



Sustainable Oceans Conference Overview

Introduction

Established in 2012, the [Sustainable Oceans Conference](#) is the only annual ocean related, student-led conference in Nova Scotia. Supported by a generous and innovative gift from the Donald R. Sobey Foundation, the conference has always been very successfully planned and hosted by students from the Marine Affairs Program.

Structure and Purpose

The overall conference is guided by the Sobey Fund for Oceans Advisory Group (SFO) of the Marine Affairs Program. The day to day student conference activities are supported by a part-time conference coordinator(s). Although the themes change each year, the broad goals of the conference are to:

- Bring together ocean and coastal stakeholders to explore challenges and collaboratively identify approaches to achieve sustainable ocean management in Canada and internationally;
- Create opportunities for students to practice their leadership and project management skills, and
- Provide a public forum for students to network and present their graduate research projects (either by oral or poster presentation)

Conference Timeline

As an applied component of the MMM degree, the conference is mandatory for each incoming MMM class.

- **Phase 1 (September – December, Year 1):** selection of the leadership team (co-chair (s) and sub-committee leads) in late September/early October. The conference proposal (i.e. design, programs, themes, committees, funding and communication strategies, budget and work plans) are prepared by the leadership team and presented to SFO Advisory Group at the end of October/early November.
- **Phase 2: (January – April, Year 2):** focus on the implementation of the work plans, with key elements being securing a keynote speaker(s), and venue (s) location, fundraising and communications/marketing activities, initiating a call for abstracts, selection of oral and poster presenters, and preparing a detailed summer work plan
- **Phase 3: (May – August, Year 2):** centers on Ocean week activities (June 1-10), with a focus on conference promotion and marketing. Other activities include preparing the abstract booklet, maintaining coordination and committees delivering on their summer work plan.
- **Phase 4: (September – November, Year 2):** conference delivery and post event activities (which includes documents such as the MAP Matters newsletter, MAP policy forum, news articles, conference evaluations and final report and presentation to SFO Advisory Group).

Leadership Roles

The leadership team is made up of highly dedicated and detailed individuals who have a passion for creating a space that brings together academics, industry and general public to discuss ocean and coastal related topics.

The event provides the MMM students with the opportunity to take substantial leadership roles in the planning, delivery and execution of the conference. Within the leadership team there are five to six leadership roles: [Co-chairs](#), [Communications Lead](#), [Fundraising Lead](#), [Logistics Lead](#) and [Submissions Lead](#). Although guided by the conference

coordinators, the successful delivery of the event requires a dedicated level of commitment and ownership by both the leadership team and the MMM class.

Employability Skills

The conference is an effective way to build valuable partnerships for internships and careers. Students who have actively participated in planning and delivering a successful conference will have marketable skills to include on their resume. Future employers look for the following transferable skills when hiring marine managers:

- Project management
- Event planning and scheduling
- Budgeting and fundraising
- Media and marketing capabilities
- Oral and written communication
- Creative problem solving
- Taking initiative
- Networking ability