

TESL Ontario 2015 Conference

November 12-13, 2015

Expanding Horizons – Drawing on Experience & Knowledge

Now that the TESL Ontario Conference Committee has had an opportunity to debrief the 2015 conference, we are in planning mode for this year's event. We appreciate your feedback and where it's feasible, this year's conference will reflect some of what we heard from you, bearing in mind that providing a stimulating, instructive conference while being fiscally responsible is a challenge.

We heard from many of you urging us to bring back conference assistance and we agree with you! We truly appreciate the support from MCIIT to provide conference assistance to 240 ESL instructors in 2015. However, ongoing conference assistance from the federal and/or provincial government is not a given; TESL Ontario applies annually, but each government determines its priorities and conference assistance isn't always their focus. Not to be deterred, we continue to pursue this annually.

Most of you indicated you loved being back at Sheraton Centre and we will be returning there! The suggestion to relocate to a venue outside of Toronto isn't feasible because the majority of our delegates come from the GTA and access to downtown Toronto is doable. We did explore the option of going further afield, but transportation costs which would not be covered by conference assistance would have been prohibitive.

Interest in ESL week has been waning over the last few years, thus the decision has been made to not formally recognize it, but we encourage you to acknowledge the importance of ESL within your organization. As interest and participation in the Research Symposium has been declining, the decision has been made to eliminate that aspect of the conference as well.

With these changes we anticipate we will still be able to deliver a conference that will address your thirst for education and information regarding English as a Second Language.

Many of you expressed concern that PBLA sessions did not have enough space. We realize the importance of PBLA and will take steps to address this in 2016.

The vast majority of you prefer the 2-day format, and that will continue. As well, the Welcome Reception on Thursday will continue as our major networking opportunity. Most of you liked not having to pre-register for sessions because it gave you flexibility; that will continue. With fewer participants than in the past, we require fewer breakout rooms for our sessions, but will maximize the capacity when the schedule is developed.

With this in mind, your conference committee is moving forward with its commitment to bring you the best possible conference experience without losing the integrity of our conference tradition and remaining fiscally responsible. Mark your calendars now for November 24 and 25 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto!

Barb Krukowski
Conference Chair