010	USA	336
2011	Sweden	747
2012	New Zealand	317
2013	Puerto Rico	329

Most of the affiliates have made little or no money from running the conference. The exceptions were Cincinnati (significant sponsorship was raised) and Puerto Rico (expenses were low due to tremendous volunteer hours). Immediate Past-President Tom Cooney (and this year's conference organizer) has said that the learning curve is very steep. My observation is that this effort should not be repeated each year unless there are tremendous benefits to the organizing group.

2. The potential benefits to the host affiliate include the following:
 - a. Potential profit from the conference.
 - b. Accessibility of the conference to host affiliate members.
 - c. Increased membership attracted by the conference.

The potential profit has been demonstrated to also be the exposure to a potential loss. Accessibility is demonstrated by the fact that over the last 6 years, 40-60% of the attendees came from the host affiliate. Each conference resulted in an increase in membership for the host affiliate. For example, Puerto Rico had their membership top 100 for the first time due to the conference. The last two benefits are likely to benefit the affiliate where the conference is located, regardless of who hosts it. Last year the board decided to have the I/O organize the

2016 Conference. Given Tom Cooney's observations regarding a steep learning curve, it may make sense to continue this model for three additional years after that to see if the following benefits accrue:

- a. A more consistent product
- b. Sustained sponsorship at a higher level
- c. Lower costs due to being able to use the same infrastructure each year instead of reinventing the wheel and being able to learn from past experience.

Profits from the World Conference will benefit all the affiliates.

3. I have the following recommendations to the board:

- a. Give the I/O the authority to run the conferences through 2019. This will give the board the chance to see results for 2016 through 2018 before deciding whether to continue with the arrangement, go back to the old model or develop a new model.
- b. The board needs to decide criteria for deciding location of the conference while the I/O is running the conference. Certain locations seem to attract more delegates, which will increase the probability of a profitable conference. However, all affiliates would like to have the benefit of a conference located in their area so that their members have easy access and that they can attract new members.