

## **Guidelines for Hosting a SENIA (Special Education Network in Asia) Conference**

### **Purpose:**

SENIA is a network of educators, professionals, and parents across Asia dedicated to supporting individuals with special learning needs. Working together, we will provide a network to combine our strengths to help raise awareness and advocate for the individuals in our lives. The SENIA conference is the main way that we realize our goals as an organization.

Our goals through the conference are to:

- Foster networking in Asia;
- Identify, utilize, and celebrate local resources, expertise, and programs;
- Continually advocate for individuals with special needs.

We also hope to generate revenue from each conference to help fund additional programs to further promote awareness and advocacy for individuals with special needs.

### **Hosting**

Hosting the SENIA conference in an honor. The conference provides several benefits to the host including increased recognition as host of the conference, improved awareness of special education needs in the host's country, and local training for the host's staff and families.

It must also be noted that hosting SENIA's Annual conference requires a tremendous amount of resources and time. As such, the host organization must agree to follow these guidelines.

### **SENIA Board**

The SENIA Board is made by of 7 individuals who volunteer their time to work together to further SENIA's mission. Each board member has a specific role on the SENIA Board. For your reference, here are the names/titles of the current SENIA Board members. While your main point of contact will be Lori Boll, the SENIA Conference Liaison, the other members of the SENIA Board will be involved during the planning of and the actual conference days, as their title roles indicate, as well as to provide support for the conference organizers, as needed.

***Ericson Perez - SENIA Chairperson***

***Kathryn Balsamo - SENIA Corporate Secretary***

***Lori Boll - SENIA Conference and Association Coordinator***

***Catherine Deen - Web and Social Media Coordinator***

***Karli Koning - Local Chapter Liaison***

***Freddie Wagner - Finance and Membership Coordinator***

***Tanya Farrol - SENIA Awards Coordinator***

## Planning

### a. Venue

Ideally the venue for the SENIA Conference should be a school campus and should be provided free of charge by the host school. A hotel or conference center can be expensive and increases the risk that the conference will lose money.

### b. Program: Keynote Speakers & Sessions

Since the purpose of the conference is to recognize resources and programs based in Asia, outside speakers and keynote addresses should be kept to a minimum.

- Two to three keynote speakers can be invited to the conference, and honorarium and speakers should be kept to a minimum.
- Most workshop sessions should be presented by delegates to the SENIA conference, and they should not be paid for presenting. Workshop presenters are expected to register for the SENIA conference and pay full registration fees. Presenting at the conference should be considered an honor and privilege.
- The board suggests that the conference schedule allows for cohort groups (job alike) to meet at least once during the SENIA conference to allow for work sharing ideas.

## Criteria for Selecting Keynote Speakers and Workshop Presenters at SENIA Sponsored Events

### Keynote Speakers

- Background / work experience is aligned with [SENIA's mission](#): *SENIA is a network of educators, professionals and parents across Asia dedicated to supporting individuals with special learning needs.*
- Working together, we will provide a network to combine our strengths to help raise awareness and advocate for the individuals in our lives.
- Demonstrates understanding of special education in the context of Asia
- Will collaborate with conference organizers, including the SENIA Board's Conference Liaison, to tailor fit the keynote address for the conference theme and audience
- Conference organizers will have access to the SENIA Board's list of recommended and not recommended keynote speakers.

### Workshop Presenters

- Background / work experience is aligned with [SENIA's mission](#): *SENIA is a network of educators, professionals and parents across Asia dedicated to supporting individuals with special learning needs.*
- SENIA Board and local chapter boards will have a list of recommended and not recommended workshop presenters, based on compiled feedback from past conferences or workshop presentations.
- Conference organizers and SENIA Board's Conference Liaison will make the final decision which workshop presenters' proposals will be approved.

International conference organizers will send to the SENIA Board a summary of the feedback about each workshop presenter for reference for future conferences.

