Tips for Designing an Effective Poster

1. Know the amount of space that you will be allotted and plan accordingly.

2. You do not have to use white or cream as your background color, but use good judgment in your choice. Fluorescent colors for example, are distracting and make reading difficult.

3. Put the poster title on a separate line(s) at the top of the poster. Your name, your mentor's name, and the name of any collaborators should appear on the next line. The name of your university should be listed on a separate line below the list of names. If space is an issue, the list of names and institution may appear on the same line. The font size for the title of your poster, list of names and institution should be at least one inch high (100 point font), with the title being the largest. These elements should be contained in a single banner across the top of the poster.

4. For text lettering, use black or some other dark color. Use an easy-to-read typeface like Times New Roman, Courier, or Ariel. While Gothic, Italic, or Script fonts can be used to highlight words and phrases, they should not be used over the entire poster. Use the same font for all parts of the poster – titles, section headings, and text (except when using a special font to highlight a word or phrase).

5. The text of your poster should be no smaller than 22 point font. It should be readable from about 3 feet away. It is best to use a larger font and be concise. When creating electronic tables or figures with the intent of inserting them into a poster document, set the margins to .5 inches. Remember that axis labels, legends, etc. should be readable from a 3-foot distance as well.

6. This is a poster, not a manuscript, so focus on the most important information and say if efficiently. Use a heading for each major section: abstract, introduction, method, results, discussion (or conclusions), and references (or citations). Single space the text in each section. When appropriate, a bulleted list saves space and gives your reader the most important points in an easy-to-understand format.