

# Conference Rates Increase Update

ULA General Board Meeting, February 23, 2018

The Utah Library Association (ULA) continues to foster professional relationships across the state by providing opportunities to network and collaborate through roundtable and committee events and our annual conference. These events are largely funded from membership fees and revenue from the annual conference. With varying costs of programming, venues, and conference amenities (e.g., wifi) from year to year, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a budget that draws primarily from conference revenue and not the limited reserves. To facilitate the ongoing financial stability of the ULA, the general board began discussing rate increases at the October and December 2017 meetings. It was generally agreed that one jump now was more favorable than a gradual increase, and increasing one rate was more favorable than increasing both conference rates and membership rates. The president and general board asked a subgroup to research nearby state library conference rates and report back with findings and a proposed conference rate increase. The following provides information about this research and closes with a proposed conference rate increase that would go into effect January 1, 2019.

## 2014-2018 Review of Space Rental Costs and Overall Profit

Year	Venue	Space Rental	Profit
2018	Utah Valley CC	\$12,000.00	Unknown
2017	South Towne	\$18,077.57	\$9,099.07
2016	Davis Conf. Ctr.	\$18,700.00	\$12,511.60
2015	Dixie Center	\$11,095.00	\$22,438.12
2014	South Towne	\$15,053.70	\$15,465.53

This table above illustrates that aspects of the conference budget, such as space rental, can vary from year to year, as does our overall profit. Our event manager, Pia Jones, indicated it is difficult to gather information about how much other state library associations pay for their conference. She did say that a third of our conference budget typically goes to food whereas larger conferences may spend up to half of their budget on food and beverages. There are

other ways of comparing our conference to others, which are reviewed in the following sections.

### Comparison of Conference Registration Rates

	Conference Registration Type	Current ULA Rates	Average Across other Associations <sup>1</sup>	Percentage ULA is higher/lower than the average
MEMBER	Preconference Only	\$55	\$33	40.9% Higher
	One Day (Th./Fri.)	\$100	\$127	27% Lower
	Full Conf. Early Bird	\$170	\$209	23.2% Lower
	Full Conf. Regular	\$200	\$233	16.5% Lower
NON-MEMBER	Preconference Only	\$55	\$33	40.9% Higher
	One Day (Th./Fri.)	\$170	\$171	0.6% Lower
	Full Conf. Early Bird	\$250	\$281	12.5% Lower
	Full Conf. Regular	\$295	\$297	0.7% Lower
STUDENT	Preconference Only	\$55	\$33	40.9% Higher
	One Day (Th./Fri.)	\$75	\$98	30.2% Lower
	Full Conf. Early Bird	\$100	\$130	29.8% Lower
	Full Conf. Regular	\$100	\$139	39.3% Lower

Not counting the preconference only rates, ULA registration rates are on average approximately 21% lower than other associations. Put in monetary value, ULA registration rates are on average \$25 lower than other library association rates.

### Comparison of Conference Value

It is important to consider how the ULA conference compares in value to these other conferences. If the ULA conference is generally equal in value to these other conferences, it lends additional merit to our rate increases (beyond financial stability and improved programming funding). ULA offers a comparable number of session time slots, but some states (e.g., Arizona and Kansas) offer more programs per time slot. However, these states employ more librarians and may rent more space to accommodate greater attendance. We have fewer exhibitors (25-30 compared to 40-50), but this is most likely a space issue as well. ULA and other conferences typically offer lunch each full day of the conference in addition to snacks and

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<sup>1</sup> Averages were calculated across the following library associations: Colorado Association of Libraries, Arizona State Library Association, Nevada Library Association, Idaho Library Association, and Kansas Library Association. Averages were based on the most similar conference rates.

beverages. Other conferences tend to offer more author programs and activities (e.g., hike, yoga). ULA roundtables sometimes sponsor tours and other activities. ULA offers more pre-conferences than other library associations. ULA also organizes sessions by category better than other conferences.