**c. Role of SENIA Conference Liaison**

One SENIA Board member will act as conference liaison between the host school and board. This should help facilitate a close working relationship between both organizations. The current Conference Liaison is Lori Boll, who will be your main point of contact for any questions or concerns you may have during the course of planning for the conference.

Additionally, the liaison will need to be involved in the selection process for keynote speakers and workshop presenters. The SENIA Board has historical knowledge of past presenters and can help with the decision making process to ensure that the most qualified are chosen.

**d. Board Approval**

The SENIA Board is to approve the conference program and venue before the conference is finalized. The main concern of the SENIA Board will be to make sure that the goals of SENIA are followed and that cost is minimized.

**e. SENIA Board**

1. The SENIA Board liaises with one another regularly during the conference. The SENIA Board **would request that the host organization dedicate a room/space for the SENIA Board to use** throughout the conference. The **SENIA Board should be given opportunity to speak throughout the conference**. This would include, but is not limited to: the chairperson for SENIA delivering a welcome message, presentation of the SENIA Student and SENIA Advocate Awards, and final thoughts at the close of the event.
2. After the pre conference, the **SENIA Board typically meets with the host school organizers, the pre conference speakers, and the head of EARCOS**. This event is planned and paid for by the host school.
3. The conference registration fees are to be waived for each member of the SENIA Board. Each SENIA Board member is expected to pay for the pre-conference, should they decide to attend.

**f. Local Chapter Requirements**

The host school is responsible to provide a place and time for local SENIA chapters to meet during the SENIA Conference. This place needs to hold at least 20 people and allow for technology to show the meeting agenda and notes.

The host school is asked to provide an area during the conference for local chapters to advertise their chapters. This area will be manned by local chapter representatives.

**g. SENIA Teacher Representative Requirements**

The host school is responsible to provide a place and time for SENIA teacher representatives to meet during the SENIA Conference. This place needs to hold at least 30 people and allow for technology to show the meeting agenda and notes.

## **Finances**

### **a. Financial obligation**

The school host organization is responsible for all finances associated with the conference. In addition, **for each delegate registered for the conference, the school host organization is expected to collect \$10 to be paid to SENIA to help raise funds for future SENIA events. Any excess revenue over costs is to be returned to SENIA to support future awareness and advocacy programs.** The school host organization is to pay full registration fees for staff members that attend the conference. Staff members that support and plan the conference should not be paid for their time from the SENIA conference registration fees. The following activities should not be reimbursed except for actual out-of-pocket expenses: planning, marketing, registration management, working on the day of the conference, etc. Staff members that actually work at the conference (not including presenters) do not have to pay conference registration fees.

### **b. SENIA Awards (financial expectation of school host organization)**

The school host organization is responsible for the following finances associated with the SENIA Awards:

#### **SENIA Student Award**

- Economy airfare for the award recipient and one chaperone
- Two nights hotel accommodation
- Cost for the plaque

#### **SENIA Advocacy Award**

- Economy airfare for the award recipient and possibly one chaperone (if award recipient is under the age of 18 or require special assistance)
- Two nights hotel accommodation
- Conference registration fees
- Cost for the plaque

### **c. SENIA Board Conference Fee Waived**

The conference registration fees are to be waived for each member of the SENIA Board. Each SENIA Board member is expected to pay for the pre-conference, should they decide to attend.

### **d. SENIA Board Dinner**

The host school should plan to arrange a dinner, expenses to be borne by the host school, for the SENIA Board (7 people), the invited keynote speakers, the head of EARCOS, and the host

school planning team. This dinner is typically held the night of the pre conference. The purpose of this dinner is to network and celebrate the start of the SENIA conference.