### Comparison of Library Income & Cost of Living

Compared to eight nearby states (Colorado, Arizona, Nevada, Kansas, New Mexico, Idaho, Wyoming, and Montana), Utah librarians make approximately \$1,700 more per year. On average, these other states employ approximately 1,100 librarians, whereas Utah employs approximately 770 librarians<sup>2</sup>. The 2017 composite cost of living index for Utah (96.7) is slightly lower than the average composite cost of living index for these comparator states (97.5)<sup>3</sup>.

### Proposed Rate Increases

Overall, the ULA conference is on par with other state library conferences in terms of time, session offerings (when taking into account the size of our association), and food offerings. Additionally, Utah librarian incomes and cost of living are comparable to other states. Thus, it appears reasonable to increase conference rates to also be comparable.

Rate Type	Current Member Rate	Proposed Member Rate	Current Non-Member Rate	Proposed Non-Member Rate	Current Student Rate	Proposed Student Rate
Preconference Only	\$55/session	\$55/session	\$55/session	\$55/session	\$55/session	\$40/session
One Day (Th./Fri.)	\$100	\$120	\$170	\$190	\$75	\$95
Full Conf. Early Bird	\$170	\$200	\$250	\$280	\$100	\$120
Full Conf. Regular	\$200	\$220	\$295	\$300	\$100	\$130

<sup>2</sup> Bureau of Labor Statistics salary and employment information retrieved from *2016 Occupational Employment and Wages Statistics - Librarians* at: <https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes254021.htm>

<sup>3</sup> Composite cost of living index calculated by averaging the cost of living indices of cities and metropolitan areas in each state, as recorded by the Council for Community & Economic Research. For reference, the national average cost of living index is 100. The state composite cost of living index values retrieved from [https://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost\\_of\\_living/](https://www.missourieconomy.org/indicators/cost_of_living/)

In these proposed rates, the preconference per session rate remains the same, as it was already higher than the average of preconference rates in the comparison. One day rates were increased by \$20 for members, non-members, and students. Full conference early bird rates were increased by \$30 for members and non-members. Regular rates for members and non-members were increased by another \$20 from this new early bird rate. This is less of a “late fee” increase from the current rates, which increase by \$30 from early bird to regular rates for members and by \$45 from early bird to regular rates for non-members. However, a \$20 “late fee” charge from early bird to regular rates more closely matches the average of other conferences. Full conference rates for students were increased by \$20 for the early bird rates and another \$10 for the regular rates. A smaller increase seemed more reasonable for students who are typically living on a smaller budget. The proposed rates also give students a new discount on the preconference only price, dropping it from \$55 to \$40 for students.

### Projected Revenue Increases

Using the average registration counts from the last two years, the following table illustrates how these proposed rates would translate into almost \$12,000 in additional revenue. The majority of registrations come in at the member early bird rate, so this is where the largest bump in revenue would occur.

	Conference Registration Type	Average Registration Last 2 Years	Average Revenue Last 2 years	Revenue Increase with Proposed Rates
MEMBER	Preconference Only	3	\$165	\$0
	One Day (Th./Fri.)	61	\$6,100	\$1,220
	Full Conf. Early Bird	293	\$49,810	\$8,790
	Full Conf. Regular	28	\$5,600	\$560
NON-MEMBER	Preconference Only	3	\$165	\$0
	One Day (Th./Fri.)	7	\$1,190	\$140
	Full Conf. Early Bird	8	\$2,000	\$240
	Full Conf. Regular	2	\$590	\$10
STUDENT	Preconference Only	2	\$110	-\$30*
	One Day (Th./Fri.)	11	\$825	\$220
	Full Conf. Early Bird	9	\$900	\$180
	Full Conf. Regular	9	\$900	\$270
SUM		436	\$68,355	\$11600

\*In the data used to get average registration counts, pre-conference only registrants were not distinguished by member/non-member/student so the average of 8 preconference only registrants were evenly split between these registrant types. Thus, this \$30 loss with the student discount may not be an accurate projection.

The ULA Conference Registration Rate increases proposed in this report were approved by the General Board on Friday, February 23, 2018. These rates will take effect on January 1, 2019.