**e. Financial obligation to SENIA at close of conference** (*please see bolded sections in section a)*

### **SENIA Awards**

- a. The SENIA Awards promote individuals or groups that advocate and create awareness about special education issues in Asia. There are two awards. The **SENIA Student Award** honors a student with a disability who excels. It celebrates the achievements of a child or youth with disabilities; encourages awareness of the abilities and aspirations of children/youth with disabilities; and advocates on behalf of exceptional children in Asia. The **SENIA Advocacy Award** honors a student, adult or group that celebrates the achievements of people with disabilities; encourages awareness of the abilities and aspirations of people with disabilities; and advocates on behalf of exceptional people in Asia.
- b. The presentation of both the SENIA Student Award and the SENIA Advocacy Award at the conference is an important and integral part of SENIA's mission statement. As such, the award presentation should be held at a prominent and appropriate time to maximize the honor for the recipients. Time should be given to present the honorary recipients as well as allowing for the award winner a 10-15 minute speech. For the SENIA Advocacy Award winner it is strongly encouraged that time is given during the conference for the winner to present their project. This can be done during an unconference session. If possible, the host shall try to organize accommodations for award winners (i.e. a sign language translator)
- c. It is an honor for many of the SENIA award nominees to receive either an honorary award or be a recipient of the SENIA award. It may be the first time an individual is recognized for advocating and creating awareness about special education issues in Asia. For this reason, honorary award winners and their families will choose to come at their own expense to the award ceremony. The host should be aware of this and be able to accommodate an additional 40 people for the two award ceremonies. This includes members and parents or chaperones of SENIA's local chapter youth groups.

### **Website and Social Media**

- a. **Conference Website** - The host institution is allowed to develop and maintain a conference page using their own school server and information technology resources. If they will use this option, they must submit the address of the conference webpage so that this may be made available on the SENIA official website at least 4 months before the conference. The host institution may also request SENIA to host their conference information on the official SENIA website. If this option will be used, the host institution must assign a webmaster who will be given access to a portion of the SENIA website. Please note that online payments may not be available through this option.

- b. **Publicity** - Announcements for the upcoming conference shall be posted on the official SENIA Website and social media channels including Facebook and Twitter.
- c. **Creatives** - The host institution may choose to design the set of creatives for the conference following the [SENIA Web and Social Media Playbook](#). Basic creatives include the following: Posters, Social Media Photos, Banners, Brochures, others. Creatives must be submitted to the SENIA Web and Social Media Coordinator for approval before use. Assistance in the design of creatives may also be requested from the SENIA Web and Social Media Coordinator at least 4 months before the conference. Earlier coordination to design creatives for Save the Date and others may be coordinated at least 6 months before the conference. Creatives to be approved by the SENIA Web and Social Media Coordinator.
- d. **Hashtag** - The host institution may suggest a hashtag for the event following their approved theme. The hashtag #SENIAXXXX (Year of Conference) is a standard hashtag for use.
- e. **Resources** - All SENIA conference and workshop speakers shall be asked to share their resources to participants. Conference handouts and resources must be made available to participants at least within five working days of the end of the conference. The use of Google drive for handouts is discouraged. It is best to start a Post-Conference page that is password protected which contains the resources, evaluation form link and photos from the event. If the host institution needs help setting up a resources page, the SENIA Web and Social Media Coordinator can assist as long as the request is made at least 1 month before the conference. All resources must be submitted to SENIA within 2 working days from the conference's close.

### **Final Report**

Following the SENIA Conference, the host organization will be

- a. provided a link to the SENIA School Survey. The SENIA Board would ask for this to be completed promptly at the close of the conference. This survey is intended to inform the SENIA Board and future hosts about the requirements/logistics of hosting a SENIA Conference. Accurate information will greatly serve in future planning.
- b. Contacted by **Freddie Wagner - Finance and Membership Coordinator** to coordinate the money transfer to the SENIA account (managed by EARCOS)

Applicants to host the next SENIA conference should sign below that they have reviewed these guidelines and agree to them.

**Conference Organizer**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Title**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Organization**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

**Representative of Host Organization**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Title**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Organization**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**